COMMENTARY

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The setting for this episode is the Greek city of Thebes, founded by Cadmus (513–14 n.). Cadmus is by now an old man, and has abdicated the throne of his city in favour of his grandson Pentheus. Early in the reign of the young king, a wild new religious cult sweeps in from the East, that of the god Bacchus, son of the supreme god Jupiter and the Theban princess Semele. While all other Thebans welcome the new cult, Pentheus proves to be sceptical and resistant, an attitude that leads to his doom. (For further discussion of setting and mythological background, see Intro. §4). The set text can be divided into the following sections: (i) Tiresias' Warning to Pentheus (511–26); (ii) Pentheus' Rejection of Bacchus (527–71); (iii) The Captive Acoetes and His Tale (572–691); (iv) Pentheus' Gruesome Demise (692–733).

511–26
Tiresias' Warning to Pentheus

This brief but complex section includes: (i) transition from the previous story, the tale of Narcissus, whose fate the seer Tiresias unerringly foretold; (ii) introduction of the next character destined for doom on Thebes' killing fields: the young king Pentheus, the only one left to scorn Tiresias; (iii) Tiresias' anticipation of events to come: the clash between Pentheus and Bacchus (in essence also an encapsulation of Euripides' tragedy *Bacchae*).

The narrative speeds along here: Tiresias' prediction of Bacchus' arrival and its fulfilment come in quick succession. This initial briskness stands in contrast to the elements of 'slow-mo' that Ovid will soon introduce (and which make up the lion's share of the set text): the speeches of Pentheus and of Acoetes. In Euripides' *Bacchae*, the verbal clash between Pentheus and Tiresias does not occur until some way into the drama.

511–12 cognita … ingens. These two lines form the pivot from the tale of Narcissus (just concluded) to the story of Pentheus (about to start). Ovid opts for straightforward syntax: we get two main verbs, *attulerat* and *erat*, linked by the *-que* attached to *nomen*. The design, revolving around the synonyms *famam ~ nomen* and *vati ~ auguris* (on which more below), is intricate: *meritam … famam ‹› nomen … ingens* form a *chiasmus; and *vati attulerat ‹› erat auguris* are also arranged chiastically.

A regular Latin idiom is the use of the perfect passive participle to modify a (concrete) noun where English would have, in place of the participle, an abstract noun and the preposition 'of'. Examples include

post transactam fabulam ('after the play having been performed' = 'after the performance of the play', Plaut. *Cas*. 84), and *nuntiata clades* ('the disaster having been reported' = 'the news of the disaster', Liv. 10.4). In similar fashion here the qualification of the noun ***res*** by ***cognita*** (perf. pass. part. of *cognoscere*, 'get to know' or, in the perfect, simply 'know') yields the sense 'knowledge of the matter'.

The 'matter' referred to is the story of Narcissus and, more specifically, the fulfilment of Tiresias' prophecy concerning the boy's fate. As such it harks back to the beginning of that episode: *enixa est utero pulcherrima pleno* | *infantem nymphe, iam tunc qui posset amari,* | *Narcissumque vocat. de quo consultus, an esset* | *tempora maturae visurus longa senectae,* | *fatidicus vates 'si se non noverit' inquit.* | *vana diu visa est vox auguris: exitus illam* | *resque probat letique genus novitasque furoris.* ('The beautiful nymph [sc. Liriope, mother of Narcissus] brought forth from her full womb an infant loveable even then [sc. at its birth] and named him Narcissus. When consulted about him, as to whether he would live a long time and see a ripe old age, the fate-speaking prophet [sc. Tiresias] replied: "If he shall not know himself". For a long time the prophet's utterance seemed an empty one, but the boy's demise proved it true — the event, the manner of his death, the strangeness of his passion', 3.344–50). Ovid's linking of the two episodes in this manner raises an interesting question: 'Will knowing *about* (Tiresias knowing about) Narcissus help anyone else (know themselves)? We read on (but will it help … *anyone*?)'. (John Henderson).

meritam … famam (notice the 'framing' arrangement) is the direct object of *attulerat*; the indirect object is ***vati***, a 3rd declension noun, referring to Tiresias. A *vates* was originally a divinely inspired prophet (the meaning to the fore here); but the word also came to be used in the Augustan period as the designation of choice for poets (as opposed to the Greek loanword *poeta*), thereby enhancing the intrinsic metapoetic potential of prophet figures in epic narrative.

John Henderson points to an interesting twist here: 'with *famam* Ovid uses this bridge between narrative layers and segments to sound the grand theme that epic poetry confers renown (see Hardie 2012) — usually, upon characters, who make a name for themselves simply by being named in their epic, but here (by surprise: Echo and Narcissus have been headlining, but they just leave backing *vox* and

flower, disembodying into white leaves) instead upon the role of the teller in the story he foretold, and as well upon his role as stand-in mouthpiece for the bard Ovid. By implication, scorning Pentheus is scorning not just Bacchus but the power of epic, and blindly slighting the shape-shifting … Ovid. And reading (this) epic is to enter the laboratory of storytelling'.

The poetic adjective *Achais -idos* (f.), meaning 'Greek', is a Greek loan word (Ἀχαιΐς -ϊδος). It is found in Greek poetry from Homeric epic (*Il.* 1.254 etc.) onwards, but does not occur in extant Latin literature before Ovid (who has it again at *Met.* 5.306 and 15.293). *Achais* imparts a more elevated — and more epic — tone than would a more conventional adjective (such as *Graecus, -a, -um*). 'Achaia' (the Latin spelling, or *version*, through linguistic metamorphosis) was strictly speaking a region of the Peloponnese, but such synecdochical usage (one region of Greece stands for the whole) is widespread in epic poetry. In Ovid's day, moreover, 'Achaia' had currency as the name of the Roman province that encompassed all of southern Greece (including the entire Peloponnese and regions immediately to the north of the Gulf of Corinth; the remaining areas comprised the province 'Macedonia'). Such play on linguistic and geopolitical registers occurs throughout the poem and feeds into Ovid's trans-cultural and imperialist poetics: overall, the *Metamorphoses* traces the transition of history and empire from Greece to Rome, with Rome (and its empire) hyperbolically conceived as tantamount to the world (see Intro. §3c). Here the geographical specification simultaneously enhances and delimits Tiresias' fame: it knew no bounds … among the cities of *Greece*. The phrase ***per Achaidas urbes*** should probably be taken **apo koinou* with (i) *cognita res*, (ii) *famam … attulerat*, and (iii) *nomen erat … ingens*. It also harks back to the opening of the Narcissus episode: *Ille [sc. Tiresias] per Aonias fama celeberrimus urbes | inreprehensa dabat populo responsa petenti* ['He, renowned throughout the cities of Boeotia, gave faultless prophecies to those seeking them', 3.339–40]. Put differently, Tiresias' fame grows as Ovid's narrative unfolds: whereas it was limited to Boeotia at the beginning of the Narcissus episode, at the beginning of the Pentheus episode it has reached all of Greece.

nomen has the pregnant sense of 'famous name', 'renown', 'celebrity'; ***ingens*** makes clear that Tiresias has become the Ovidian equivalent of a Hollywood A-lister thanks to his unerring soothsaying. The genitive

auguris, which depends on *nomen*, is used loosely as a synonym for *vates* in the previous verse. In republican and early-imperial Rome, an *augur* was a special type of religious functionary. Unlike the *vates* who relied on divine inspiration, an augur divined divine will (and especially their plans for the future) from signs observed in nature, often the flight- and eating-patterns of birds. But poets often used such terms more or less interchangeably in the general sense of 'soothsayer' (L-S s.v. *augur* ii), as here. Technically speaking, *vates* is the more appropriate label: the blind Tiresias could hardly base his predictions on the inspection of *empirical* signs; his access to the divine sphere — and hence inspired knowledge of the future, a prerogative of the gods — operates via a *metaphysical* connection. But with *augur* Ovid, in addition to introducing variety into his religious nomenclature, invokes a specific priesthood of Roman civic religion. By such subtle effects, Rome's presence is felt throughout the *Metamorphoses*, even though the city itself will not materialize until Book 14.

513–16 spernit … obicit. The new story starts rancorously, with the verbs *spernit*, *ridet* and *obicit* sounding a derisive note. The shared subject of these verbs needs to be assembled from bits and pieces littered across lines 513–14: *Echionides*, (*ex omnibus*) *unus*, *contemptor superum*, and *Pentheus*. Our understanding of the syntax evolves as we read along. The patronymic *Echionides* ('son of Echion') could be a viable subject and seems to suffice until we reach *ex omnibus unus*, at which point it becomes preferable to take *Echionides* as standing in apposition ('a single individual, the son of Echion …'). Two more appositional expressions follow in the subsequent line: the general attribution *contemptor superum* and the proper name *Pentheus*. Ovid thus introduces his new protagonist, the young king of Thebes, through a complex sequence of designations: we first get his lineage (he is the son of Echion), then learn that he stands apart from everyone concerning Tiresias (*ex omnibus unus*) and that he is a blasphemer (*contemptor superum*); and finally we get the actual name (*Pentheus*). Reshuffled, we get: 'A single individual, Pentheus, the son of Echion, a blasphemer of the gods, still holds him in contempt …' This build-up has an ominous effect, not merely introducing Pentheus as the principal character (the next to stamp his name on epic, to star in Ovid), but also adumbrating his downfall (the flipside of the *fama* factory; but infamy's still a form of fame). Those who challenge the gods tend

to meet a sticky end in the *Metamorphoses* (513–14 n.); the 'piecemeal' fashion in which Ovid introduces Pentheus here may subtly anticipate his physical disintegration at the end, where he gets torn limb from limb.

Note the placement of the verbs within a *tricolon arrangement: *spernit* comes at the beginning of line and clause; *ridet* comes at the end of line and in the middle of its clause; *obicit* comes at the beginning of the line and the end of the clause — and is further set off by enjambment and the abrupt *diaeresis after the first foot. The effect is to maintain focus upon Pentheus' actions with deliberate variation. It should be noted that Narcissus too 'scorned' (Echo: 393 *spreta*) — but Pentheus ups the ante, to make a complete hatchet job of it, and of himself.

513–14 spernit … Pentheus. The conjunction ***tamen*** gives the preceding two lines a concessive force ('Even though the story of Narcissus … Pentheus nevertheless …'). ***Echionides*** is a patronymic, which identifies an individual by a male ancestor (often his father). The patronymic is characteristic of ancient epic language, both Greek and Latin (which borrowed it from Greek). It is found from the very first line of Western literature (Hom. *Il.* 1.1 'Sing, Muse, of the wrath of *Peleus' son* [Πηληϊάδεω] Achilles …') onwards. Here the patronymic identifies Pentheus as son of Echion, one of the surviving Spartoi (Σπαρτοί, the 'Sown-men'); his mother was Agave, one of the four daughters of Cadmus and Harmonia (see Intro. §4). The reference to Echion points back to the beginning of Book 3, where Ovid tells the story of the foundation of Thebes. Cadmus had been ordered by his father Agenor, king of Phoenicia, to search for his sister Europa (who had been abducted by Jupiter in the form of a bull). Since finding Europa proved impossible, and Agenor had forbidden his son to return without her, Cadmus was in effect forced into exile. He thus resolved to found a new city, and at length arrived at the location in Boeotia where the Delphic oracle had indicated he should do so. Thereupon he sent his comrades to fetch water, only to have them slaughtered by the dragon who dwelt in the nearby spring. Cadmus took his revenge by slaying the beast and was thereupon instructed by an anonymous voice from the sky to sow its teeth into the ground. The Spartoi soon rose from the earth in great number, but promptly began to slay each other through bloody fratricide, until only five remained. Cadmus went on to found Thebes with these five survivors, of whom Echion alone is mentioned by

name (3.126 *quorum fuit unus Echion* — 'one of them was Echion'). With these balancing references to Echion, Ovid imparts a sense of continuity and cohesion, while affirming the importance of lineage and Thebes' (partial) autochthonous origins for his Theban narrative. At the same time, such references keep in view the peculiar 'Theban condition' — its inhabitants' seemingly genetic predisposition to familial strife, which repeatedly brings the city to disaster. Pentheus will make much of the city's serpentine ancestry in his upcoming speech. Indeed, 'Echion' derives from *echis* (ἔχις), the Greek term for 'viper', so Pentheus is quite literally 'serpent spawn' or, taking more liberties, 'viper-king' — which goes some way to explaining his bizarre praise of the serpent of Mars later on in the tale (543–48).

In ***ex omnibus unus*** the preposition is used partitively: out of all those who heard of Tiresias' correct prediction of Narcissus' fate only a single individual (still) holds him in contempt. Speaking more broadly, the play of 'one versus many' (and related motifs) recurs throughout the episode: 544 (Pentheus on the dragon of Mars) … *qui multos perdidit unus* …; 564–65 (Pentheus' family trying to dissuade him from fighting Bacchus) *hunc avus, hunc Athamas, hunc cetera turba suorum* | *corripiunt dictis frustraque inhibere laborant*; 617–20 (Acoetes shouted down by his crew) *hoc [probant] omnes alii* …; 646 (Acoetes being beset by his crew) *increpor a cunctis* …; 647–48 (Aethalion mocking Acoetes after his refusal to stay at the helm) '*te scilicet omnis in uno* | *nostra salus posita est*'; 654–55 (Bacchus in disguise pleading with the sailors) *quae gloria vestra est,* | *si puerum iuvenes, si multi fallitis unum?*; 687–88 (Acoetes being the sole member of the crew not turned into a dolphin) *de modo viginti …* | *solus restabam* …; 715–16 (the throng of Bacchants attacking Pentheus) *ruit omnis in unum* | *turba furens* … The respective merits of the stances of individual and crowd fluctuate over the course of the narrative. At the outset, the individual (Pentheus) is misguided — both in scorning Tiresias and in refusing to permit the worship of Bacchus. In Acoetes' tale, the opposite case arises: the ship's crew is manifestly criminal and sacrilegious (an *impia turba*, 629) in its showdown with Acoetes, who alone manifests religious scruples. The final scene involves a more ambiguous situation: Pentheus, facing imminent dismemberment, at last sees the error of his ways — but too late: the divinely deranged crowd tears him into pieces, though with 'blasphemous hands' (*manibus … nefandis*, 731). John Henderson adds that 'Ovid, in typical

fashion, will show just how wooden his build-up for Pentheus is when he nevertheless adds (i) further unbelievers (batty Theban *women*, 4.1–4), and then (ii) the "sole" surviving Cadmeid to reject Bacchus' godhood (Acrisius of Argos, 4.607–10), which kick-starts the next saga via the breathtakingly *fake* "bridge", as Acrisius doesn't believe in Perseus' claim to be son of Jupiter *either*…! (see 559–61 n.)'.

The form ***superum*** is syncopated gen. pl. of *superi*, 'the gods above'; it is an objective genitive, dependent on ***contemptor***. The expression calls to mind the description of Mezentius as *contemptor divum* at *Aen.* 7.648, and further reminiscences of this Virgilian figure occur later in the set text (582–83, 623–25 nn.). Speaking more broadly, mortals defying gods is a prominent theme in the early books of the *Metamorphoses*, where an entire human race with blasphemous proclivities comes into being from the blood of giants slain while hubristically attacking the seat of the gods on Mount Olympus (*Met*. 1.157–62). The first representative of this particular race treated in the narrative is the vicious tyrant Lycaon, who tests Jupiter's divinity by serving him a meal of human flesh and then attempting to murder him; it is this conduct that convinces Jupiter to eradicate the entire race of human beings (save the pious couple Deucalion and Pyrrha) in a flood of biblical proportions. It is, moreover, hardly coincidental that the giants, the human race fashioned by the Earth out of their blood, and Pentheus (via his descent from Echion) are all autochthonous, i.e. 'born from the earth': they are genetically predisposed (as it were) to challenge the *superi* ('gods above'). Indeed, in the choral ode at Eur. *Bacch*. 538–44, Echion is actually said to be one of the giants who opposed the gods and Pentheus, his son, quite literally 'born from a dragon'. In any event, *contemptores superum* almost invariably come to a bad end, so the phrase imparts a sense of foreboding: Pentheus' fate, it is safe to assume, won't be a happy one. The fact that Pentheus is a king — and as such acts as a privileged representative of Theban society towards the divine sphere — exacerbates his transgression, while creating a civic crisis (see Additional Information after 531–63 n.); but on the whole, Ovid follows Euripides in presenting Pentheus' tale as a personal and familial tragedy rather than one of Theban society at large.

514–15 praesagaque … senis. The *-que* after *praesaga* links *spernit* and *ridet*. ***senis*** (gen. sing. of *senex*, 'old man') focalises Tiresias *both* as

Pentheus mis-sees him as an 'old woffler doom-monger' *and* as we are to recognize him, as 'wizened voice of authority' (see 516–18 n.). Yes, it's the old old story, of tradition — don't fight it! ***praesaga … verba*** speaks both to his prophecy regarding Narcissus and to his prophetic powers more generally (on which see Intro. §5b-i).

515–16 tenebrasque … obicit. The *-que* after *tenebras* links *ridet* and *obicit*, the *et* links *tenebras* and *cladem*. Notice that *tenebras* and *cladem lucis ademptae* are virtually synonymous, both referring (in poetic language) to Tiresias' blindness, and so producing a 'theme-and-variation' effect (cf. 646 with n.), which adds emphasis. We also have a mild instance of **hysteron proteron* insofar as *tenebras* indicates the condition or effect, whereas *cladem lucis ademptae* refers to the moment of deprivation or cause. The circumstances of the blinding were recounted at 3.316–38 (see Intro. §5b-i; the key lines are also cited below). ***lucis ademptae*** is genitive of apposition (AG §343d) with ***cladem***: *lucis* speaks to vision (*OLD* s.v. 8), *ademptae* (perf. pass. part. of *adimo*) to its loss. ***obicit***, here in the sense of 'to cite (before an opponent as a ground for condemnation)' (*OLD* s.v. 10), presupposes an indirect object in the dative such as *ei*, which is easily supplied, and implies that Tiresias is in the physical presence of Pentheus. This is indeed the case, as the following makes clear, but constitutes a rather sudden and unmediated narrative turn.

516–18 ille … videres. The main clause of this segment outside the direct speech consists of *ille* (subject) and *ait* (verb), with *movens* being a circumstantial participle agreeing with *ille* and governing the accusative object *albentia tempora* (Tiresias is shaking his head indignantly as he speaks). ***albentia*** is present participle of *albeo*, modifying *tempora*, to which it stands in predicative position: 'the temples white with …' rather than 'the white temples'. This distinction is important, as otherwise you'll be hard put to fit in ***canis***, an instrumental ablative governed by *albentia*; it comes from *cani, -orum* (m. pl.), strictly meaning 'grey hair', but here used metonymically in the sense 'old age'. Tiresias' visible signs of old age call to mind the reverence due to the elderly (in ancient as in modern thought), thereby underscoring Pentheus' rude conduct. The seer ingeniously reacts to Pentheus' contempt by reversing the terms of the latter's mockery. As with his foretelling of Narcissus' fate (see 511–12 n.), so here Tiresias utters a *prima facie* counterintuitive

statement that reconceives an apparent misfortune (the loss of sight) as a blessing. The sense is that Pentheus would be better off if he too were blind because his decision to spy on the Bacchic rites will prove fatal. In broader thematic terms, Ovid subtly announces here another (fatal) case of illicit gazing, reprising the motif from the tale of Actaeon earlier in Book 3. Naturally the whole passage re-echoes with Narcissus' brand of dysopia too — and his failure to *listen*.

Both ***esses*** and ***fieres*** are 2nd pers. sing. imperfect subjunctives (from *sum* and *fio*, respectively), forming a riddling present counterfactual condition (AG §517). We first get the apodosis (the exclamatory *quam felix esses*), then the protasis (*si … fieres*). Why Pentheus would be exceedingly fortunate (*quam felix*) if he, too, were blind is explained above.

The adjective ***orbus*** can take either an ablative or a genitive, as here with ***luminis huius***, to indicate the thing of which one is deprived or bereft (cf. AG §349a). In post-classical Latin *orbus* by itself (i.e. without the genitive attribute *luminis* vel sim.) came to mean 'blind': see *OLD* s.v. 6, with reference to Apul. *Met.* 5.9, where *Fortuna* is called *orba et saeva et iniqua* ('blind, savage, and unjust'). *lumen* signifies 'eyesight' here; it has the same sense in the prelude at 3.336–38 *at pater omnipotens … pro lumine adempto | scire futura dedit poenamque levavit honore* ('But the all-powerful father granted [Tiresias] knowledge of things to come in compensation for his loss of sight and lessened [Juno's] punishment by this honour'). In essence, we have an exchange of one type of vision ('eye-sight') for another ('fore-sight'), which explains Tiresias' use of the demonstrative pronoun *huius*. He may have lost one particular type of *lumen* (the use of his eyes), but he has gained another kind in recompense, i.e. mental il-*lumin*-ation/ understanding. See?

Tiresias completes the counterfactual condition with a negative result clause, ***ne Bacchica sacra videres***. The adjective *Bacchicus* is one of several name-based adjectives derived from *Bacchus*; others include *Baccheus*, *Bacchius*, and *Bacheius*. The form *Bacchicus* is found only three times before Ovid in extant Latin, with the first two occurrences coming from fragments of early tragedies (Naevius' *Lycurgus* and Ennius' *Athamas*). Though a small sample size, this suggests that Ovid may have employed it here as having tragic affiliations. *Bacchica sacra* refers to rites performed by (usually frenzied and/ or inebriated) worshippers in

honour of Bacchus; the particular allusion here is to the *trieterica orgia*, nocturnal rites held by the Thebans every third year on Mount Cithaeron. The adjective *sacer* ('consecrated to a deity', 'divine') and the associated noun *sacra* ('religious rites') are key terms that recur throughout the set text: 530 *ignota ad sacra*; 558 (Pentheus speaking) *commenta … sacra*; 574 *famulum … sacrorum*; 580–81 (Pentheus addressing Acoetes) *ede … | morisque novi cur sacra frequentes*; 621–22 (Acoetes with reference to Bacchus) *non tamen hanc sacro violari pondere pinum | perpetiar*; 690–91 (the end of Acoetes' tale) *delatus in illam | accessi sacris Baccheaque sacra frequento*; 702 *electus facienda ad sacra Cithaeron*; 710–11 *hic oculis illum cernentem sacra profanis | prima videt …*; 732–33 *talibus exemplis monitae nova sacra frequentant | turaque dant sanctasque colunt Ismenides aras*. The emphasis is on the recognition of the new rites as authentic, on recognizing a divinity in human guise, and on joining up when Bacchus comes along.

Additional Information: Feldherr (1997, 47) points out that the theme of sacrifice pervades Book 3 and links the story of Pentheus with the foundation of the city at the book's opening: 'Images of sacrifice feature in the book's first and last episodes and so provide a thematic frame uniting the death of Pentheus with the foundation of Thebes. After the miraculous cow has led the followers of Cadmus to the site of Thebes, the first act of the settlers is to prepare a sacrifice. It is while collecting water for libations that the colonists encounter the dragon who kills them … At the book's conclusion not only can the dismemberment of Pentheus be compared to a Bacchic *sparagmos*, but the poem's final couplet treats his death as a warning to convince the women of Thebes "to attend the new *sacra*, to give incense, and to cultivate the sacred altars". In both cases the sacrifice unites its participants as members of a new community whose existence the rites themselves confirm. Thus the initial sacrifice can be clearly connected with the rituals of founding the city of Thebes itself, while the final lines make clear that it is as members of the Theban state (*Ismenides*) that the women will participate in Bacchic rites'. Feldherr goes on to link this concern with sacrifice in Ovid's Theban history to the theories of the French cultural historian René Girard, who sees as the primary purpose of sacrifice not so much, or not only, communication with the gods, as the regulation of cyclical violence arising within any community as a result of competition. Naturally, any variety of human, and therefore corrupted, sacrifice must *also* taint the foundation it may bless — with tragedy (Zeitlin 1965).

519–23 namque … sorores. Tiresias anticipates the arrival of Bacchus in 519–20 and then goes on to spell out with a conditional sequence what will happen to Pentheus if he fails to honour the new god. The two parts of the sentence are loosely linked by the connecting relative *quem* (= *et eum*) at the beginning of line 521. The main verb of the first half is *aderit*; the main verbs of the second half are *spargere* and *foedabis*.

519. The archetype of *namque dies aderit* is the famous Homeric expression ἔσσεται ἦμαρ ὅτ' ἄν … ('the day shall come when …', Hom. *Il.* 4.164). ***namque*** ('for indeed', 'for truly') is 'an emphatic confirmative particle, a strengthened *nam*, closely resembling that particle in its uses, but introducing the reason or explanation with more assurance' (L-S s.v.). The antecedent of the relative pronoun ***quam*** is ***dies***, whose gender can be either masculine or feminine: when used of a fixed or appointed day, as here, it is feminine (AG §97a). In terms of syntax, *quam* functions both as the accusative object of *auguror* and as the subject accusative of the indirect statement introduced by *auguror* (the infinitive being *esse*). The verb ***auguror*** is a deponent version of the more usual *auguro*, with no difference in sense. The adverb *procul* is the predicate of *quam*: '… which, I foretell, is not far off'.

520 qua … Liber. The antecedent of ***qua*** (an ablative of time) is again *dies*. Tiresias' use of the subjunctive ***veniat*** could be a modest touch reflecting the seer's religious scruples (i.e. he opts for a potential subjunctive rather than future indicative), but that would be hard to square with the forcefulness of the preceding *namque dies aderit*. It may rather be that the present subjunctive (which in any case carries an intrinsic future force) was regular to express a solid future assumption in a temporal clause determining an antecedent, as here: cf. Liv. 8.7.7 *dum dies ista venit qua … exercitus moveatis* ('until that day comes on which you move the army'). Some scholars have argued for the existence of a 'prospective' or 'anticipatory' subjunctive in Latin (as in Greek), though the small number of examples adduced, and the fact that they are restricted to subordinate clauses, leaves the matter uncertain.

The god Bacchus (Greek Dionysus) is variously referred to in Latin epic: ***Liber*** is one of his several poetic designations. Originally an Italian fertility god, Liber (the name signifies 'free') came to be associated with Bacchus despite the apparent lack of any original association with wine

(see Bömer on Ov. *Fast.* 3.512). ***novus*** can mean 'new', but also 'strange' (*OLD* s.v. 2). With respect to the former sense, Liber/ Bacchus is the most recent addition to the divine pantheon (see Intro. §5b-iii), as well as 'the big new thing' in Book 3. With respect to the latter sense, he is a god with an unusual pedigree: while partially of Theban origin — a little earlier in the poem Ovid recounts his sensational double birth arising from the union of Jupiter and Cadmus' daughter Semele (3.310–15; see Intro. §5b-iii) — he returns to his native city from the East as a 'newcomer'. The themes of unfamiliarity, newness, and arrival from foreign parts recur throughout the episode, as Bacchus establishes his new cult against the resistance of his cousin Pentheus (the son of Cadmus' daughter Agave): 530 *ignota … sacra*; 558 *commentaque sacra*; 561 *advena*; 581 *moris … novi … sacra*; 732 *nova sacra*. Speaking more broadly, the adjective *novus* is a keynote of the whole poem, which begins with *in nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas* | *corpora* ('my mind carries me to tell of forms changed into new bodies, 1.1–2); newness is of course intrinsic to metamorphosis, and there is a strong hint of literary novelty in this declaration as well. In Roman culture more generally, though, 'newness' was often seen as threatening venerated tradition, so that the connotations of *novus* were decidedly ambivalent. *res novae* meant 'revolution', and this is precisely what Ovid's Pentheus fears (as indeed does Euripides' Pentheus, who speaks of νεοχμὰ … κακά [literally 'new evils', often translated 'revolution'] at *Bacch*. 216).

The name-based adjective *Semeleius, -a, -um* is derived from *Semele* (Σεμέλη), the mother of Bacchus. The use of a name-based adjective in agreement with its noun rather than noun + genitive, which we would expect in prose, is typical of epic language; the usage with *proles* is formulaic: earlier in the poem, Ovid has *Clymeneia proles* (of Phaethon, son of Clymene, 2.19) and *proles Stheneleia* (of Cycnus, son of Sthenelus, 2.367); later in the set text we will see *proles Mavortia* (of the Spartoi, 3.531). Note that *Semeleia* scans ⏑ ⏑ — ⏑ ⏑, with the third 'e' long as representing the long Greek vowel 'êta' (η).

521–23 quem … sorores. The relative pronoun ***quem*** (referring back to *Liber*, the last word of the previous line) is a 'connecting relative' (equivalent to *et eum*; cf. AG §303) and accusative object of the verb of the *nisi*-clause, i.e. *fueris dignatus*. Tiresias here uses a 'future more vivid' conditional sequence (AG §516.1), with future perfect in the protasis

(*fueris dignatus*) and future in the apodosis: *spargêre* (= *spargêris*, i.e. 2nd pers. sing. fut. indic. pass.: 'you will be scattered') and *foedabis*.

The protasis of the condition, i.e. the *nisi*-clause, is less complicated than it might seem at first glance. Its verb is the future perfect periphrastic ***fueris dignatus***, from the deponent *dignor*. (The regular form for the future perfect as given in grammars would be *dignatus eris*, i.e. perf. pass. part. + a future form of *sum*; alternatively, Latin writers could use the future *perfect* form of *sum*, as Ovid does here). *dignor*, a transitive verb, is constructed with its own object in the accusative and an objective ablative (connected with the adjective *dignus* that the verb implies): 'to deem *x* (acc.) worthy of *y* (abl.)'. ***templorum*** is a genitive of definition with ***honore***: 'the honour of temples' is concrete advice; Tiresias is suggesting the building of such to honour Bacchus.

The indeclinable ***mille*** modifies ***locis*** (ablative of place). ***lacer***, which prefigures 722: *lacerata est* [sc. *manus*], stands in predicative position to the subject of the sentence (i.e. you): 'torn to pieces, you will be scattered …' Several stylistic touches turn this into a particularly macabre visualization of Pentheus' gruesome end. The *hyperbaton *mille … locis* underscores the shocking hyperbole of *mille*, which anticipates the 'vehicle' of the simile used by Ovid to cap the account of Pentheus being ripped to pieces: a tree shedding its leaves in autumn (729–31). As Keith (2002, 267) points out, the sound of the Latin *spargere* recalls the Greek technical term for ritual dismemberment of the Bacchic kind, i.e. *sparagmos*. Listen. Can you already hear the serpent spawn (513–14 n.) being torn to bits and sprayed across *mille locis s-anguine s-ilvas*?

Gore (***sanguine***) is a recurrent motif of the Pentheus episode. In fact, the set text is among the most 'gore-nographic' portions of the *Metamorphoses*, offering the ancient epic equivalent of a Hollywood splatter-film. The verb ***foedabis*** ('you shall defile/ pollute'), made conspicuous by enjambment, contributes to the effect: it rhetorically turns the victim of dismemberment into the perpetrator of a religious offence, a prospect that Tiresias seems to dwell on with a measure of spondaic foreboding (*foedabis* scans — — —). After ***silvas***, we get two more alarming accusative objects of *foedabis*: his mother Agave (***matrem***) and maternal aunts Autonoe and Ino (***matris sorores***), who, as the unwitting perpetrators of his dismemberment, will be splattered with their *proles*' blood; his grim death will thus not only befoul the natural

world, it will also pollute — both metaphorically and literally — kinship relations. The recurrence of the same word in different cases (here *mater*, which occurs first in the accusative, *matrem*, then the genitive, *matris*) is called *polyptoton. Here it underscores the primal horror of Pentheus' fate: he is going to be torn apart by relatives normally associated with love, tenderness and nurturing: his mother and maternal aunts.

Note that, in addition to polyptoton, *matrem* and *matris sorores* are linked by correlating *-que … -que*. This correlating usage (in which the first *-que* is, strictly speaking, redundant) is a mannerism of elevated epic language that is not found in normal prose usage. It is generally used to connect a pair of words or expressions that are parallel in form and/or sense, often terms designating family relations, as here. The device goes back to Ennius, who probably introduced *-que … -que* in imitation of Homeric τε … τε. It is metrically convenient, since the particle *-que* scans short (AG §604a.1), and so is particularly frequent at the close of the verse. Further occurrences of correlating *-que … -que* in the set text can be found at 529, 550, 558, 609, 618, 645.

524. Tiresias' solemn one-word declaration ***eveniet*** ('It shall come to pass!') is abrupt and unequivocal, dispensing with the conditionality of his earlier formulation. Metre underscores the dramatic exclamation: *eveniet* scans as a choriamb (— ⏑ ⏑ —), and is marked off by a sharp trithemimeral *caesura, which pause enables the force of the utterance fully to sink in. *eveniet* is followed by additional future indicatives (*dignabere*, *quereris*) that reinforce the sense of certainty.

Hard on the heels of *spargere* (522), we have another alternative 2nd pers. sing. fut. indic. pass. form in ***dignabere*** (i.e. equivalent to *dignaberis*). The word ***numen*** is etymologically connected to *nuto* ('nod'), and speaks to divine will (so, for example Cicero speaks of *numen et vim deorum*, 'the will and power of the gods', *Nat. D.* 2.95). Over time, however, it came to be used as a virtual synonym of *deus* ('god'), and that is the sense of the term here, as again at 560.

525. The verb ***quereris*** (2nd pers. sing. fut. indic. pass. of the deponent *queror*, 'to lament') governs an indirect statement with ***me*** as subject accusative and ***vidisse*** as infinitive. With ***sub his tenebris*** ('in this darkness', referring to blindness), Tiresias picks up (echoes) the idiom of Pentheus' taunt in 515–16 (*tenebrasque et cladem lucis ademptae | obicit*):

the deictic adjective *his* is an explicit gesture back to it. The ability to see (*vidisse*) that Tiresias mentions here is his prophetic vision: he ominously declares that Pentheus will lament that he, the seer, has seen 'only too well' (*nimium*, literally 'excessively, too much').

526 talia … natus. The subject of the clause is Pentheus, designated ***Echione natus***, a poeticism combining the past participle of *nascor* and an ablative of origin without a preposition (AG §403a): 'born of (i.e. son of) Echion'. It is equivalent to the patronymic *Echionides* used earlier (513 with n.). The two references to Pentheus by way of his father's name (and hence his chthonic origins as a descendant of the serpent of Mars) provide a fitting frame for the opening encounter between the prophet and the king.

The present tense of the circumstantial participle ***dicentem***, which modifies an implied *eum* (sc. Tiresias), indicates that the action of the participle and the main verb ***proturbat*** are contemporaneous. Put differently, Pentheus rudely pushes Tiresias away while he is still speaking, thereby supplementing the verbal taunts of 514–16 with physical abuse.

> Additional Information: Ovid uses the verb *proturbat* only twice in the entire poem, here and at 3.80 with reference to the dragon of Mars (*obstantis proturbat pectore silvas*, 'he sweeps down with his breast the trees in his path'). This is part of a broader strategy of using lexical and thematic reminiscences, along with other effects, subtly to remind the reader of Pentheus' serpentine lineage. You might look for sibilant hissing in his diction (e.g. 543–45 with n.); an inclination towards meteoric anger (cf. 3.72 where *solitas … iras* identifies anger as a hallmark of the dragon's mental disposition); fearful, flashing eyes that express that anger (577–78 with n.). More subtly, Ovid unleashes a pair of similes in which the serpent and Pentheus are likened to rivers (568–71 n.).