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Panel 1. Images, texts, reality

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Abstract The inauguration of the Via Domitiana, one of the greatest engineering projects of the imperial public building programme, provided Statius with a new reason to dedicate another poem to the Emperor: *Silvae* 4.3. The event is celebrated by different voices. One of them is Volturnus, the river of Capua and the most challenging obstacle to be dealt with, and it is highly significant that a considerable portion of the panegyric is pronounced by him. Now, it has been suggested that, as far as this feature is concerned, Statius is in debt to Callimachus, fr. 384 Pf., known as the *Victoria Sosibii*. But I think Callimachus can take us one step further, linking Statius' poem to another: Tibullus 1.7, Messalla's *genethliakon*. In the present paper, I would like to explore the relationship between Statius' poem and Tibullus'. This appears to have provided Statius with suitable material for his celebration. So Messalla, Rome's benefactor for repairing the *Via Latina*, turns to be the Emperor with his new *Via*. Both are triumphing Roman leaders being offered a panegyric. Both will achieve eternity: in *Silvae* 4.3, the Sybill of Cumae performs the prophetic role of Tibullian Parcae's. Besides this, the other 'speaker', Volturnus, compares itself to famous rivers, whereas a small catalogue of rivers and his famous features helps Tibullus tracing Messalla's route. Finally, from a generic point of view, it has been recognised that the *genethliakon* is in fact a framework to Tibullus 1.7, a complex mingling of material from other genres. This happens also in Statius' poem, where the *genethliakon*'s material seems to apply to Volturnus, which joyfully claims he has just began being a river, owing his newborn self to the Emperor.