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Lucan "Transforms" Ovid: Intertextual Studies in the Bellum Civile and the Metamorphoses

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LUCAN 'TRANSFORMS' OVID: INTERTEXTUAL STUDIES IN THE *BELLUM CIVILE* AND THE *METAMORPHOSES*

By

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This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my grandfather, Lewis Edward Watkins, who never underestimated the value of education. April 17, 1932 - March 6, 2011.

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ABSTRACT

Although many of Lucan's allusions to Ovid are well-known, studies that contextualize them with the care that has been done with, e.g., Lucan and Vergil are still few in number. This study makes a substantial contribution to the growing understanding of Ovid's influence upon Lucan. In seeking to move beyond the emulation-alone model as a way of explaining their poetic interactions, I examine a number of intertextual links between Lucan's *Bellum Civile* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses,* and I demonstrate how Lucan appropriates Ovidian material to articulate and enhance his broader poetic goals and vision.

INTRODUCTION

The last several decades have been witness to a renaissance in the study of post-Augustan Latin epic poetry. Following from and in many ways inspired by the renewal of interest in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as an Augustan complement (and rival) to Vergil's *Aeneid*, many post-Augustan epic poets like Lucan, Statius, Valerius Flaccus, and Silius Italicus are currently being re-evaluated and enjoying revivals of their own.[1] Though it is a common orthodoxy that Ovid laid the groundwork for many of the characteristic features of post-Augustan or 'Silver Age' poetry,[2] expansive and sustained studies of Ovid's influence on his successors are still lacking. This is certainly true of Lucan, whose *Bellum Civile* has been read most often in relation to its sustained and quite often polemical engagement with Vergil's *Aeneid*.

When it has come to studying Ovid's influence on Lucan, critics have historically been concerned with isolating varied, seemingly unplanned, and disparate Ovidian intertexts, with little attention either to explaining their significance or delineating any larger patterns in Lucan's use of Ovidian material.[3] This trend can be attributed—at least in part—to the idiosyncratic place that the *Metamorphoses* holds within the epic tradition. The poem is pointedly episodic and its framework is characterized by such fragmented and fragmenting fluidity that it militates against the attempts of both poets and critics to cast it as *the* principal model against which to judge any of the texts that follow it.[4] When it comes to Lucan, there is a sense in which it has simply been easier to analyze the ways that Lucan reacts, systematically, to Vergil: on a macro and micro

[1] See Wheeler (2002, 361-3) for a good (and recent) summary of this trend, especially as it pertains to Lucan.

[2] The general affinitities between the two poets are outlined well in Williams (1978, 52-3; 189-90, 195-7; 246-61).

[3] Examples (both older and relatively recent) include: Pichon (1912, 231-5); Phillips (1962); Linn (1971, 156-69); Esposito (1987, 1995); Siciliano (1998).

[4] See the comments of Hinds (1998, 143), on the "Virgiliocentric history of epic construction and reception," though he does propose that the *Metamorphoses* might be considered the primary (code) model for Statius' *Achilleid*. Wheeler has recently questioned (2002, 364) "whether the Contean theory of generic discourse is worth retaining" at all, especially when one considers that it is difficult to consider a text as "Protean" as the *Metamorphoses* a code model. On the *Aeneid* and the 'epic code,' see Conte (1986, 141-5).

level, he presents his *Bellum Civile* as a conscious subversion of the *Aeneid*;[5] Lucan's relationship with Ovid's text is arguably more complex and thus more difficult to pin down.

Despite these inherent difficulties in dealing with the broader issues of Ovid's reception, Lucanian criticism has nonetheless largely been lacking in explaining and contextualizing even those few and isolated Ovidian intertexts that have been the primary focus of study of the two poets up to now. The most common model for comprehending Lucan's adaptation of Ovidian material has been emulation—Lucan's desire to "out-Ovid Ovid." Though this is a useful interpretative strategy in some respects (Lucan does indeed consciously try to surpass his models, Ovidian and otherwise), it does not ultimately take us very far in our understanding of the aims and goals of Lucan's poem as a whole. In a trenchant critique of Lucanian criticism's reliance on the emulation-alone model for understanding Lucanian allusivity, Masters writes:[6]

> We note the correspondence, we note the ways in which Lucan has surpassed or failed to surpass his rival (usually on questionable aesthetic grounds), we make our judgement and we give sentence. What else is there to say?

As Masters implies here, this way of reading Lucan is ultimately not very productive—nor, in the end, very interesting. Even after we recognize that Lucan is striving to emulate his predecessor(s), after we "pass our judgement" and "give our sentence," the questions as to *why* he is doing this—and similarly, *why* he has chosen the particular model he has—still linger. As to the former question, common explanations for Lucan's 'amplificatory' technique (in regard to both Vergil and Ovid) have included appeals to his desire to evoke pathos or, even more commonly, to underscore the horrific nature of his subject matter. Masters critiques these types of reading strategies too, pointing out that in deferring to such explanations "all we ever learn is all we ever knew" –namely that civil war is wicked and Lucan's epic is full of "(misfired) attempts at inducing pathos."[7] Once more, we might ask if Lucan has a larger point, and apropos of my inquiry here, does Lucan have a larger point in choosing to echo Ovid when he does?

It has now been twenty years since Masters raised these criticisms, and the study of Lucan's use of Ovid is still in its nascency. Although many of Lucan's allusions to Ovid are

[5] Though this critical stance must also necessarily depend on one's attitudes toward oppositional voices within Vergil's work (and Lucan's 'reading' of these voices).

[6] 1992, 60.

[7] 1992, 61.

well-known and have been for some time, studies which contextualize them with the care that has been done with Lucan and Vergil are still few in number.[8] My goal in this study is to make a substantial contribution to the growing understanding of Ovid's influence upon Lucan. In seeking to move beyond the emulation-alone model as a way of explaining their poetic interactions, I examine a number of intertextual links between Lucan's *Bellum Civile* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses,* and I demonstrate how Lucan appropriates Ovidian material to articulate and enhance his broader poetic goals and vision.

In arranging this study, my method has been to follow where the Ovidian material within Lucan's text has led; and so, given the episodic nature of the poems of each of these two poets, I must admit that, in many ways, my own treatment will be somewhat episodic as well. I have chosen to subtitle my work as 'intertextual studies' partly for this reason, but also to allow for a certain breadth of treatment in the types of intertextual nexus I will treat within. Accordingly, my readings will range from what we might term 'pointed' allusions, to Lucan's manipulation of Ovidian versions of standard *topoi*, to more general speculations along the lines of certain thematic continuities which I think are discernable at many key moments within Lucan's text.

Although my readings of these specific Ovidian moments form the core of my analysis overall, I have also striven to build around (and alongside) Lucan's Ovidian *loci* a more comprehensive analysis of the *Bellum Civile* on its own terms. In finding ways to connect what I suspected might simply amount to a series of isolated 'case studies' in Lucanian imitation, my method has yielded an interesting result. Each of my Chapters–which I have organized around the the fundamental thematic and generic concerns of epic poetry (the cosmos, the city, the hero)—will display evidence of an abiding and vigorous Ovidian prescence within Lucan's work. In itself, this speakes to the fact that Lucan's allusive gestures toward Ovid are far from haphazard and unthinking exercises in poetic rivalry; rather, they are foundational pillars of Lucan's poetic project and, as we shall see, provide many jumping off points for the construction of his own (sometimes similar, sometimes different) poetic program.

I deal with this idea perhaps most fundamentally in my first Chapter, which examines Lucan's 'worldview.' I discuss the parameters of Lucan's cosmological vision and their Ovidian antecedents, and I argue that Lucan patterns his cosmos after Ovid's in the *Metamorphoses*. Both

[8] Some recent work along these lines has been done by Hinds (1987, 23-29), Feeney (1991, 292-301), Fantham (1992b), Wheeler (2002), Tarrant (2002), and Papaioannou (2005).

poets conceive of cyclical patterns of destruction and rebirth, and Lucan alludes to Ovid in order to signal that his own tale of civil war takes part in these cyclical patterns (his subject is firmly situated in the 'destruction' part of the cycle). Alongside Lucan's adaptation of Ovid's cosmological framework, I also show how Lucan enhances his portrait of 'chaos on earth,' *bellum civile*, in his use of the Iron Age myth (Ovidian and otherwise). In Lucan's hands, the Iron Age becomes a metaphor for civil war itself, and Lucan uses Iron Age imagery not only to lament the dire consequences of the war but also to express nostalgia for a now-gone Roman 'Golden Age' of freedom. I end my analysis with an illustration of how both of these patterns of imagery (which are inherently anti-progressive) might inform our reading of Lucan's controversial eulogy of Nero at 1.33-66.

In the second Chapter, I shift my focus from Lucan's broader macrocosmic concerns to varying levels of microcosm within the poem. I demonstrate that Lucan presents cities in his poem as microcosmic shadows of Rome and that the battles in many of these cities are, in turn, to be read as miniature re-enactments of the civil war at large. I situate within this broader interpretive paradigm two episodes that contain a number of notable allusions to Ovid: Lucan's description of the naval battle at Massilia in book three and Vulteius' suicide pact in book four. In the former, I demonstrate how Lucan alludes to Ovidian battle *topoi* to enhance his overall presentation of the battle as microcosm of civil war. In the latter, I show how Lucan invokes Ovid's Theban saga as a model for the disintegration of Rome through civil conflict. I conclude by arguing that Lucan uses all of these cities (whether those within his own narrative or mythic cities like Thebes) to articulate his larger place within the epic tradition: in singing the fall of *the* City, Lucan claims pride of place for himself.

My third Chapter deals with Lucan's use of Ovidian paradigms in his two main mythological excursus within the *Bellum Civile*: the wrestling match between Hercules and Antaeus in book four and Lucan's extended description of Medusa as mother of the snakes that attack Cato's army in book nine. In his Hercules excursus, Lucan presents the hero's fight with Antaeus as a 'reading lesson' that looks ahead to Curio's defeat by Juba in civil war. Not only does Lucan construct his Hercules and Antaeus fight as a precursor to Curio's fight with Juba, but he suggests that Curio has failed to read the hints contained within the model properly. In Curio's loss to Juba, Lucan even offers a narrative to rival his earlier mythical excursus: if the earlier fight only hinted at civil war, Lucan actually presents it. As far as Cato's desert march in

book nine is concerned, Lucan uses the Medusa excursus to articulate his idiosyncratic brand of epic poetry—a 'Medusaean poetics' wherein monsters take center stage—and further invokes an ambivalent Hercules in patterning the death and suffering of Cato's men after Ovid's dying Hercules in the *Metamorphoses*. I show that Lucan's use of heroic models in both episodes plays into his larger goal of questioning whether heroism is possible in a poem about civil war. Lucan follows Ovid in chipping away the heroic veneer of myth, but he also insists that in civil war (unlike myth) there is no place for heroes—only monsters.

Though I have arranged for each of these studies to function and stand on its own, they are not un-related to one another, and each one builds, in some ways, on the others. Taken together, they all show that Lucan has seen within Ovid's epic a text in which mythic paradigms for civil war are not only plentiful but also compelling. Lucan cleverly channels many of these mythic narratives into his own story of civil war in a way that suggests that he intends for us to view his own epic as 'universal' in its own sense. Just as Ovid seeks to envelop the *Aeneid* within the confines of his own epic narrative, Lucan's 'readings' of so many of Ovid's myths as reflective of his own subject have a similar effect, and this offers a different perspective, I think, on the old emulation-alone model. As Lucan strives to carve out his own place within the tradition, his systematic incorporation, recycling even, of both Vergilian and Ovidian material within his own narrative is a gesture that indicates the primacy of his story. Though both Ovid and Vergil reflect on civil war through the lens of myth in their own epics, Lucan's *Bellum Civile* is *the* story of civil war as it truly is.

CHAPTER ONE

PATTERNS OF CHAOS

I discussed in my Introduction that while many echoes of Ovid in the *Bellum Civile* have been acknowledged and noted, many still have not been contextualized in ways that contribute to a meaningful understanding of Lucan's text as a whole. In this Chapter, I shall begin my efforts at contextualization at a natural starting point: *Bellum Civile* book one. Apart from the fact that it seems inherently fitting to begin at the beginning, I have also chosen to start here because, like most (if not all) first books, Lucan's first book contains many programmatic themes, motifs, and other elements that will inform the remainder of the text—including clues as to Lucan's use of Ovidian material itself.[9]

As it turns out, Lucan's first book is particularly dense with echoes of Ovid, and this is especially true in relation to Lucan's cosmic schemata. My analysis in this Chapter will center largely on the points of contact between the two authors in matters of cosmology, and along these lines, I will discuss the Ovidian underpinnings of several important moments in book one: Lucan's opening simile (1.72-83), his analysis of the causes of war (which he calls the *publica semina belli,* 1.158-82), and his eulogy of Nero (1.33-66). In all of these, Lucan assimilates the chaotic dissolution of the universe with the chaotic dissolution of Rome and its *mores* through civil war, and traces of Ovid's creation stories in the first book of the *Metamorphoses* inform Lucan's presentation on both fronts. As my analysis will show, Lucan suggests that his own 'chaos' is to be interpreted as a repetition of Ovid's presentation(s) thereof, while hints of the Iron Age myth (including Ovid's version at *Met.*1.89-150) underpin his portrayal of the lapsed morality at Rome and figure heavily into Lucan's invocation of Nero.

I argue that Lucan's gestures toward Ovid in matters cosmic point to the fact that Lucan has inherited—and purposefully replicated within his own work—a distinctly Ovidian (if not

[9] Cf. Wheeler's remarks (2002, 369) about the programmatic aspects of Lucan's allusions to Ovid in the first book of the *B.C.* Apart from these elements of book one, aspects of Lucan's cosmos (and often also Ovid's influence thereupon) will inform parts of my discussion in other Chapters as well.

Metamorphean?) worldview. [10] Not only does Lucan seize upon many of the nuances and latent ambiguities of Ovid's text and bring them to the forefront of his own, but he also co-opts many Ovidian themes in a way that suggests a certain continuity between his work and the *Metamorphoses.* Lucan draws on Ovid to indicate that *Bellum Civile* as a story of 'metamorphosis'—the transition from Republic to Principate—and yet, at the same time (as Ovid) challenges the idea that this change also constitutes a form of progress.

Chaos Iterum

Before launching into an analysis of all of these themes properly, I want to begin with a few general remarks about Lucan's first book and its Ovidian *color.* As far as specific books of the *Bellum Civile* go, the first has attracted perhaps the most scholarly attention: the powerful opening lines of Lucan's prooemium, the invocation of Nero, Lucan's portrait of Caesar at the Rubicon, and his vivid depictions of various cosmic phenonema have all undoubtedly contributed to its popularity.[11] In all of these facets of the text, Vergil's influence on Lucan is percecptible, and indeed there are many aspects of the first book that draw heavily not only from the *Aeneid,* but also from Vergil's depiction of civil war and its effects on Italian agriculture in the *Georgics*.[12] Until recently, however, the task of examining the Ovidian antecedents of many of these scenes has fallen primarily within the purview of those writing scholarly commentaries.

[10] I should note that my conclusions in this Chapter will run contrary to the views of von Albrecht (1970, 296-7), Schaaf (1975, 224-5), and Esposito (1987, 66). My approach is more in line with those who argue for a sense of continuity in theme and content between Lucan and Ovid, e.g., Feeney (1991, 292-301), Wheeler (2002), Tarrant (2002, 356-60). Wheeler's work on Lucan's reception of the *Metamorphoses* has been especially useful in formulating my own treatment here.

[11] On the proem: Conte (1966 = Rutz 1970, 339-53), Saylor (1999); on the invocation of Nero: arguing pro-irony Ahl (1976, 25-61); Johnson (1987, 121); Hinds (1987, 23-9); arguing pro-sincerity are Nock (1926); Grimal (1960); Thompson (1964); Dewar (1994); Holmes (1999). I will deal with the Nero material (which I think is subversive) in due course below, p. 43-47. Treatments of the Rubicon scene include Grimal (1970), Feeney (1991, 292-6), Masters (1992, 1-10), and Maes (2005). On cosmology, particularly the Stoic aspects: Pichon (1912, 165-216); Due (1968), Lapidge (1979), Billerbeck (1986). On cosmology more generally: Sklenář (1999, 2003), Narducci (2004), Fantham (2010).

[12] On Lucan and the *Aeneid*, see (mainly) Thompson and Bruére (1968, 1970), Narducci (1979) and (2002), and Quint (1993, 131-57). Lucan's use of the *Georgics* is widely recognized but largely unexplored; the still standard review of Lucan's interactions with that text is Paratore (1943); Hardie's remarks (2008, 307-311) are convincing but cursory. Particularly relevant to Lucan's proem (1.1-8), though the whole passage is more or less a touchstone for Lucan's entire poem is *G.* 1.489-92: *ergo inter sese paribus concurrere telis / Romanas acies iterum videre Philippi; / nec fuit indignum superis bis sanguine nostro / Emathiam et latos Haemi pinguescere campos.*

Getty, for one, isolates two Ovidian echoes in the very opening line of the poem, comparing Lucan's *Bella per Emathios plus quam civilia campos* at 1.1 with a line from Ovid's Musomachia (*Emathiis ad Paeonas usque nivosos / cedamus campis, Met.* 5.313-4) and Neptune's expression of anger regarding Laomedon and the walls of Troy (*exercet memores plus quam civiliter iras*, *Met.* 12.583).[13] These echoes aside, one of the most frequently cited and well-known Ovidian moments comes in the form of a sort of mini-proem at line 67, where Lucan announces his intent to examine the causes of the war.[14] Having already provided an initial introduction to his subject (1.1-32) and invoked Nero as inspiration (1.33-66), he introduces his next major topic as follows:[15]

> fert animus causas tantas expromere rerum
> inmensumque aperitur opus, quid in arma furentem
> inpulerit populum, quid pacem excusserit orbi. (1.67-69)
>
> My mind compels me to explain the causes of such great events
> and an immense task opens up before me – what forced a
> maddened populace to take up arms, what drove away peace
> from the world.

The phraseology Lucan employs here – especially in line 67 (*fert animus causas tantas*…)—clearly evokes the proem of Ovid's *Metamorphoses,* where Ovid explains his poetic goals and calls on the gods for inspiration:

> In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas
> corpora; di, coeptis (nam vos mutastis et illa)
> adspirate meis primaque ab origine mundi
> ad mea perpetuum deducite tempora carmen (*Met.*1.1-4)
>
> My mind compels me to speak about forms changed into new bodies.
> Gods, favor my undertakings (for you have changed these also)
> and lead down my song from the first origin of the world to my own time.

[13] 1940, ad loc. (cf. also Roche 2009 ad loc).

[14] This allusion has a long pedigree, for more discussion of which see Steele (1924, 302); Phillips (1962, 66); Schaaf (1975, 224); Esposito (1994, 108-9); Wheeler (2002, 370); Tarrant (2002, 356).

[15] The text of Lucan I have used throughout is Housman (1926); of Ovid, Tarrant (2004). Translations are my own (largely adapted from Duff) unless noted otherwise.

Lucan's appropriation of Ovid's proem is suitable to his immediate poetic purposes on several grounds. Ovid's proem points forward in that he plans to explain the progression of mythic 'history' from the beginning of the world (*ab origine mundi*) up to his own time (*ad mea tempora*). Though Lucan is looking backward to explain events in the past, there is a sense in which to explain these events is also to explain the progress of Roman history up to his own time as well. For Lucan to detail the *causas rerum,* the civil war, is to narrate the origin of the world he now inhabits.

These lines are only the starting point of Lucan's engagement with Ovid in these matters, however, and if one examines Lucan's ensuing description of the cosmic events that accompany civil war, further similarities between his and Ovid's cosmic visions emerge. After Lucan announces his intent to detail the *causas rerum*, he then describes how Rome has become the victim of an *invida fatorum series* (1.70) and, having reached the limit of its growth, is on the brink of imploding from within:

> invida fatorum series summisque negatum
> stare diu nimioque graves sub pondere lapsus
> nec se Roma ferens. Sic, cum conpage soluta
> saecula tot mundi suprema coegerit hora,
> antiquum repetens iterum chaos. omnia mixtis
> sidera sideribus concurrent, ignea pontum
> astra petent, tellus extendere litora nolet
> excutietque fretum, fratri contraria Phoebe
> ibit et obliquum bigas agitare per orbem
> indignata diem poscet sibi, totaque discors
> machina divolsi turbabit foedera mundi.
> in se magna ruunt: laetis hunc numina rebus
> crescendi posuere modum. (1.70-82)

> It was the envious chain of destiny, impossibility of the very high
> Standing long, huge collapses under too much weight,
> Rome's inability to bear herself. So, when the final hour
> Brings to an end the long ages of the universe, its structure dissolved,
> Reverting to primeval chaos, then fiery stars will plunge
> Into the sea, the earth will be unwilling to stretch flat her shores
> And will shake the water off, Phoebe will confront
> Her brother and for herself demand the day, resentful
> Of driving her chariot along its slanted orbit, and the whole
> Discordant mechanism of universe torn apart will disrupt its own laws.
> Mighty structures collapse on to themselves: for prosperity the powers

Have set this limit to growth. (trans. Braund)

In likening the implosion of Rome to that of the universe itself,[16] Lucan's first simile follows in the tradition of both Vergil and Ovid in drawing a programmatic analogy between political events at Rome and cosmic phenomena. [17] Here, as elsewhere throughout the *Bellum Civile,* Lucan makes it clear that his depictions of various macrocosmic phenomena are meant to reflect the microcosm of civil war itself (and vice-versa). Apart from its role in articulating and expanding on one of the poem's basic analogies, however, Lucan's analysis of Rome's inward collapse also continues the dialogue with Ovid that he began with his *fert animus*. Lucan even overtly signals his continued engagement with Ovid at line 72: *antiquum iterum repetens chaos.* Not only does the combination *chaos antiquum* recall the phraseology used by Ovid's Tellus at *Metamorphoses* 2.299 (*in chaos antiquum confundimur*),[18] but the terms *repetens* and *iterum* are clear meta-poetic signals that Lucan's *chaos antiquum* is a repetition (*repetens*) of that of his predecessor. [19] Here at the beginning of Lucan's epic, we are re-living again (*iterum*) the beginning of Ovid's, and just as Ovid begins with chaos after his proem (*Met.*1.5ff.), Lucan follows Ovid's lead in describing his own vision thereof. [20]

Although Lucan's tale is ostensibly one of *reversion* to chaos while Ovid's creation narrative (at least initially) describes the *progression* from chaos, there are many elements of Ovid's depiction of chaos at the beginning of the *Metamorphoses* that seem to inform Lucan's portrait of an unraveling cosmos in his opening simile. For instance, after his proem, Ovid describes the state of the universe before the intervention of a creator-figure as follows:

---

[16] Comparable to Lucan's conception of chaos here (and perhaps also drawn from Ovid as well) is Sen. *Thy*. 828-35: *Ne fatali cuncta ruina / quassata labent / iterumque deos hominesque premat /deforme chaos / iterum terras et mare cingens /et vaga picti sidera mundi / Natura tegat*. Cf. Tarrant (2002, 356).

[17] I discuss Vergil's simile in Ch. 2, p. 76-77, below. This is a motif that Lucan will continue to exploit throughout the rest of the poem, but also one at which he has hinted already. Even as early as line 5, Lucan plays on the conventional association between *urbs* and *orbis* to imply that Roman civil war has world-wide implications (*certatum… concussi viribus orbis,* 1.5). On the *urbs-orbis* conceit, see discussion in Bréguet (1969) and Hardie (1986, 364-66). Other instances of the motif in the *B.C.* include: 1.650-1, 1.88, 7.46, 7.552-56.

[18] On the pairing *chaos antiquum* as being distinctly Ovidian, see Wheeler (2002, 370 n. 2).

[19] For more on words for repetition and their literary significance, see Hardie (1993, 17-18); for further comment on Lucan's use of *iterum* in this line, see Tarrant (2002, 358).

[20] On chaos as a common beginning for (epic) poems, see Tarrant's remarks (2002, 349). Lucan's phrasing as such may also be an acknowledgement of his place within the tradition at large (not just in relation to Ovid's), i.e., "here is another epic, beginning with chaos…again."

Ante mare et terras et quod tegit omnia caelum
unus erat toto naturae vultus in orbe,
quem dixere chaos: rudis indigestaque moles
nec quicquam nisi pondus iners congestaque eodem
non bene iunctarum discordia semina rerum.
nullus adhuc mundo praebebat lumina Titan,
nec nova crescendo reparabat cornua Phoebe
nec circumfuso pendebat in aere tellus
ponderibus librata suis, nec bracchia longo
margine terrarum porrexerat Amphitrite;
utque erat et tellus illic et pontus et aer,
sic erat instabilis tellus, innabilis unda,
lucis egens aer; nulli sua forma manebat,
obstabatque aliis aliud, quia corpore in uno
frigida pugnabant calidis, umentia siccis,
mollia cum duris, sine pondere, habentia pondus. (*Met.*1.5-20)

Before there was sea and lands and the sky which covers
All things, there was only one aspect of nature in the
entire world, which men have called chaos. A rough and unorderly mass,
Nothing at all except lifeless weight and discordant seeds of things, not well
Joined, lumped together as one. The Sun was not yet offering his
Light to the world, nor was the Moon renewing her horns by waxing,
Nor was Earth hanging balanced by its own weight in the surrounding air,
Nor was Ocean stretching her arms along the long border of the lands.
And while there was earth and sea and air, the earth was unable to be stood on,
The water unsuitable for swimming, the air was lacking light. No forms
Were remaining constant; one thing was opposing another because in one
Body, cold was fighting hot, wet was fighting dry, soft was at odds with hard,
And the weighted and with weightless.

Lucan's description of the cosmos in his opening simile is in accord with the general pattern Ovid lays out in his opening lines. On one level, both poets emphasize *pondus.* In Ovid's account, various bodies with mass (*pondus iners*) have not yet been assigned proper places*,* the earth is not yet balanced properly (*tellus / ponderibus librata suis*), and various weighted bodies struggle to find their place in empty space (*sine pondere, habentia pondus*). In stressing a return to chaos, Lucan is interested in *pondus* out of balance, and his portrait of the universe emphasizes the collapse of great bodies due to their disproportionate weight (*sub pondere lapsus; in se magna ruunt*).

Apart from his interest in *pondus*, Lucan continues to follow the broad outline of Ovid's description of creation, giving attention to the state of affairs on earth, sea, and land—with special interest in the roles of heavenly bodies, especially sun and moon. Ovid's chaos is a state of darkness due to absence of the sun (*nullus adhuc mundo praebebat lumina Titan*). Lucan similarly conceives of his chaos as a state of darkness, and in his hands, even the heavenly bodies provide a model for civil conflict: Lucan's darkness results, in part, because of sibling infighting between the sun and moon (*fratri contraria*). At the same time, Ovid has already also laid the groundwork for this as well by presenting the constituent elements of creation as engaging in battle with one another. Ovid's primordial elements oppose one another (*obstabat aliis aliud; frigida…calidis…umentia siccis…* etc.), and they are at war within one body (*corpore in uno…pugnabant*), an image evocative of civil conflict.[21] Ovid further bolsters the image of elemental conflict through the use of polyptoton (*obstabatque aliis aliud; sine pondere habentia pondus*), and this too is not only represented in Lucan's cosmic simile (cf. *sidera sideribus* 1.75) but is also a hallmark of Lucan's language for civil war throughout the epic (cf. *infestisque obvia signis / signa, pares aquilas et pila minantia pilis*, 1.7).

When Ovid turns to describe how the primordial chaos is shaped and bounded by a creator figure (*hanc deus et melior litem natura diremit, Met.*1.21), he continues to anthropomorphize the elements by suggesting that the creator has settled a legal argument between the elements (*litem…diremit*). Similarly, Lucan's description of the collapse into chaos due to the dissolution of the *foedera mundi* has much the same effect, and he underscores this metaphor by following his description of chaos immediately with an analysis of political affairs at Rome. When, for instance, Lucan describes the breakdown of the triumvirate, he terms the alliance a *feralia foedera regni* (itself an internal echo of 1.4's *rupto foedere regni*), whose dissolution leads to the outbreak of chaos on earth that mirrors the chaos in the heavens.

Lucan's 'Metamorphoses'

We have thus far seen Lucan following in Ovid's footsteps in two key ways: not only does he specifically evoke the phrasing of Ovid's proem in the *Metamorphoses*, but he follows

[21] Cf. Lucretius' similarly bellicose language in depicting the creation of the world and elemental strife, especially at 5.380-1, 5.437, and 5.439.

this gesture with a presentation of cosmic phenomena in the *Bellum Civile*'s opening simile that is filtered through an Ovidian lens. As to the wider significance of these allusive gestures, one of the effects of Lucan's Ovidian mini-proem (*fert animus causas…*) is to signal that he envisions the *Bellum Civile* as a poem that engages fundamentally with the topic of metamorphosis—in his case, the transformation of the Republic into the Principate. This point is not a new one. Tarrant has argued as much in his own analysis of Lucan's early nods toward Ovid's chaos: [22]

> Could Lucan be implying that his own poem is a story of metamorphosis, the transformation from republican freedom to slavery under Julius Caesar? If so, Lucan could be writing a sort of revision of Ovid, since the *Metamorphoses* itself ends with Julius Caesar's death and deification, which Ovid ostensibly regards as the prelude to an era of peace and restored freedom under Augustus.

Wheeler's view of Lucan's stance toward Ovid is similar. He, like Tarrant, zeroes in on Ovid's stated goals of narrating the progression from the *origine mundi* up to *mea tempora,* and reads Lucan's vision of cosmic catastrophe as an explicit reversal of Ovid's universal history. While Ovid's narrative begins in primordial chaos and culminates in the ascendency of Rome under Augustus, Lucan's narrative actually reverses this trend in focusing instead on a return to elemental chaos. In other words, argues Wheeler, Lucan's gestures toward Ovid thus far in the *Bellum Civile* suggest that he intends to revise (or re-write?) the progression that Ovid implies in the *Metamorphoses*.[23]

On the face of it, this way of reading Lucan's opening salvos toward Ovid's cosmology is attractive: it is difficult to deny the fact that Ovid's creation narrative at 1.5ff., from which we have seen Lucan pointedly draw, presents a progression from chaos while Lucan's opening simile suggests a return to it. At the same time, however, I think that Lucan's understanding and appropriation of Ovid's cosmic language—and vision—is more nuanced than this way of reading ultimately admits. For one, Ovid's presentation of the progression of universal history made from book one to book fifteen of the *Metamorphoses* is by no means uncomplicated or

[22] 2002, 356-7; also relevant is Roche (2009, 149).

[23] See Wheeler (2002, 373), especially: "Lucan's simile comparing the fall of Rome to the end of the world explicitly reverses the cosmogony of the *Metamorphoses*" and "Lucan tendentiously constructs the *Metamorphoses* as a universal history that reaches its fulfillment not in the apotheosis of Julius Caesar and Augustus but the civil war that Caesar wages against Pompey and Cato" (376). See also the similar arguments of Schaaf (1975, 224) and Tarrant (2002, 356-7).

unproblematic in its own right; in fact, it is questionable whether (and to what extent) the *Metamorphoses* presents as unambiguous a picture of 'progress' from chaos to order as the reading of Tarrant, in particular, has implied.[24] I am not convinced that it does, and more to the point, I am not sure that Lucan's gestures toward Ovid, especially when considered alongside the themes of the *Bellum Civile* as a whole, reveal that Lucan reads the *Metamorphoses* in this way either. Instead, both Lucan's and Ovid's notions of 'progress' and what it entails are quite markedly ambivalent.

While it is not my goal to discuss the *Metamorphoses* and its attendant issues in depth here, I do want to note that even as early as the first book of that text, it is questionable as to whether 'progress' is being made. In fact, the opening book of the *Metamorphoses* itself contains multiple narratives of creation and destruction, movements from chaos to order and back again,[25] all of which rival the opening lines in their explanatory capacities and call into question the authority of the first creation narrative—not to mention the very nature of poetic authority itself.[26] To cite just one example, as part of his description of the re-creation of the world post-flood, Ovid seems to challenge his philosophical version at 1.5ff rather directly, even recalling its language:

et eodem in corpore saepe
altera pars vivit, rudis est pars altera tellus.
Quippe ubi temperiem sumpsere umorque calorque,

[24] As Hardie claims, the framework of the *Metamorphoses* "is barely able to escape the pullulation of transformations that throng the intervening space," (1992, 60).

[25] Among the creation narratives in the first book we might include: the birth of men from the blood of the giants (*Met.*1.159-62) and the re-birth of mankind post-flood (*Met.* 1.348-415). Among the destruction stories are to be counted the flood (*Met.*1.262-347) and even Jove's recollection of the ekpyrosis (*Met.*1.256-8). Ovid links all of these narratives by his emphasis on the imposition and subsequent dissolution of boundaries: the orderly creation at *Met.*1.5ff. is followed by a series of narratives that see the erasure and re-configuration of boundaries of various sorts. Along these lines, we might consider Ovid's Ages of Man (*Met.* 1.89-150) both a creation and destruction narrative, as it details how the distinctions between earth, sea, and sky in the initial creation narrative are blurred by the activities of men and then re-configured for the purpose of creating civilization. Ovid reprises these patterns beyond book one as well. The Phaethon narrative (whence Lucan actually draws his phrase *chaos antiquum,* cf. Hinds 1987, 28-29, Wheeler 2002, 370) turns the normal order of the heavens and the earth on its head in a way that suggests that Phaethon's ride is a fiery complement to Jove's flood (*Met.*2.204-9, 260-71). The very process of metamorphosis itself, finally, also represents a movement from chaos to order in the erasure of the former boundaries of the self and the re-creation of new ones.

[26] On the issue of conflicting narratives and issues of poetic authority in Ovid's opening book, O'Hara's discussion is especially illuminative (2007, 108-114). McKim (1984) and Tarrant (2002, 350-55) also discuss the creation narratives with a view toward explaining their inconsistencies and have influenced my thinking here.

concipiunt, et ab his oriuntur cuncta duobus,
cumque sit ignis aquae pugnax, vapor umidus omnes
res creat, et discors concordia fetibus apta est. (*Met.*1.427-32)

And often in the same body one part is living while the other is inanimate matter.
And indeed when moisture and heat combine, they conceive, and from these two are born all things, and although fire fights water, moist heat creates all things, and the discordant harmony is suitable for conception.

The version of elemental creation outlined in these lines amounts to a reversal of the lines I cited above in my discussion of Ovid's opening cosmogonical narrative. Whereas in the initial creation narrative, the creator places boundaries between elements that were in a state of chaos (*non bene iunctatum discordia semina rerum*, 1.9) [27] and warring within the same body (*corpore in uno…pugnabant*, 1.18-19), here, the very struggle between elements within the same body (*eodem in corpore*) is attributed with generative properties (*discors concordia fetibus apta est*).[28]

Though this is just one example of an Ovidian creation narrative (among many), even this isolated case shows that when one considers the opening cosmogony of the *Metamorphoses* alongside the manifold creation and destruction narratives that follow it, a more nuanced if not downright complicated (and contradictory) picture of Ovid's concept of historical 'progress' emerges. Instead of implying, for instance, that the whole of the *Metamorphoses* ought to be read as a tale of the progression from chaos to order, 'progress,' as Ovid presents it, is rather more cyclical than linear: patterns of destruction and creation and movements from chaos to order (and vice-versa) are re-iterated in various narratives throughout the text.[29] Furthermore, although the

[27] Cf. the terms for dividing and separating Ovid employs throughout that narrative: *diremit* 1.21, *abscidit* 1.22, *secrevit*, 1.23, *distinxit,* 1.47, *dissaepserat,* 1.69.

[28] I have cited this line from Ovid in particular because Lucan may have had it in mind when describing the relationship between Pompey and Caesar prior to the outbreak of war; Lucan calls the triumvirate a *concordia discors* at 1.98. Schaaf (1975, 224) has read this reminiscence as evidence that Lucan has inverted the *Metamorphoses*' progression from chaos to *concordia* into a regression of *concordia* to chaos. We might read Lucan's reference, with equal plausibility, as a suggestion that the *concodia discors* emblematized by the triumvirate will lead to a creation (*res creat*) of its own: the tyranny of one of its two remaining members.

[29] By way of further highlighting this point, I might add that the cyclicality implied by Ovid's multiple narratives of creation and re-creation, destruction and re-destruction is inherently anti-progressive: the idea of progress seems to imply that there is an ultimate goal or *telos*, or at least a direction. In his discussion of the idea of progress in the ancient world more generally, Dodds (1973, 2-3) isolates two ancient myths that are distinctively anti-progressive – the Italian myth of the *Saturnia regna* and the Myth of Eternal Recurrence (which he discerns lurking behind both the Phaethon and Deucalion myths, 14). Both of these anti-progressive myths figure prominently in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and, as this Chapter will show, Lucan's *Bellum Civile*.

ending of the poem seems intended to culminate pointedly and triumphantly with Rome's ascendency, Ovid hints at the fact that not even Rome can escape these cyclical patterns. This is, after all, one of the implicit messages of Pythagoras' remarks on the subject at *Met.*15.418-52.

That Lucan has noticed this trend and reads the *Metamorphoses* in this way is apparent if we (as Wheeler himself suggests) read Lucan's reference in his opening simile to the *invida fatorum series* (1.70) as an allusion to the words of Ovid's Pythagoras.[30] Lucan's concept of the *series fatorum* looks back to the cycles of creation and destruction outlined by Pythagoras, who construes his own *series* of periods of prosperity and decline in the final book of the *Metamorphoses* (15.152). Particularly important for Lucan is Pythagoras' *series* of cities, which begins with Troy, now in ruins (*Met.*15.420-5), and ends with a nascent Rome:

> nunc quoque Dardaniam fama est consurgere Romam,
> Appeninigenae quae proxima Thybridis undis
> mole sub ingenti rerum fundamina ponit.
> Haec igitur formam crescendo mutat et olim
> inmensi caput orbis erit! (*Met.* 15.431-5)

> Now also there is report that Dardanian Rome is rising near where Tiber comes from the Apennines, laying foundations of great things under its massive weight. This city is growing and changing its form, and one day it will be the capital of the wide world!

Perhaps moreso than anywhere else in the *Metamorphoses*, Pythagoras' narrative stresses a cyclical vision of 'history' as a series of progressions and regressions. Each city in his *series* rises from the ashes of its predecessor(s); and yet, athough the logic of Pythagoras' speech implies that Rome itself will also follow suit in the chain of ruined cities that he has just catalogued, he leaves this point unvoiced. This is decidedly *not* the case with Lucan, whose epic makes explicit what Pythagoras (and Ovid) necessarily left implict.

Lucan tendentiously re-focuses our attention on a moment when Rome finds itself a victim of the *invida fatorum series*, and his reminiscence of Ovid's Pythagorean *series* suggests not so much a revision of Ovid as much as a continuation of Pythagoras' train of thought. Whereas Pythagoras predicts, in appropriately metamorphic language, that Rome is changing its form by growing (*formam crescendo mutat,* 434), laying its weighty foundations (*mole sub*

[30] 2002, 372-3.

ingenti rerum fundamina, 433)*,* and will soon become the *caput orbis* (435), Lucan's narrative actually begins at a moment when Rome is the *caput orbis* (cf. 2.136, 2.655, 5.686, 9.123), has met the limit of its growth (*nec se Roma ferens*, 1.72), and is making an inward turn toward civil war, implosion, and destruction (*in se magna ruunt*, 1.81). In this regard, the effect of the meta-poetic language in Lucan's opening simile should not be overlooked. From his vantage-point under Nero, Lucan looks back to Caesar's civil war to detail a period of great heavenly and earthly disruption; his tale of civil war, with its terrestrial and heavenly consequences, is indeed one example—in a *series*—of chaos repeating (*repetens*) itself…again (*iterum*).[31]

The cyclical view of cosmic creation and ruin expressed within Lucan's opening simile is bolstered by his intimations elsewhere in the text that chaos-on-earth (civil war) is part of a larger cycle, or *series,* of Roman civil discord. Quite early in book one, for instance, Lucan forcefully reminds us that Rome was founded in fratricide: *fraterno primi maduernt sanguine muri* (1.95). Lucan's mention of the murder of Remus is the final point in a larger argument Lucan has built about the cyclical nature of tyranny—a cycle which he extrapolates into an almost universal law: for as long as the earth and the heavenly bodies continue in their proper cosmic functions, he argues, for that long will it also be impossible for aspirant rulers to share *regnum* (1.89-92). Lucan's 'law of tyranny' (*potestas / inpatiens consortis erit* 1.92-3), not only further builds the analogy between human and cosmic affairs that informs the whole of the text, but it also implies that fallings-out between presumed tyrants occur with a predictable regularity that rivals the cycles of heavenly bodies moving through the signs of Zodiac.

Lucan's treatment of the conflicts of Marius and Sulla further enhance his portrait of civil war as cyclical.[32] In his catalogue of the prodigies that herald the outbreak of war in book one, for instance, the ghosts of Marius and Sulla literally come back to haunt the frightened citizens of Rome (1.580-4). Lucan also devotes a sizable portion of book two to recalling, through the

[31] Lucan's thought here is in keeping with Stoic cosmological doctrine that posits *cycles* of world conflagration *and* regeneration (contra, notably, Sklenář, 1999, 2003, 1-12). In pointing to a fact that seems lost on almost all critics of Lucan's poem, Roche's recent discussion of Lucan's cosmology is one of the few to acknowledge that the palingenesis of the world is as fundamental to Lucan's evocation of Stoic doctrine as its self-destruction (2005, 67-9). I agree with Roche that we should not lose sight of the fact that although Lucan's story focuses on the destruction of the Republic, the Empire is set to rise from its ashes.

[32] In this Lucan is certainly drawing from the declamatory tradition of citing various *exempla* of civil war, on which see the discussion in Fantham (1992a, 91). The proscriptions are a recurring nightmare that lurks in the background of Lucan's poem. As such, they provide a model for Caesar and Pompey's own war in various capacities.

eyes of a survivor, the civil wars fought by Marius and Sulla in the previous generation (2.67-233). The elder begins his narrative by lamenting the fact that he has lived long enough to witness yet *another* civil war (*servatosque iterum bellis civilibus annos,* 2.66), and he closes his narration of the carnage of the Sullan proscriptions with a prediction that the Romans will most certainly experience these same horrors again:[33]

> haec rursus patienda manent, hoc ordine belli
> ibitur, hic stabit civilibus exitus armis (2.224-5)
>
> These things remain to be endured again; we will go through this sequence of war once more; this will be the outcome for civil arms.

Not only does Lucan look to the past for *exempla* of Roman civil discord, but he also looks ahead to events beyond (what is presumably) the scope of his own story.[34] The prophecy of the possessed Roman *matrona* (1.674-95) hints at many future civil conflicts beyond the battle of Pharsalus (*consurgunt partes iterum, totumque per orbem / rursus eo*, 1.691-2). She forsees the transfer of *Emathias acies* to Thapsus (686-8) and Munda (688-90), the reawakening of *impia bella* within the senate itself (690-1),[35] and eventually also the battle of Phillipi (*vidi…iam Philippos*, 694).[36] Lucan returns to the matrona's vision in his own capacity as narrator in book six as he meditates on the unfortunate role of Thessaly as a recurrent site for Roman civil war

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[33] I discuss these lines and their programmatic nature again in Ch. 2, p. 70-1, below. I should add to my points here that the elder goes on to say that the present cycle of civil war is more serious than its previous iterations: *quamquam agitant graviora metus, multum coitur / humani generis maiore in proelia damno* (2.225-6). Perhaps Lucan intends to suggest that this *bellum civile* (and his *Bellum Civile)* is the largest and most important in the cycle.

[34] The intended end-point of Lucan's epic is a contentious issue, and I mention it here because the matrona's prophecy has sometimes been read as an outline of the intended scope of the epic (cf. Bruère 1950, 225-7; Due 1962, 129-31). This way of reading the prophecy has fallen out of fashion. More recent treatments, all widely varied in their conclusions, include: Marti (1970); Frank (1970); Ahl (1976 311-16); Masters (1992 216-59); Stover (2008). I do not agree with those who have argued that the Matrona's prophecy should be read as an outline of the epic Lucan meant to write before he died. In accordance with my larger point, however, I do think that Lucan's references to 'future' battles play into his insistence that civil war is an ingrained, regular, and recurrent feature of Roman life.

[35] This is presumably a reference to Caesar's assassination, but may also allude to the future political conflicts (and proscriptions) of Octavian and Antony.

[36] The Matrona actually mentions *Phillipos* twice (at 1.690 and 1.695). Following Vergil's *Romanas acies iterum videre Philippi* (*G.* 1.490), Lucan conflates Pharsalus and Philippi so as to suggest that the two battles are intextricably linked as two successive *exempla* of civil war. For more on the commonplace of conflating these two battles, see Roche (2009, ad loc.).

(*infelix tellus,* 7.847),[37] where he provides a list of battles similar to those first envisioned by the matrona and even adds Mutina and Actium to their number (7.847-68). All of these gestures remind us that although Lucan's main goal is to describe conflict between Pompey and Caesar, this *bellum* is just one in a continuous *series* of internecine conflicts from Romulus and Remus onward. Nor should we forget that Lucan's first line shows his interest in the *plurality* of Roman civil wars—his subject is *bella civilia* not just *bellum civile* (cf. *bella per Emathios plus quam civilia campos*, 1.1). As O'Gorman argues, the very term 'civil war' (a war between citizens) suggests a "'native war' like the 'native tongue' or vernacular…the war to which the Romans have been brought up." [38] Civil conflict is thus as cylical as it is—and because it is—intrinsically Roman.[39]

Universal Fire, Flood… and War

All of these features of Lucan's text demonstrate that he conceives of his *Bellum Civile* and its subject as not only as part of a *series* of Roman civil wars but also as partaking of a larger (Pythagorean) *series* of city destructions on a grand scale. Lucan further affirms that he conceives of the *Bellum Civile* as akin to an Ovidian-style destruction narrative by likening it to one of Ovid's canonical destruction myths in *Metamorphoses* one: the Deucalionic flood. Just as Ovid introduces Jove at *Metamorphoses* 1.166 conceiving of great angers in his heart (*ingentes animo et dignas Iove concipit iras*), Caesar, at the moment before he crosses Rubicon, is described by Lucan as conceiving of a great war in his heart (*ingentisque animo motus bellumque futurum / ceperat,* 1.1.84-5). This allusion to Ovid has not gone unnoticed,[40] but I draw attention to it here because it highlights a key trait that Lucan's Caesar and Ovid's Jove share in common: they are both on the brink of inflicting world-wide destruction. As Ovid's Jove

[37] Cf. the Matrona's own vain wish for Apollo to take her to a different, unknown land – not Thessaly *again* (!): *<u>nova</u> da mihi cernere litora ponti / telluremque <u>novam</u>* (1.694-5). On Thessaly as a site for the repetition of *nefas* see my discussions below at p 35-37.

[38] 1995, 119.

[39] I discuss aspects of this motif further, in relation to Lucan's use of Thebes as a model for recurring civil discord, in Ch. 2, p. 88-98, below.

[40] Cf. Pichon (1912, 233); Phillips (1962, 64); Feeney (1991, 295-6).

becomes angry at mankind and ponders how to punish the human race, he considers two methods – fire or water. Recalling a prophecy that the world is destined to die by fire sometime in the future (a witty acknowledgment of the Stoic ekpyrosis, *Met.*1.253-59), Jove opts instead for a flood (1.260-1). Lucan's Jovian Caesar, when he crosses the Rubicon with thoughts of a great war in his heart, is set to inflict a third kind of universal destruction: annihilation through war. In casting Caesar as such, Lucan is most certainly playing into mythic traditions where supreme deities decide to inflict destruction on humanity through war. [41] Seeing that Ovid has already provided destructions by flood and fire (through both Jove's acknowledgement of the ekpyrosis and in the Phaethon narrative of *Metamorphoses* two), Lucan completes the trifecta with Caesar's war, who here plays the part of a deity unleasheing his own brand of destruction on the world.

Lucan enhances the force of his initial allusion to Ovid's Jove by returning to the image of universal deluge and similar cataclysms elsewhere in his poem. When Lucan turns, for instance, to explain the *semina belli* (which I will analyze in their own right below),[42] he prefaces his account with the claim that these underlying causes of war always "engulf" (*semper mersere* 1.159) powerful nations.[43] The effect is to suggest that the wars that arise from these vices are their own form of punishment. Not only does Lucan liken the war to cataclysmic events like the flood, but he even indicates that he thinks *bellum civile* is, in many ways, a worse form of destruction. At the beginning of book two, for instance, frightened Italians would rather see the world engulfed in fire than endure civil war:

> Vel perdere nomen
> si placet Hesperium, superi, conlatus in ignes
> plurimus ad terram fulmina decidat aether. (2.56-8)

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[41] Sent, often, as a method of population control. Apollo explains the gods' motivation for inciting the Trojan War as such in Euripides' *Orestes* (1639-42). Lucan again meditates on these three modes of destruction (fire, flood, and war) in Nigidius Figulus' analysis of astrological signs at the end of book one. As he weighs the various possibilities for cosmic destruction, Figulus mentions *Deucalioneos…imbres* at 1.653 and then the upper air bursting into flame due to the sun's chariot, *succensusque tuis flagrasset curribus aether,* at 1.657 (a reference to the Phaethon myth?) before going on to discuss the war itself.

[42] See p. 28-30, below.

[43] I owe the observation regarding the diluvian implications of *mersere* to Fantham (2010, 214). I would add that Lucan's inclusion of the adverb *semper* plays into the points about cyclicality I have been discussing thus far: war brings 'deluge' upon *populi potentes* with a degree of regularity that we should not find surprising.

If it is pleasing, gods, for you to destroy the Italian name, let vast heaven gather itself into flames and let thunderbolts fall down to earth.

Lucan later also links the Sullan civil war and the carnage caused by the proscriptions to various forms of cosmic destruction, while also suggesting that Sulla has surpassed these cosmic counterparts:

tot simul infesto iuvenes occumbere leto
saepe fames pelagique furor subitaeque ruinae
at terrae caelique lues aut bellica clades
numquam poena fuit (2.199-201)

Often has famine or the fury of the sea or sudden collapses or a plague of heaven and earth or a military defeat caused so many young men to die all at once-- but never punishment.

As Lucan argues that Sulla's slaughter of Romans has surpassed various types of cataclysms and catastrophes, he suggestively also construes Sulla's civil conflict as a *poena*: even in the generation before Lucan's (Jovian) Caesar, the perpetrators of civil war are playing the roles of punishers, inflicting civil war upon the Roman people (cf. Sulla as *ultor* 2.139). There is a sense, as well, in which Ovid's punishing Jove may also be lurking behind Lucan's Sulla, whose proscriptions Lucan likens to an attempted excision of diseased tissue that nearly ends up taking off the whole arm: *dum nimis iam putria membra recidit / excessit medicina modum, nimiumque secuta est/ qua morbi duxere manus* (2.141-3).[44] In explaining his rationale for exterminating mankind, Ovid's Jove also compares his impending action to the excision of diseased tissue (*cuncta prius temptanda sed inmedicabile curae / ense recidendum, ne pars sincera trahatur*, *Met.*1.190-1). Just as with Lucan's would-be surgeon Sulla, Jove's 'remedy' goes well beyond simple surgical excision of a few problem parts.

In coloring his political narrative with these Ovidian mythological elements, Lucan has effectively inverted Ovid's own technique. After all, Ovid compares his own Jove to Augustus at

[44] This type of medical imagery is also common enough in Roman historiography (cf., e.g., Liv. *Praef.* 9). Lucan uses the image of amputation/bodily mutilation as metaphor for civil war itself throughout the poem, on which see especially Bartsch (1997, 9-13), Eldred (2000, 147-8), and (more generally) Most (1992, 407-9).

several points as the flood narrative of his first book develops. The *concilium deorum* is conducted like a meeting of the Roman Senate and Ovid jokes that gods who attend live on what we might call the "Palatine hill"of heaven (1.176). After Jove tells the story of Lycaon's moral outrages, the gods react in a way that is similar to the people's reaction to Julius Caesar's assassination (1.200-203). Ovid even adds that Jove was as pleased by the gods' loyal reaction (*pietas*) as Augustus was by the citizenry's reaction to Caesar's assassination (1.203-4). All of these gestures on Ovid's part provide a political subtext for Jove's punitive flood: by construing the flood as an act of vengeance, Ovid invites us to liken it to Octavian's program of vengeance against the tyrannicides and possibly even his proscriptions (Lucan's Jovian Sulla is suggestive to this end, especially).

I raise all of these points because they shed light on one further aspect of Lucan's allusion(s) to Ovid's flood-sending Jove. As with the Italian townsfolk I cited above, Lucan also regularly appeals to the gods, especially Jove himself, and begs them to intervene in the present conflict and punish its main actors for their pursuance of *bellum nefandum.* One such appeal at Pharsalus is particularly powerful to this end. Lucan asks how Jove can look down from heaven and witness what is happening at Pharsalus and not send his punitive thunderbolts (*spectabit ab alto / aethere Thessalicas, teneat cum fulmina, caedes*? 7.447-8).[45] If Lucan's Caesar is Jovian, it seems he wishes he could have instead Ovid's Caesarian Jove.

'Change and Decline' from Ovid to Lucan

My discussion thus far has shown that Lucan envisions his *Bellum Civile* as a continuation of the transformative cycles of creation and destruction, rise and fall, that Ovid delineates in the *Metamorphoses*, and contrary to Tarrant and Wheeler, I have argued (and will continue to argue below) that Lucan's gestures toward Ovid in these matters imply a continuity of cosmic vision more than a fundamental revision thereof. At the same time, although Lucan

[45] The absence of the gods as avengers for the wickedness of civil war is a recurrent motif. As Lucan continues his remarks at Pharsalus, he further elaborates on the role of the gods and cycles of punishment in claiming that the Romans themselves will punish the gods for not sending aid when it was so direly needed: soon enough the gods will no longer be worshipped (7.458-9) and the Caesars will be up in heaven to afflict them (7.455-57)! On Lucan's portrayal of the gods as largely passive agents, see Fantham (2004), a larger discussion of the problem of theodicy in Lucan, and Jal (1964) for an overview of Roman views of the gods' passivity during civil war more generally.

conceives of the civil wars as cyclical, his own text lingers within one particular part of the cycle – i.e., the part where Rome is on the decline. The opposite is true, though for a different reason, with Ovid and Pythagoras. Both poet and philosopher end their narratives with Rome ostensibly on the rise: Pythagoras ends his cycle with Rome's foundation and Ovid's epic ends with Rome's 're-foundation' under Augustus. Ovid's final book thus not only begins with Rome's rise but ostensibly ends at a high point once again.

Drawing from an analysis of Ovid's sparing remarks in his final book regarding the civil wars that brought Augustus to power, Wheeler has suggested that Lucan's *Bellum Civile* is an attempt to fill in a gap that Ovid has effectively glossed over. As Wheeler puts it, Lucan's epic can essentially be read as a "massive interpolation between two lines of Ovid's," whose Augustan finale has failed to acknowledge fully the role of civil war in the ascent of the Caesars.[46] When Lucan, furthermore, begins his epic with an invocation of Nero (the Ovidian underpinnings of which I shall discuss below), he signals a fundamental continuity between Ovid's *princeps* and his own.

While I find this particular facet of Wheeler's argument especially clever and largely compelling, I also think its full implications have not been explored. In what follows, I not only want to press Wheeler's line of argument a bit further than he has taken it, but also, in a way, return to my initial qualms with both Wheeler's and Tarrant's readings of Ovid's concept of historical 'progress' in the *Metamorphoses* (and Lucan's purported 're-writing' thereof). Just as Ovid's Pythagoras speaks of the birth of Rome from the ashes of Troy, so too is Ovid himself concerned with Augustus' transformation of Rome and the extent to which this represents 'progress' in the finale of his poem. Lucan writes with a similar set of concerns: insofar as the civil war ushers in the transition from Republic to Principate, the *Bellum Civile* is also a story about the transformation of Rome, the creation of a new Rome via the destruction of an old one. Lucan's story, however, is most certainly not one that delineates a sense of 'progress,' nor is it a tale he finds pleasurable in the telling.

That Lucan is unhappy to tell his story is a point made abundantly clear to us via his frequent authorial intrusions throughout the text (and especially so as the narrative develops in the later books), but he also broaches this idea early on and with more subtlety in his use of

[46] 2002, 375.

imagery that evokes the Iron Age myth. At varying points in the *Bellum Civile*, Lucan uses the transition from the Golden to the Iron Age and its ideological baggage as a metaphor for civil war and its consequences and suggests that the transition from the Golden to the Iron Age is akin to the transition from the Republic to the Principate. The myth thus becomes a vehicle through which Lucan reflects on what has been lost in the transition: just as the Iron Age myth explains the sacrifices that must be made for human 'progress' (the accoutrements of civilization come at the cost of losing the Golden Age), Lucan utilizes the motif to draw attention to the sacrifices (freedom) and the great costs (the loss of the Republic) that were paid for the so-called 'progress' of peace under the principate.

Lucan and the Iron Age

Prior to discussing the broader significance of Lucan's mobilization of the myth, or, for that matter, its intersections with his political views, I first want to discuss the facets of the myth which make it suitable for Lucan's purposes and examine some of the places in the text where Lucan employs imagery evocative of the Iron Age. Because the myth deals, at its deepest level, with the creation and violation of various boundaries (of the literal and metaphorical variety), Lucan is able to utilize it as a means of enhancing his depictions of the many violations and trangressions that have led to celestial and moral chaos in the *Bellum Civile*. From sailing and mineral mining to the contraventions of societal laws and norms, boundary violations delineate the transitions between the ages and are a defining feature of the Iron Age in its own right. [47] Among such boundary violations, sailing is perhaps the most commonly mentioned, as it involves not only the violative act of cutting down wood to build ships but then actually

[47] I am largely (and purposefully) limiting my in-text citations to Ovid's description of the Ages of Man in *Metamorphoses* one, though, of course, the myth itself is not exclusive to Ovid. Lucretius' extended description of the development of human civilization at *DRN* 5.925-1457, especially, provides a sort of de-mythologized road-map for Lucan's development of the imagery. The myth itself has a long literary history. In the Greek tradition, there are some traces of the idea in Homeric poetry (*e.g.*, the island of the Cyclopes at *Od*. 109-11) and Sophocles' famous Ode to Man (*Ant.* 332-41), though Hesiod's version (at *Op*. 116ff.) has been most influential. The myth of the Golden Age is a recurrent motif in Roman poetry; in his recent analysis of the use of the myth among Roman authors, Feeney has in fact called it "*the* great Roman myth" (2007, 112). Versions of/reflections on the myth can be found in Lucr. 5.925-1457, Hor. *Carm*. 3, Sen. *Med.* 301ff., V. *G.* 1.134-48, *G.* 2.136-76, *Ecl.* 4, *A*. 8.324-9. In the secondary literature, the appendix of the common characteristics of the Golden Age/Iron Age in Gatz (1967) is invaluable.

traversing the sea (a boundary imposed upon men by nature) to explore other lands (cf. *nondum caesa suis, peregrinum ut viseret orbem, / montibus in liquidas pinus descenderet undas, / nullaque mortales praeter litora norant, Met.*1.94-6).[48] Alternatively, the myth also deals with the the creation of boundaries and divisions. For instance, the division of land into discrete parcels of private property is absent in the Golden Age but prevalent in the Iron Age (e.g., *cautus humum longo signavit limite mensor*, *Met.*1.136), and similarly, city walls, moats, and other defenses are boundaries that were lacking in the Golden Age but prevalent in later ages (*nondum praecipites cingebant oppida fossae*, *Met.*1.97).[49]

Though he does not broach the subject in explicitly mythic terms, the creation and transgression of boundaries are both abiding preoccupations within Lucan's poem.[50] From Caesar's literal crossing of the Rubicon to the subversion of filial piety within *cognatas acies*, Lucan dramatizes boundary violation as a characteristic feature of civil war. As with many facets of his presentation of *bella civilia*, his preoccupation with boundaries extends even to the cosmos, and at least one facet of this theme has surfaced already in my discussion above: we have seen how Lucan portrays chaos as boundless and ill-defined, presents the heavenly bodies as abandoning their proper places and functions, and envisions the universe as folding inward on itself and imploding (*totaque discors / machina divolsi turbabit foedera mundi* 1.79-80). This collapse inward—which essentially amounts to a (suicidal) violation of the boundaries of the self—is one of the defining images of the poem, and we can trace it from its prescence in the cosmos down to Rome and its warring armies, and even to various episodes and actors in the poem. While boundary violations are of utmost concern to Lucan, so too is the creation of various boundaries or divisions.[51] In many scenes throughout the epic we see characters creating divisions among themselves or redefining various categories to create new distinctions and divisions (*e.g.*, the re-definition of *civis* and *hostis*). The Iron Age myth, in delineating the creation/violation of various boundaries, squares well with this aspect of Lucan's conception of

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[48] Cf. *Met.*1.132-4; V. *G.* 1.136, 2.503-4; *Ecl.* 4.32-3; Lucr. 5.1000-6.

[49] Cf. V. *G.* 1.125-6; Lucr. 5.1440-3.

[50] For more on Lucan's obsession with boundaries see the discussions of Masters (1992, 1-5, 72-3) and Bartsch (1997, 14-35).

[51] Masters (1992, 49-53; 73-8) is especially good on this aspect of Lucan's poetic program.

civil war and plays into his broader aim in emphasizing the sorts of re-definitions (including the re-definition of the Republic as the Principate) that arise as a consequence of internal discord.

Lucan's larger (and arguably more conceptual) interest in boundaries notwithstanding, his overall portrait of a world and city in ruin actually includes many of the characteristic features of the Iron Age. Among these features, the most obvious is war itself, which is a decidedly Iron Age phenomenon in most accounts of the myth (e.g., *sanguineaque manu crepitantia concutit arma*, *Met.*1.143).[52] Many descriptions of the Iron Age feature not just references to war, but also to the fraternal and familial discord typified by civil war. Lucan's description of the violence of the proscriptions in book two is evocative of the Iron Age violence on this score:

> infandum domini per viscera ferrum
> exegit famulus; nati maduere paterno
> sanguine; certatum est, cui cervix caesa parentis
> cederet; in fratrum ceciderunt praemia fratres. (2.148-51)

> The slave drove his abominable sword into the belly of his master; sons were dripping wet with the blood of their fathers; children fought one another for the priviledge of beheading their parent; brothers slew one another for reward.

These very features are also present in Vergil, who mentions familial infighting and fraternal strife (*flexit et infidos agitans discordia fratres, G.* 2.496; *gaudent perfusi sanguine fratrum*, *G.* 2.510); Ovid also notes how Iron Age families turn against one another (cf. *inminet exitio vir coniugis, illa mariti, / lurida terribiles miscent aconita novercae, / filius ante diem patrios inquirit in annos, Met.*1.146-8),[53] and his Iron Age even includes hints at Caesar and Pompey's civil war (*non hospes ab hospite tutus, / non socer a genero, fratrum quoque gratia rara est, Met.*1.143-5). Any mention of *socer* and *gener* can hardly help but recall the triumvirs, and Lucan may even be following Ovid's lead by incorporating features reminiscent of the mythic Iron Age into his own historical narrative of these famous inlaws' civil war.

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[52] Cf. *Met.*1.98-100; Lucr. 5.1441-1435.

[53] Cf. Cat. 64.399-404, for a similar catalogue of familial strife. Catullus notably also connects the Iron Age and its *nefas* to a war: the Trojan War.

Apart from the prescence of war and civil war in the Iron Age, another characteristic feature of the transitions from age to age is moral degeneration and decline (*protinus inrupit venae peioris in aevum / omne nefas, Met.*1.129-30),[54] and Lucan's own heavy emphasis on *nefas, scelus,* and the inversion of right and wrong (cf., *iusque datum sceleri canimus,* 1.2) is in keeping with the degeneration of *mores* endemic to the Iron Age.[55] Alongside his general and frequent excoriations of *nefas* and *scelus*, however, Lucan also points to specific vices. Greed is, for instance, a frequently recurring complaint in the *Bellum Civile*, as well as a standard element in the Iron Age age myth. In his list of Iron Age vices, Ovid portrays greed in terms of boundary violation, narrating how how men dig deep into the bowels (*viscera*) of the earth and bring its wealth back to the surface:

> Sed itum est in viscera terrae,
> quasque recondiderat Stygiisque admoverat umbris
> effodiuntur opes (*Met.*1.138-40)
>
> But men ventured even into the bowels of the earth, and they dug out riches that were hidden there and covered by Stygian gloom.

Ovid's suggestion that metal mining is like diving into the earth's *viscera* provides quite an evocative image, which – again – may have attracted Lucan's notice. To turn the sword against one's own *viscera* is one of the definining metaphors for civil war throughout the poem (*populumque potentem / in sua victrici conversum viscera dextra,* 1.2-3), and Lucan links his own Iron-Age-esque images of greed to civil war in several of his own narratives. When Caesar despoils the treasury (*tristi spoliantur templa rapina*, 3.167) in order to finance the war—an act which amounts to the despoliation of his country—Lucan presents the event as a boundary violation akin to Ovid's description of digging wealth out from deep within the earth:

> Tum conditus imo
> eruitur templo multis non tactus ab annis

[54] Cf. Cat. 64.397 (*sed postquam tellus scelere est imbuta nefando*) and 405 (*omnia fanda nefanda malo permixta furore*).

[55] Lucan's insistence on the inversion of right and wrong certainly also owes much to Vergil's description of a world wracked by civil war in the *Georgics.* Especially salient is Vergil's description of this inversion at *G.* 1.505-6: *Quippe ubi fas versum atque nefas: tot bella per orbem / tam multae scelerum facies.*

Romani census populi, quem Punica bella,
quem dederat Perses, quem victi praeda Phillipi (3.155-8)

Then the wealth of the Roman people was dug out, untouched for many years and stored deep within the temple, wealth from the Punic Wars, and that of Perses, and the treasure of conquered Phillip.

Hardie likens Caesar's despoliation of the treasury to the "opening of an Aladdin's cave," and suggests that Caesar's descent into Alexander's tomb at 10.17-19 may be read along similar lines.[56] Alighting on the greed motif once again at the climactic battle of Pharsalus, Lucan describes Caesar's soldiers' search for the spoils of battle in a way that also evokes the idea of mining the earth for metals (*invenere quidem spoliator plurima mundo / bellorum in sumptus congestae pondera massae,* 7.753-4). The metaphor evoked here is once again an apt one: having just conquered Pompey at Pharsalus, these men, as Caesar earlier at the treasury, have also looted—and eviscerated—their own country in their pursuit of civil war and its spoils.

Lucan first alights on the topic of Roman greed in book one, perhaps most notably in his list of the *publica belli / semina* (1.160-82). After providing an overview of Pompey and Caesar's motivations (the *ducibus causae*, 1.158), he turns to explain the causes of war among the Roman people more broadly in a tour de force description of Roman social and political degeneracy:

namque, ut opes nimias mundo fortuna subacto
intulit et rebus mores cessere secundis,
praedaque et hostiles luxum suasere rapinae,
non auro tectisve modus, mensasque priores
aspernata fames; cultus gestare decoros
vix nuribus rapuere mares; fecunda virorum
paupertas fugitur, totoque accersitur orbe
quo gens quaeque perit; tum longos iungere fines
agrorum, et quondam duro sulcata Camilli
vomere et antiquos Curiorum passa ligones
longa sub ignotis extendere rura colonis.
Non erat is populus, quem pax tranquilla iuvaret,
quem sua libertas inmotis pasceret armis.
Inde irae faciles et, quod suasisse egestas,
vile nefas, magnumque decus ferroque petendum,

[56] 2008, 313-14.

plus patria potuisse sua, mensuraque iuris
vis erat; hinc leges et plebis scita coactae
et cum consulibus turbantes iura tribuni;
hinc rapti fasces pretio sectorque favoris
ipse sui populus letalisque ambitus urbi
annua venali referens certamina Campo;
hinc usura vorax avidumque in tempora fenus
et concussa fides et multis utile bellum (1.160-82)

For when Rome had subdued the world and Fortune introduced
Excessive wealth, when morals gave way before prosperity,
When booty and plunder from the enemy urged luxurious life,
Then there was no limit to gold and houses, and hunger spurned
The tables of former times; clothes hardly decent
For young wives to wear were seized upon by men; warrior-bearing
Poverty they shun, and from all the world import
The bane of every nation; next their fields' boundaries
They prolonged and joined, and under unknown tenant-farmers
They stretched out far the lands onced ploughed by the hard share
Of Camillus and worked by ancient spades of the Curii.
This people could not take pleasure in tranquil peace
Or be satisfied by liberty with weapons untouched.
That was the cause of passions quickly roused, of crime despicable
Urged by want; it was an honour great and to be sought by sword,
To have more power than the state; the yardstick of legality was
Violence—hence the forcing through of laws and rulings of the plebs;
Tribunes, consuls all alike disrupting justice;
Hence the rods of office seized by bribery, the people
Selling its own votes, corruption bringing death to Rome,
Repeating annual contests on the mercenary Campus;
Hence ravenous money-lending, interest greedy for its appointed time,
And credit shaken and war advantageous to many. (trans. Braund)

Lucan points to greed throughout as one of the primary contributing factors to the breakdown of Republican values, but the passage in its entirety also reads as a de-mythologized description of the Iron Age.[57] Not only does Lucan emphasize the abandonment of *paupertas* and the rise of *luxuria* in its various guises (*luxum suasere rapinae; mensasque priores / aspernata fames;* cf. *nec tantum segetes alimentaque debita dives…, Met.*1.137), but his commentary on the

[57] Lucan's description here also undoubtedly owes much to the historiographical tradition, on which, Wiseman (2010) provides a good overview of the approaches various authors take in characterizing and explaining civil war and the degeneration of Roman *mores*. Also illuminative are Roche's (2009, ad loc.) comments on these lines as well as his discussion of Lucan and Sallust in the introduction to his commentary (36-39).

development of *latifundia* and the abandonment of the farming practices of the *maiores* (*tum longos iungere fines*…) plays into the agricultural component of many treatments of the Iron Age myth (cf. *cautus humum longo signavit limite mensor*, *Met.*1.136). Most important of all, however, are Lucan's complaints about the rise of corruption and the abandonment of old values (*hinc usura vorax avidumque in tempora fenus/ et concussa fides et multis utile bellum; inde irae faciles et …vile nefas … mensuraque iuris/ vis erat*), which are not far removed from traditional inventories of Iron Age vices (cf. *fugere pudor verumque fidesque; / in quorum subiere locum fraudesque dolusque/ insidiaeque et vis et amor sceleratus habendi*, *Met*.1.129-31).

The Iron-Age images and themes first raised in Lucan's analysis of the *semina belli* occur elsewhere in the text. One of the more notable examples occurs later in book one within Lucan's report of a speech delivered by Caesar's centurion Laelius. As Laelius affirms his willingness to follow Caesar into war, he lists a number of shocking acts he is willing to commit in Caesar's name. Though Lucan certainly means to cast Laelius as an emblem of the shockingingly depraved loyalty of Caesar's troops, [58] many elements of the speech evoke the sense of moral chaos that is endemic to the Iron Age. In one of the more famous parts of the speech, for instance, Laelius re-defines *civis* and *hostis* (casting those *cives* who are not on Caesar's side as *hostes*) in a way that evokes one of Vergil's descriptions of the Golden Age (*nec civis meus est, in quem tua classica, Caesar / audiero*, 1.373-4, cf. *aureus hanc vitam in terris Saturnus agebat / necdum etiam audierant inflari classica,* V. *G.* 2.538-9). [59] Lucan exploits the contrast in the context between his and Vergil's lines to great effect: whereas Vergil affirms that there is a lack of war and its trumpet call in the Golden Age, Laelius reminds us that here in the *Bellum Civile,* we are far from the peaceful times of *aurea saecula*. This fact becomes even more abundantly clear as his speech continues, and Laelius describes how he will enact atrocities against kin and country that should normally be directed only against enemies:

> pectore si fratris gladium iuguloque parentis
> condere me iubeas plenaeque in viscera partu
> coniugis, invita peragam tamen omnia dextra;
> si spoliare deos ignemque inmittere templis,

[58] See Leigh (1997, 191-233) for an analysis of Lucan's use of the centurion figure in the *B.C.*; on Laelius especially, see Leigh (1997, 204-10).

[59] Cf. Roche (2009, ad loc).

numina miscebit castrensis flamma monetae;
castra super Tusci si ponere Thybridis undas,
Hesperios audax veniam metator in agros,
tu quoscumque voles in planum effundere muros,
his aries actus disperget saxa lacertis,
illa licet, penitus tolli quam iusseris urbem,
Roma sit. (1.376-86)

If you bid me to bury my sword in the heart of my brother or the neck of my father or in the womb of my pregnant wife, I will perform all these acts even if my right hand is unwilling. If you bid me to plunder the gods and set fire to their temples, the flame of the military mint will melt down the deities. If you bid me to to pitch camp by the waters of the Tuscan Tiber, I will go through the fields of Hesperia to measure the boundaries. Whatever city walls you wish to level, the battering-ram, driven on by my arms, will knock them down even if the city you wish to be razed to the ground is Rome itself.

Laelius' pledge to murder and pillage amount to a complete reversal of moral norms— especially *pietas:* he is willing to invade his own *patria* and do violence to the gods and their temples, and in so doing he has no qualms about killing his parents and siblings, wife and children. Not only is Laelius' list of future *nefanda* evocative of the types of kin-killing that are stock elements in the Iron Age, but his claim that he will go through the fields of Italy as an *audax metator* (measuring out boundaries for camps) also plays into the agricultural enclosure element of the myth (cf. Ovid's *mensor*, *Met.*1.136).[60]

Apart from hinting at the Iron Age elements of Laelius' moral depravity, Lucan ends the speech in a way that connects Laelius' *scelera* back to the overall picture of cosmic upheaval that he began first to elaborate in his opening simile. When Laelius finishes speaking, Caesar's men enthusiastically express their approval, and Lucan describes the noise they make by way of a traditional wind simile:

it tantus ad aethera clamor,
quantus, piniferae Boreas cum Thracius Ossae
rupibus incubuit, curvato robore pressae
fit sonus aut rursus redeuntis in aethera silvae. (1.388-391)

[60] Many Iron Age activities (especially sailing and, specifically, the sailing of the Argo) are conceived of in terms of *audacia* (cf. Nisbet and Hubbard 1970, on Hor. *Od.* 1.3). The term *audax* is thus decidedly ambivalent (though perhaps not so much ambivalent as damning here with Laelius). Lucan uses it elsewhere to evoke undertones of the Iron Age myth; Caesar's attempt at crossing the Adriatic Sea in book five is a particularly striking example (*B.C.* 5.5.497-503, 577-93).

> Such a sound goes up to the heavens as great as that when Thracian Boreas presses down upon the cliffs of pine-clad Ossa, and there is a roar when the trees press down to the earth or bounce back up again.

Given that Laelius' speech has just inverted many norms of martial heroism, Lucan's description of the soldiers' loud approval by way of traditional Homeric-style wind simile only adds to the irony of Laelius' misdirected sense of valor and devotion to his leader.[61]

Apart from its role in underscoring Laelius' complete departure from martial (and moral) *virtus*, the simile also, on the other hand, connects Laelius' speech to cosmic phenonema: just as the assent of the men is compared to the rushing of the Northwind, the simile also colors their response with undertones of the Gigantomachy – the ultimate metaphor for cosmic upheaval and *impia bella*—in the mention of Mt. Ossa.[62] The speech and the simile with which Lucan ends it thus encompass many of the concerns of the epic as a whole: we see portraits of chaos on the moral level (bolstered by undertones of Iron Age imagery) and the cosmic level (underscored by Gigantomachic imagery) all presented within the overall context of Lucan's historical narrative about Caesar's invasion of Italy.[63]

If the *semina belli* and Laelius' speech are suggestive of the fact that Lucan views the current period of *bella impia* as comparable to the mythic Iron Age, his references to the sailing of the Argo at several key moments in the text make the connection more explicit. The Argo, the traditional first ship, is often envisioned as the harbinger of the transition to the Iron Age,[64] and Lucan evokes the *prima ratis* in this capacity at the end of his second book. Finding himself almost completely blockaded by Caesar's forces at Brundisium, Pompey and some of his ships manage (just barely) to escape Caesar and his army. In the chaos of the escape, some of

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[61] Contributing, as well, to the overall sense that Lucan is subverting epic norms is that immediately after this simile, Lucan launches into his first catalogue (a catalogue of Caesar's Gallic troops, no less).

[62] On Lucan's use of the Gigantomachy, one of the defining images for civil war in the poem, see Feeney (1991, 297); Henderson (1988, 45).

[63] Lucan's choice to link the imagery of the Iron Age with the Gigantomachy follows Ovid's similar approach in *Metamorphoses* one. Ovid explicitly likens the moral decline on earth, delineated in the Iron Age myth, with the Giants' immoral assault on heaven (…*neve foret terris securior arduus aether*, *Met.*1.151).

[64] On Argo as the first ship: Cat. 64. 1-11, Prop. 1.17.13-14, Ov. *Am.* 2.11.1, Sen. *Med.* 301-2. Cf. also Nisbet and Hubbard (1970) on Hor. *Carm.* 1.3.12

Pompey's ships run aground and fighting between the two sides ensues on the shores. As the remainder of the fleet leaves the harbor, Lucan compares the escape to the Argo and its near destruction at the Symplegades:

> hic primum rubuit civili sanguine Nereus.
> cetera classis abit summis spoliata carinis:
> ut, Pagasaea ratis peteret cum Phasidos undas,
> Cyaneas tellus emisit in aequora cautes;
> rapta puppe minor subducta est montibus Argo,
> vanaque percussit pontum Symplegas inanem
> et statura redit. (2.715-19)
>
> Here the Sea first reddened with the blood of civil war. The rest of the fleet, though despoiled of its hindmost ships, departed. Just as when that ship launched from Pagasae was seeking the waves of Phasis, earth sent forth the Cyanean cliffs onto the sea. Though its stern was taken off and the Argo made smaller, it was rescued from the rocks, and the Clashing Rocks struck the empty sea in vain and remained fixed thereafter.

This moment in the text is noteworthy on many grounds. For one, in keeping with his assimilation of civil war to the Iron Age and its vices more generally, Lucan suggestively links the Argo (the *prima ratis* and the initiator of the Iron Age) with the first instance of civil war on the sea (*primum rubuit*). The *nefas* inherent in this moment – and again, its Iron Age connections – are something Lucan has hinted at even before the simile itself. As the morning of the Pompeians' planned escape arrives, Lucan describes how the rising of the constellation Virgo signals that the time for departure has arrived (*iam coeperat ultima Virgo…praecedere*, 691-2). Fantham, following a suggestion of Tarrant, has seen this as a possible allusion to Ovid's Astraea, the goddess of Justice itself, who actually abandons earth during the Iron Age (*victa iacet pietas et virgo caede madentis / ultima caelestum terras Astraea reliquit*, *Met.* 1.149-50).[65]

Lucan's explicit mention of the Argo and his hints toward Astraea signal the momentous nature of Pompey's departure from Italy. The Argo-like depature of Pompey marks a point of no return, for both Italy and for Pompey himself. As far as Pompey and his fate are concerned, we know that he will never return, and this is something Lucan reminds us of at the end of the passage. Just a few lines after his comparison of Pompey's fleet to the Argo, Lucan ruminates on how Pompey, whose good fortune has now left him (*lassata / Fortuna descivit*, 2.727-8) will

[65] See Fantham (1992a, ad loc).

never return to Italy again, alive or dead (2.725-36). The departure also marks the ultimate and permanent loss of Italy itself, and this is a loss that Lucan highlights by way of placing a lengthy discursus on the geography of Italy, its mountains, rivers, and landscape (2.392-438) immediately before Pompey and Caesar's confrontation in Brundisium at the end of the second book. As Fantham has illustred in her commentary on these lines and in her remarks on the excursus more generally,[66] Lucan has modeled them in part on Vergil's *laudes Italiae* (*G*. 2.136-76) so as to further highlight that post-Brundisium, Italy will be forever changed. That the civil war will ruin Italy's lands is a point that Lucan has made before now (*horrida quod dumis multosque inarata per annos / Hesperia est desuntque manus poscentibus arvis*, 1.25-29) but as Lucan presents it here, Pompey's Argonautic abandonment of Hesperia provides an actual demarcation point for the impending decline.

I should note, as well, that the entire Brundisium escape scene is, like the Laelius narrative I discussed above, another example of how Lucan mediates between the mythic traditions of the Iron Age and the Gigantomachy. As Caesar tries to block Pompey's egress from the harbor, Lucan suggests that he and his men are playing the role of chthonic, Giant-like monsters. The Argo simile itself is suggestive to this end. Pompey's fleet escapes the harbor largely intact, except for the few ships that are run aground and lost to Caesar's army (*classis…summis spoliata carinis,* 2.714). As Lucan builds his simile, he likens these captured ships to the stern of the Argo which is lost and smashed between the Clashing Rocks (*rapta puppe,* 717). The overall effect of the comparison is to suggest, then, not only that the Pompeians are like the Argonauts, but that their foes are to be associated with the earth (*Cyaneas tellus emisit…cautes,* 716) and the mountains it uses to thwart the Argo's progress (*subducta est montibus Argo,* 717).

And indeed, Lucan has already shown Caesar using "mountains" as his weapon of choice earlier in the narrative. As he struggles to block the harbor so that Pompey cannot escape, Lucan describes how Caesar tries to heap up a wall of boulders to create a wall across the harbor (*sed molibus undas / obstruit et latum deiectis rupibus aequor*, 2.661-2). As Caesar and his men throw the rocks into the sea, they simply sink down into the sea-bed and thwart their attempts to pile them on top of one another. Lucan describes the sinking of the rocks in a simile that compares them to moutains that have been torn from the earth and thrown into the sea:

[66] Cf. Fantham's summary of the allusions (1992a, 156).

ut maris Aeolii medias si celsus in undas
depellatur Eryx, nullae tamen aequore rupes
emineant, vel si convolso vertice Gaurus
decidat in fundum penitus stagantis Averni. (2.665-9)

Just as if lofty Eryx were thrown down into the middle of the Aeolian sea, its peaks would not stick out over the top of the water, or if Gaurus, with its summit torn off, was plunged deep down into the stagnant pools of Avernus.

Lucan's description is notable not only in its emphasis on Caesar's literal mixing of the lofty and heavenly with the lowly and hellish, but also in conflating his actions with those of the Giants, who are infamous for their piling of mountains upon mountains.[67] As with Laelius' speech, Lucan colors the events at Brundisium with mythic undertones so as to further enhance his portrait of cosmic and terrestrial chaos. Just as the Iron Age myth delineates the devolution into *nefas* in its various forms among men, the Gigantomachy provides the cosmic equivalent of the height of immorality. Unlike his depiction of Laelius, however, where Lucan deploys both types of imagery in the interest of emphasizing the depravity of Caesar's men, here Lucan divides the blame between the Caesarian and Pompeian camps. If Caesar and his forces are Giant-like, the equally Argonaut-like Pompeiani cannot and should not be completely excused of their trangressions either, as they bring ruin on the very land they should mean to protect.

Apart from the Argo simile at Brundisium, where Lucan uses the image of the Argo to suggest that Pompey and his men have ushered in the Iron Age of *bellum civile* for Italy, Lucan returns again to the Argonautic motif in the midst of his 'Thessalian excursus' in book six.[68] Prior to the battle of Pharsalus, Lucan describes the geography of Thessaly, emphasizing how its various features have primeval associations with violence and war.[69] Near the end of the excursus, Lucan details the various mythical *semina Martis* that have been sown in the Thessalian plains with a description that complements his de-mythologized *semina belli* from book one:

[67] On the piling of mountains as part of Gigantomachic imagery, see Hardie (1986, 100-8).

[68] The fullest discussion of the geography of the excursus is Masters (1992, 150-178). See also, more recently, Hardie (2008, 309-11).

[69] Cf. Catullus 64.37, where the event that eventually leads to the Trojan War (Peleus' wedding) is also linked to a landscape in a way that may have attracted Lucan's notice: *<u>Pharsalum</u> coeunt, <u>Pharsalia</u> tecta frequentant*.

> Hac tellure feri emicuerunt semina Martis.
> primus ab aequora percussis cuspide saxis
> Thessalicus sonipes, bellis feralibus omen,
> exiluit, primus chalybem frenosque momordit
> spumavit novis Lapithae domitoris habenis
> prima fretum scindens Pagasaeo litore pinus
> terrenum ignotas hominem proiecit in undas.
> primus Thessalicae rector telluris Ionos
> in formam calidae percussit pondera massae,
> fudit et argentum flammis aurumque moneta
> fregit et inmensis coxit fornacibus aera.
> illic, quod populos scelerata inpegit in arma,
> divitias numerare datum est… (6.395-407)

> In this land did seeds of savage warfare first spring to life.
> First from the rocks struck by the trident of the sea
> Lept forth the Thessalian steed, the portent
> Of fatal wars; first he champed the steel bit
> And foamed at the unfamiliar reins of the Lapith tamer.
> First cleaving the sea from Pagasaean shore did a ship fling
> Human beings, creatures of the land, on to the unknown waves.
> Ionos, ruler of the Thessalian land, was the first
> To beat the lumps of heated ore in shape,
> Melt silver in the flames, and strike gold
> With a stamp and in vast furnaces to smelt copper.
> There to count one's wealth became possible, and this drove
> The people into wicked warfare. (trans. Braund)

As evidence for the guilt of the Thessalian plains, Lucan points to the fact that the Argo set sail from there, but in addition to the Argo itself, there is a whole series of firsts that he also locates in Thessaly. This region was responsible for the primal guilt of sailing, as well as the war horse (*primus…Thessalicus sonipes…exiluit*), a precursor for war itself (*bellis feralibus omen*), and even the invention of coinage (*primus Thessalicae rector…in formam calidae percussit pondera massae...)* and wars motivated by greed (*quod populos scelerata inpegit in arma*). Lucan has not only covered the primary main Iron Age examples of human overreach and wickedness in the span of these few lines, but he has also demonstrated that a simple and single reference to the Argo will not suffice to make his point about the pollution of this land. Indeed, Thessaly's doom is so over-determined that it should come as no surprise that Pompey and Caesar's own *impia bella* will continue in the precedents set by these 'firsts.'

Lucan rounds out his description of Thessaly's primal guilt by highlighting its connections to the Gigantomachy itself. In having given birth to Python, it is not only the land of chthonic monsters, but it is also the site of the Giants' assault on heaven:

> hinc maxima serpens
> descendit Python Cirrhaeaque fluxit in arva,
> unde et Thessalicae veniunt ad Pythia laurus.
> inpius hinc prolem superis inmisit Aloeus,
> inseruit celsis prope se cum Pelion astris
> sideribusque vias incurrens abstulit Ossa. (6.407-412)

> From here, the Python, the enormous
> Snake, came down and glided into the lands of Cirrha—
> And that is why Thessalian laurels come to the Pythian games.
> From here the wicked Aloeus launched his sons agains the gods,
> When Pelion nearly thrust himself among the lofty stars
> And Ossa, by encroaching on the constellations, stopped their course.
> (trans. Braund)

As we saw with Laelius' speech and Pompey at Brundisium, here once again Lucan has aligned imagery of the Iron Age with its cosmic analogue in the Gigantomachy—and to a similar effect. The disruptions on earth, as symbolized by the *semina Martis* themselves, have again found their mirror in the cosmic disruption caused by the piling of Pelion on Ossa. As the excursus draws to a close, both Lucan and his readers know that the defining battle of Caesar and Pompey's own earthly *bellum nefandum* is soon to be fought in the region Lucan has just lengthily described. Just as we have already seen Pompey's 'Argo' set sail and Caesar and his 'Giants' begin their assault, so too is Thessaly's history set to repeat itself, once again.[70]

Living after the Fall

As Lucan's treatment of the Iron Age in his Thessalian excursus and other related scenes suggests, Lucan evokes imagery reminiscent of that mythical age, in part, to reflect on the boundary violations and the moral chaos inherent within and caused by civil war. Similarly,

[70] As if to further highlight that this is so, at 7.144-150, as the battle of Pharsalus begins, Lucan imagines many of the events and characters he here links with Thessaly preparing themselves for battle.

Lucan also evokes this imagery (coupled, often, with the Gigantomachy) as a way of further articulating his overall portrait of the cyclical and repetitive nature of the chaos caused by *bellum civile*. In effect, within the *Bellum Civile,* we see *bellum civile*, in its various metaphorical and mythological guises, re-cycling itself. As Garreth Williams observes, Lucan's text "revels in reviving a chaotic history, moulding into fantasy in so many ways, and replaying past dreams/texts/versions of the story through epic and literary memory."[71]

Even so, if Lucan's purpose in the *Bellum Civile* is to repeat, replay, and dwell on the past, his constant authorial intrusions into the text remind us that Lucan is living with the consequences of the events he details in his poem.[72] Just as the Argo initiates a transition, so too does civil war, and although Lucan's poem details this momentous event, he lives his life in the wake of it. This fact is suggestive of yet another facet of Lucan's use of the Iron Age myth: if *bellum civile* is akin to the transition to the Iron Age, what Lucan has delineated via his reminiscences of that age is a powerful narrative of a 'Fall.' Lucan's *Bellum Civile* is, in essence, the story of the 'Fall' of the Republic at the expense of the rise of the Empire.

In an insightful though largely overlooked analysis of Lucan's poem, Andrew Walker has singled out this very aspect of Lucan's worldview and gestures toward its larger significance. As he argues, "in mourning the fall of Rome, Lucan naturally places himself at odds with the ideology of the Republic restored." [73] I would slightly rephrase Walker's words here in light of my own own discussion of the Iron Age: in mourning the fall of Rome, Lucan naturally places himself at odds with the idea that the principate has restored the Golden Age. This plays into Lucan's insistence on the transformation of Rome that has occurred as a result of civil conflict: there has been no return to or restoration of what Rome once was because Rome has been fundamentally changed (and not for the better). For Lucan, this new 'Golden Age' is no true golden Age as much as the Republic 'restored' is no *res* <u>*publica*</u> at all; as Lucan writes in the midst of his narrative of Pharsalus, at stake in this struggle is which of two things will be its result—*Libertas* or Caesar (7.696)—and we know who won.

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[71] Cited, *per litteras*, by Walker (1996, 71).

[72] Indeed, the constant intrusions of Lucan as narrator actually collapse the distinctions between past and present and suggest an uninterrupted continuity between the transformative period he describes and the current age; Lucan does not seem to acknowledge that much has happened to change things in-between.

[73] Walker (1996, 67).

Lucan broaches these ideas about the Golden and Iron Age, freedom and the principate, in several of his authorial intrusions at Pharsalus, but also much earlier in his eulogy of Nero. In each case, he emphasizes that he is (in some ways at least) enjoying the results of the transformation and transition wrought by the civil wars: a time of peace. But a restoration of peace and stability cannot in and of itself also constitute a restoration of the Golden Age as Lucan conceives of it, and this is because this peace has come at a great cost—freedom. Lucan insists on the fact that the Republic has been transformed into something new, *not* restored to its old form.[74] Living with the consequences of a transformation—a movement from chaos to order, a post-war(/flood) world, a transition from a true Golden to an Iron Age—Lucan's ultimate complaint is that this new creation, the result of the transformation, is more terrible than the process of getting there itself.

These ideas inform Lucan's address to Nero at 1.33-66, but before discussing the Nero material proper, I first want to examine two of Lucan's authorial interjections at Pharsalus. Because Lucan employs a critique in these lines that is similar to the one he uses against Nero, discussing them first will provide a frame for my discussion of the (more controversial) Nero material and elucidate Lucan's ideas about the purported 'Golden Age' of peace in which he lives. During his description of Pharsalus, Lucan halts the narrative many times to reflect on its momentous nature in determining Rome's future. At one point, as he details how the battle will devastate the city, diminish her power in the world, and ravage her population (7.388-459), he also comments on how Pharsalus will determine the future of *regnum* at Rome:

> ergo utrimque pari procurrunt agmina motu
> irarum; metus hos regni, spes excitat illos.
> hae facient dextrae, quidquid nona explicat <u>aetas</u>
> ut vacet a <u>ferro</u> (7.385-8)

> Therefore both columns rush forth moved by equal passion. Fear of tyranny incites one side; the other is inspired by the hope for it. These hands will see to it that, whatever the ninth century unfolds, it will be free from war.

[74] For criticisms of the Neronian 'Golden Age' in Seneca and Tacitus and the very 'cyclicality' of these Golden Ages more generally, see Feeney (2007, 135-6). We might say that although Nero has 'recycled' Augustan ideology, Lucan, in insisting on the fact that a fundamental change has occurred, rejects that this is so (and is deeply anti-Vergilian, as a result).

As Lucan ruminates on the significance of Pharsalus here and outlines one of its consequences—i.e., that it ushers in a time of peace for future generations—he actually admits that his age has benefitted from what happened on the battlefield that day. As these lines indicate, Pharsalus has quite literally made his *aetas* into a peaceful *and* golden one, an age that is as free from 'iron' as it is from the 'sword.'[75] By the same token, although Lucan acknowledges that he lives in this 'Golden' age of peace and stability, he also laments this very fact elsewhere in the text. As Lucan goes on to claim later in the same book, the *aetas* in which he lives is one that is also enslaved:

> vincitur his gladiis omnis quae serviet aetas.
> proxima quid suboles aut quid meruere nepotes
> in regnum nasci? Pavide num gessimus arma
> teximus aut iugulos? Alieni poena timoris
> in nostra cervice sedet. Post proelia natis
> si dominum, Fortuna, dabas, et bella dedisses. (7.641-46)

> A whole age doomed to enslavement was conquered by these swords. How is it that the next generation or their children deserve to be born into slavery? We surely did not bear cowardly arms or shield our throats from the sword. It is the punishment for someone else's cowardice that sits on our neck. If, Fortune, you were intent on giving a master to those of us born after the battle, you should have also given us a chance to fight.

Lucan has put his finger on the real trouble with the 'Golden Age' of peace he enjoys under the principate: the stability, peace, and security that came with the end of the civil wars has come at the cost of freedom. From Lucan's perspective, life in the so-called Neronian 'Golden Age' is so intolerable that (in what is perhaps the poem's ultimate irony) he wishes for a return to the very *bella* that produced it (*si dominum, Fortuna, dabas, et bella dedisses*)! It is in moments like these that one begins to see precisely why Lucan has chosen his subject. In writing a poem about *bella nefanda,* Lucan is, in his own way, returning to a time when the possibility for freedom still existed; in choosing to make *bella* his subject, he voices his protest of the present age of peace.

Lucan expresses a similar idea quite clearly through Nigidius Figulus, the astrologer who appears in book one to interpet the omens that signal the start of the war. Noting that peace will come with a *dominus* (*cum domino pax ista venit*, 1.670), Figulus counsels the Romans to

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[75] Notable as well is 5.386-8: *mentimur dominis / haec primum repperit aetas / qua sibi ne ferri ius ullum, Caesar, abesset / Ausonias voluit gladiis miscere secures*.

prolong their *series* of civil wars and to delay peace for as long as possible (*continuam seriem clademque in tempora multa / extrahe* 671-2); to these injunctions he even adds that the Romans will maintain their freedom only while in civil war (*civili tantum iam libera bello,* 672)! Once again, by writing a poem that dwells upon and within the cycles of civil war, Lucan as *auctor* (and escapist) has actually taken his own character's advice.[76] Lucan's poem is one of nostalgia in its truest and fullest sense. Not only does Lucan, in writing his epic, 'return' to the memory of the events that transformed Rome forever (painful and distasteful though the recollection may be), but what he writes becomes a powerful lament for the irrevocable loss of what was a *true* Golden Age characterized by Republican freedom.[77]

Lucan broaches many of the same ideas in his address to Nero earlier in the poem, and with an approach that is similar to his authorial interjections at Pharsalus. Just as he acknowledges in his authorial interjections at Pharsalus that his *aetas* is enjoying post-war peace, he also begins his address to the emperor by conceding that present-day Rome has benefitted from civil war, because without it, there would be no principate:

> quod si non aliam venturo fata Neroni
> invenere viam magnoque aeterna parantur
> regna deis caelumque suo servire Tonanti
> non nisi saevorum potuit post bella gigantum,
> iam nihil, o superi, querimur; scelera ipsa nefasque
> hac mercede placent; diros Pharsalia campos
> inpleat et Poeni saturentur sanguine manes;
> ultima funesta concurrant proelia Munda;
> his, Caesar, Perusina fames Mutinaque labores
> accedant fatis et quas premit aspera classes
> Leucas et ardenti servilia bella sub Aetna.
> multum Roma tamen debet civilibus armis
> quod tibi res acta est. (1.33-45)

> But if the fates could find no other way for the coming of Nero, the eternal realms could not be preserved for the gods except at great cost, and heaven could not serve the

[76] Could this explain why the poem is incomplete (i.e., Lucan could not bring himself to finish it because he knew to end his *Bellum Civile* meant to accept its consequences)? This is different, I think, than Masters' argument that Lucan meant to end the poem *exactly* where he did (1992, 216-59) and perhaps more akin to Feeney's suggestion (1992, 19) that Ovid may have left the *Fasti* incomplete as a form of protest.

[77] Cf. Masters' arguments on the constant delays that Lucan builds into his own reluctant narrative (1992, 4-5, 24, 54-5, *passim*).

> Thunderer unless a war was first fought with the savage Giants, we have no grounds for complaint, O gods. The very crimes themselves and the unspeakable evil are pleasing for this reward. Let Pharsalia fill up her plains with dead, let Punic ghosts drink their fill of Roman blood. Let the last battle be fought at deadly Munda. And to these deaths, let there be added the Perusine famine and sufferings at Mutina, and those fleets that rough Leucas overwhelmed and the slave wars under burning Etna. Rome, nevertheless, owes much to civil war–because what's been done has been done for you.

In delineating the connection between the conclusions of the wars and the ascent of the Caesars in such clear terms, Lucan is affirming one of the basic premises that underlies imperial ideology: in order for peace and stability, certain trade-offs and allowances must be made. Lucan expresses this idea with explicitly commercial language (that borders on being crassly so): the *scelera ipsa nefasque* are the "price" (*hac mercede placent*) for Nero's eventual ascent to power,[78] and Rome owes a great "debt" to civil war (*multum Roma tamen debet civilibus armis*) because these wars gave her Nero (*tibi res acta est*).

As his address to the emperor draws to a close, Lucan couples all of these ideas with an appeal to the Golden Age over which Nero, post-apotheosis, will preside. With the iron gates of war (*ferrea…limina*) closed, a 'Golden Age' of peace can now be enjoyed throughout the world:[79]

> tum genus humanum positis sibi consulat armis,
> inque vicem gens omnis amet; pax missa per orbem
> <u>ferrea</u> belligeri conpescat <u>limina</u> Iani. (1.60-62)

> Then, let the human race care for itself with arms laid down, and let each people love one another in turn. With peace spread over the world, let the iron gates of warlike Janus be closed.

There is a sense in which Lucan has constructed his remarks here as a 'thank you' to the *princeps*. He has toed the imperial line in attributing the conclusion of the civil wars to the principate and acknowledging that he has clearly benefited from them. At the same time, his commercial language cannot help but call to mind what has been lost, the price that has been

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[78] This line recalls Vergil's Juno at *A*. 7.317 (*hac gener atque socer coeant <u>mercede</u> suorum*) as she prepares to incite the war in Italy. For Lucan to assimilate his own logic to Juno's *furor*-filled approach to starting war in the *Aeneid* is perhaps a subversive touch.

[79] Cf. Verg. *A*. 1.291-6, 7.607-10; Hor. *Carm*. 2.1.153-5.

paid, in achieving this outcome.[80] Though Lucan suggests here that the civil wars are themselves 'the price,' he also hints at another one. As Lucan draws out a connection between the Gigantomachy and civil war and likens Nero to Jupiter as the winner of that *bellum* (33-36), he mentions the fact that Jupiter's power in the heavens is cemented by that war: *caelumque suo servire Tonanti / non nisi saevorum potuit post bella gigantum*. Apart from highlighting the fact that civil wars, the earthly analogue of the Gigantomachy, were a necessary evil for Nero to come to power, Lucan's use of the term *servire* suggests that the 'price' paid for Nero's ascent is indeed even more grave than civil wars in and and of themselves. The *bella nefanda* have installed Nero as a Jovian *dominus* over earth and heaven too (as Lucan's meditations on his impending catasterism at 1.46-59 indicate). As with his remarks at Pharsalus, here too in his eulogy of Nero, Lucan pays lipservice to the notion that the current age is a Golden Age, but at the same time, works to undermine it.

Caesars in the Sky

By way of tying together many of my arguments on Lucan and Nero, the Golden Age, and Lucan's cylical worldview more generally, I want to end my discussion with a few remarks about the Ovidian model for Lucan's Nero material. Lucan's eulogy of the emperor has been most often discussed in relation to its primary model, Vergil's encomium of Octavian at *G.* 1.24-42, but Lucan's approach is, I think, also anticipated in many ways by Ovid in his encomium of Augustus at the end of the *Metamorphoses*. [81] When Ovid turns to praise Augustus at the end of

[80] When Lucan claims that the fates have found a way for Nero's advent (*quod si non aliam…fata / invenere viam,* 1.33-34), he recalls the phrasing that Vergil employs in two scenes in the *Aeneid*, both of which deal with the fates' role in Aeneas' completion of his mission. The first is Helenus' prophecy regarding how Aeneas is to locate the pregnant sow: *fata viam invenient aderitque vocatus Apollo* (*A.* 3.395). The second, and I think more resonant for Lucan, is voiced by Jupiter, as he describes the role of providence in the impending ruin of Turnus and the Rutulians: *rex Iuppiter omnibus idem / fata viam invenient* (*A.* 10.112-13). The fates do indeed find the way for Aeneas to achieve his mission in Italy: the fall of Troy, the abandonment of Dido and downfall of Carthage, war against the Italians, and the death of Turnus. Manifold sacrifices are made and prices are paid for the foundation of Rome by Aeneas (and, by extension, its re-foundation under Augustus). For Lucan to recall Vergil here, whose *Aeneid* can be read, as among other things, a meditation on the sacrifices that accompanied Augustus' rise to power, is a fitting way to flesh out his own formulation of the rise of the Caesars. The fates – those Jovian forces of history – have indeed found a way for Caesar and his descendants to rise to power, and Lucan is out to expose it for what it is, stripped of its *gravitas* and mythological veneer: *bellum nefandum.*

[81] On Ovidian precedents for Lucan's panegyric, see Hinds (1987, 28-9) and Wheeler (2002, 373-5), though they focus more on Ovid's treatment of Caesar, rather than Augustus, in the finale of the poem. Wheeler (contrary to

the text, his approach is standard: he lists the victories that brought Augustus to power, praises the fact that Augustus has realized world peace, ruminates on his future apotheosis and prays that it will not happen soon. Though Ovid's discussion of the apotheosis and prayers for the emperor's long life are spoken in his own voice, much of the Augustan material of the final book is couched in mythological terms and takes the form of a dialogue between Venus and Jupiter. Upset by Caesar's assassination, Venus is consoled by Jupiter, who reminds her that Caesar's son will ultimately rise to power and avenge him. Particularly striking, for my purposes at least, is Jupiter's catalogue of civil wars prosecuted by Augustus so as to avenge his father Caesar:

> ut deus accedat caelo templisque colatur,
> tu facies natusque suus caesique parentis
> inpositum feret unus onus caesique parentis
> nos in bella suos fortissimus ultor habebit.
> illius auspiciis obsessae moenia pacem
> victa petent Mutinae, Pharsalia sentiet illum,
> Emathiique iterum madefient caede Phillipi,
> et magnum Siculis nomen superabitur undis,
> Romanique ducis coniunx Aegyptia taedae
> non bene fisa cadet, frustraque erit illa minata,
> servitura suo Capitolia nostra Canopo.
> quid tibi barbariam gentesque ab utroque iacentes
> oceano numerem? quodcumque habitabile tellus
> sustinet, huius erit: pontus quoque serviet illi!
> Pace data terris animum ad civilia vertet
> iura suum legesque feret iustissimus auctor…(*Met.*15.822-833)

> You will bring about
> His entrance into heaven and his worship in temples,
> You and his son. He will succeed to the name
> And will alone bear the burden placed upon him,
> And with ourselves as his allies in war,
> Will be his slain father's heroic avenger.
> Under his command besieged Mutina
> Will sue for peace; Pharsalia will feel his power;
> The fields of Phillipi in Macedonia
> Will be drenched in blood again; Sextus Pompeius
> Will be defeated off Sicily's coast;
> And Cleopatra, the Egyptian mistress
> Of a Roman general, her faith misplaced

Hinds' suggestion that Ovid lays the groundwork for Lucan's subversive stance) thinks that Lucan reads Ovid's panegyric as "straight praise" for the Caesars (2002, 374 n. 42).

> In their alliance, will fall before the son of Caesar
> Despite all her vain threats to transfer our Capitol
> To her Canopus. I will not mention
> The barbarous nations on both shores of the ocean,
> But every habitable land on earth
> Will be under his sway, and the ocean too!
> And when peace has been bestowed on all these lands
> He will turn his mind to the rights of citizens
> And establish laws most just… (trans. Lombardo)

Ovid's list bears striking resemblance to Lucan's. Both poets, for instance, mention Mutina and Phillipi (which is imagined by Ovid here as a repetition of Pharsalus).[82] In further delineating his list of Augustus' victories in civil war, Ovid also mentions a *magnum nomen*, here of course Sextus Pompey (but which may point ahead to Lucan's own conception of Pompey as a 'great name'). While Jupiter ostensibly lists all of these victories as a means of praising Augustus, he also pairs them directly with a reference to the Golden Age of peace over which Augustus, having completed these wars, will soon preside.[83]

One might wonder if Ovid means to suggest (as Lucan will) that Augustus quite literally owes his position of power (which Ovid highlights with the term *servare* twice) to his victory in these civil conflicts. While it is perfectly plausible to read these lines without any irony, I call attention to them here because I think that Lucan has not read them that way. His own list of civil wars, his attribution of them to the *princeps*, and his acknowledgement that the *princeps* has brought about a Golden Age of peace follow the same broad trajectory as Ovid's, and at every step, Lucan has taken what are very subtle gestures in Ovid and made them less so. In Lucan's hands, the emperor's achievement of peace is commercialized;[84] Lucan goes out of his way to emphasize the *scelera* and *nefas* inherent in the battles he lists; he tranfers Ovid's image of Augustus as *dominus* of defeated enemies and lands and seas to casting Jupiter and, by extension, Nero as *dominus* over the heaven itself and the gods within it.[85]

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[82] On this conceit, see p. 18, n. 36, above.

[83] The enjambment of *iura* into line 833 is an especially suggestive touch. With peace made, Augustus turns his mind to civil…laws.

[84] Cf. Feeney (1991, 299).

[85] Vergil uses the terminology of enslavement to describe Octavian post-apotheosis at *G.* 1.30 (*tibi serviat ultima Thule*). Cf. Feeney (1991, 214), on this commonplace of panegyric. Lucan has actually upgraded both Vergil and Ovid's Octavian/Augustus-as-*dominus* over the earth to Nero-as-*dominus* over heaven.

As Ovid's praise of Augustus continues, he adds further praise of the *princeps*. He places Augustus as last in a list of mythic *exempla* of heroes and rulers,

> sic magnus cedit titulis Agamemnonis Atreus,
> Aegea sic Theseus, sic Pelea vicit Achilles;
> denique, ut exemplis ipsos aequantibus utar,
> sic et Saturnus minor est Iove; Iuppiter arces
> temperat aetherias et mundi regna triformis,
> terra sub Augusto est; pater est et rector uterque. (*Met.* 15.855-60)
>
> Thus does Atreus yield to the honors of his son Agamemnon, thus Aegeus to Theseus, thus Achilles surpassed Peleus, and finally to give an example equal to these, thus is Saturn less than Jove. Jupiter rules the heavenly heights and the kingdoms of the trifold universe, earth is under Augustus' sway. Each is both father and ruler.

and follows up with a prayer that Augustus' apotheosis is a far off event (15.861-870). If there is any irony in it, again it is subtle. Ovid's description of the generations of heroes and kings ceding place to one another suggests an analogy between Pythagoras' narrative of the rise and fall of cities, and just as Pythagoras' narrative culminates in Rome, so too does Ovid's encomium culminate with Augustus. But in the same way that Pythagoras' metamorphic vision subtly questions the idea of *Roma aeterna*, do Ovid's words here mean to suggest the same about the *princeps*?[86]

Lucan's ruminations about the apotheosis of Nero might be read in a similar way. Lucan follows Vergil's lead in suggesting that Nero has a choice of his place in the heavens (cf. *G.* 1.29-39), but the fact that he advises Nero rather than simply offering him suggestions implies that he does not necessarily trust the *princeps* to make a sensible choice of place:

> te, cum statione peracta
> astra petes serus, praelati regia caeli
> excipiet gaudente polo; seu sceptra tenere,
> seu te flammigeros Phoebi conscendere currus,
> telluremque nihil mutato sole timentem
> igne vago lustrare iuvet, tibi numine ab omni
> cedetur, iurisque tui natura relinquet,
> quis deus esse velis, ubi regnum ponere mundi.

[86] Ovid's earlier remarks on Caesar's deification (especially *Met.* 15.761) have certainly often been read in an ironic light. Cf. Hinds (1987, 25) and Feeney (1991, 210-11, 300).

> sed neque in arctoo sedem tibi legeris orbe,
> nec polus aversi calidus qua vergitur austri,
> unde tuam videas obliquo sidere Romam.
> aetheris inmensi partem si presseris unam,
> sentiet axis onus. Librati pondera caeli
> orbe tene medio; pars aetheris illa sereni
> tota vacet, nullaeque obstent a Caesare nubes…(1.45-59)

> You, when your duty is completed and you at last seek the stars, your chosen place in the heavens, with the skies rejoicing, will accept you. Whether it is your will to hold the scepter or mount the fiery chariot of Phoebus, and with wandering fire to roam over the earth frightened not at all by the change in the sun, every godhead will yield to you, nature will leave it in your right to decide what god you wish to be and where to place your rulership of the world. But do not choose a seat for yourself either in the frozen arctic nor where the the warm sky of the opposing South sinks down—from here you will view your Rome from a star aslant. If you press on one part of the heavenly air, the sky will feel the weight. Hold the mass of heaven balanced in the middle; let that part of the calm air lie completely vacant and let no clouds block our view of Caesar.

Particularly striking is Lucan's caution to the emperor to be sure not to throw the heavens into imbalance. Getty has noted that Lucan's advice to Nero here (*librata pondera caeli / orbe tene medio*) evokes one of Ovid's description of chaos from *Metamorphoses* one (*nec circumfuso pendebat in aere tellus / ponderibus librata suis*, 11-12).[87] In raising this point, Lucan all but suggests that Nero could be responsible for more cosmic chaos – (as Hinds has suggested) a Phaethonic return to *chaos antiquum* – if he does not choose the place for his star prudently.[88] And this reader, at least, wonders if contained within Lucan's 'advice' is a morbid wish that Nero (or more precisely, Nero's death) will do just that. Given Lucan's dissastifaction with the Neronian sham of a 'Golden Age' and his complaints to Fortuna that she should have allowed his *aetas* to fight for its freedom, here perhaps is planted a seed of hope for the next cycle of (re)generative chaos.

[87] 1940, ad loc.

[88] 1987, 29.

CHAPTER TWO

THE FATES OF CITIES

In the previous Chapter, I discussed Lucan's cosmic pretensions in broad terms, and I argued that Lucan constructs his worldview (following Ovid's lead in the *Metamorphoses*) as cylical in nature. We saw this play out on the level of both micro and macrocosm: cycles of cosmic destruction were mirrored in cycles of civil war, and Lucan's own 'recycling' of the myths of the Argo and the Iron Age played into his overall depiction of the *series* of *bella civilia.*

In the present Chapter, though I will still be concerned with matters of micro and macrocosm, I also want to narrow my focus to another aspect of the inteplay between the macro and micro-levels of Lucan's poem: his use of the *urbs/orbis* conceit. Whereas my focus in the previous Chapter was largely the events of Lucan's *orbis*, one of my central concerns and organizing principles for this Chapter is *urbes*—cities and their fates. To this end, I shall examine two specific battle narratives in *Bellum Civile* books three and four: the naval battle at Massilia (3.298-762) and Lucan's description of the Caesarian soldier Vulteius and the mass suicide of his contingent (4.402-581). Lucan presents both of these scenes so as to suggest that what happens in (and to) various cities throughout the *Bellum Civile* reflects what is happening both in Rome and in Lucan's cosmos at large.[89] As the narrative of the epic progresses, we shall see that even though Caesar's pursuit of civil war actually leads him *away* from Rome, the events in cities throughout the *extrema mundi* have one final outcome: the destruction of Rome itself.

As far as Massilia is concerned, Lucan creates a narrative that engages these motifs in a rather direct way. He presents the city, which Caesar besieges shortly after leaving Rome itself, as an *altera Roma,* and the naval battle that is fought there functions as a metaphor for the ship*wreck* (as Lucan would have it) of the Roman state.[90] The Vulteius narrative ties in more obliquely to my stated concern with *urbes*: while it is clear that Lucan intends for the mass

[89] On which (recently), see Dinter (2005) for a survey of the various levels of macro/microcosm that are discernible within the poem.

[90] It is worth noting that Lucan's Massilia narrative is the only full account of a naval battle in Roman epic up to this time. For discussion of the significance of Massilia along these lines, see Masters (1992, 11-12), who suggests that the episode is a re-writing of the events of Actium, and especially Vergil's presentation thereof on Aeneas' shield at *A*. 8.671-713.

suicide to read as civil war in miniature (as does the Massilian naval battle), he also situates the narrative within a larger Theban leitmotif in the text. Just as the plight of Massilia is assimilated to that of Rome, so too is that of mythic Thebes, whose disintegration into fratricidal *furor* Rome repeats within Lucan's epic.

I have chosen to treat both of these narratives not only because they fit into a larger pattern of imagery that deals with the fates of cities—and thereby, *the* City—but also because both provide fertile ground for exploring elements of Ovidian intertextuality in the *Bellum Civile.* Apart from offering readings of the Massilia and Vulteius episodes, it is also my goal to contextualize within these readings some of the *loci* where Lucan alludes to Ovid, especially in his descriptions of battle violence. Esposito has written most extensively on the Ovidian antecedents of Lucan's battles, though his interest lies primarily in categorizing the ways in which Lucan expands and intensifies the material found in the *Metamorphoses*.[91] While I do not necessarily disagree with Esposito's overall conclusions–Lucan does indeed 'amplify' much of Ovid's battle violence–I also suggest another way of reading many of Lucan's uses of Ovid in these scenes. As we shall see, Lucan variously turns to Ovidian models to underscore his depiction of the battles themselves as microcosms of civil war.

[91] Esposito (1994) pays a great deal of attention to the theme (esp. at 87ff.and 107ff). Much of his discussion centers around the "ampliamento" of various Ovidian models by Lucan as well as "la dilatazione dell'orrore, attraverso l'aggiunta di particolare e dettagli" (92). I will discuss his approach and some specific examples he cites in more detail below. Similar readings of Ovidian material can be found in Esposito (1987) and (1995). Useful collections of parallels, battle-related and otherwise, are in Phillips (1962) and Siciliano (1998). Esposito's work on Ovid and Lucan aside, much of the discussion on Lucan's battle narratives has, historically, tended to focus on how Lucan's depiction of violence is meant to elicit 'pathos.' On this theme, Fraenkel's (1927) essay (reprinted in Rutz 1970, and translated in Tesoriero, et al., 2010) is a classic, though he does not engage in much close reading of the battles themselves. Other notable analyses along these lines are: Rutz (1960), Metger (1957), extracts of which are reprinted in Rutz (1970), and on Massilia, especially, Opelt (1957). For recent critiques of and reactions to the 'pathos' line of interpretation, see Johnson (1987, 57), Bartsch (1997, 36), and Leigh (1997, 210), who calls the *Bellum Civile* an epic "less attuned to pathos than to satire." As for Massilia, notable discussions that do not subscribe to the 'pathos trend' are those of Rowland (1969), to which my own treatment is much indebted, Masters (1992, 11-25), Panoussi (2003), and Saylor (2003).

Shadows of Rome

Lucan expands on the relatively meager accounts of the siege of Massilia in the (extant) historical record to develop his narrative into what is effectively his first full-blown epic battle.[92] The episode as a whole is positioned as one within a series of what I will dub 'city narratives' that dominate the opening books of the epic: from the moment that Lucan first describes reaction to the civil war at Rome (1.466-522), he proceeds to detail a veritable chain of cities both within Italy (e.g., Corfinium, Brundisium) and outside of the peninsula (e.g., Massilia, Ilerda) that are attacked by and eventually fall to Caesar's army.

Lucan lays the groundwork for his characterizations of these cities in his description of Rome's reaction to the news of civil war in book one. Reports of Caesar's descent into Italy induce mass panic (*volgus inani/percussum terrore pavet,* 1.486-7*; turba per urbem/praecipiti lymphata gradu,* 1.495-6), and Pompey's flight inspires yet further hysteria (*Pompeio fugiente timent*, 1.522).[93] Lucan supplements his descriptions of the frightened populace with imagery suggesting that the city is under siege, or even sacked. Along these lines, Lucan even describes the rush to flee Rome in terms that evoke (in the negative) Aeneas' iconic flight from a crumbling Troy: [94]

> sic urbe relicta
> in bellum fugitur. Nullum iam languidus aevo
> evaluit revocare parens coniunxve maritum
> fletibus, aut patrii, dubiae dum vota salutis
> conciperent, tenuere lares; nec limine quisquam
> haesit, et extremo tunc forsitan urbis amatae
> plenus abit visu; ruit inrevocabile volgus. (1.503-9)

[92] For accounts in the historians, see Caes. *Civ.* 1.33–5, 2.1–16, App. *BC* 2.47, Plu. *Caes*. 16. At Liv. *Periocha* 110, a "long siege" is mentioned. For more on Lucan's manipulation of historical sources, see Lintott (1971) and Masters (1992, 13-25, on Massilia).

[93] Lucan actually initiates his 'imagery of terror' well before he describes the abandonment of Rome itself: even at the Rubicon, the apparition of Patria is depicted as frightened (*imago… patriae trepidantis,* 1.186), and Lucan continues in this vein with his description of the frightful townsfolk of Caesar's next stop, Ariminum (*deriguere metu, gelidos pavor occupat artus*, 1.246).

[94] On Lucan's technique of 'negative antithesis,' see Bramble (1982, 544-8). One of the most famous examples is Lucan's description of Cato's 'anti-marriage' at 2.30-71.

> Thus with the city abandoned there was a fleeing into war. No aging father was able to detain his son, or wife her husband by weeping. The household gods delayed no one until he could formulate a prayer for safety from danger. No one lingered at the threshold. No one fled, full of one last look at the beloved city he might never see again. The mob rushed on with nothing to hold it back.

As is usual for Lucan, Rome's 'fall' is here assimilated to Troy's and yet is also presented as decidedly more sordid and less-heroic. Though Rome is *like* Troy, much to Rome's shame, the senate and people are willing to give up the city with no fight at all (1.511-20). When Caesar actually marches into Rome for the first time in book three, Lucan reprises the imagery of a terror-stricken, sacked city:

> …urbem
> attonitam terrore subit. namque ignibus atris
> creditur, ut captae, rapturus moenia Romae
> sparsurusque deos (3.97-100).
>
> Caesar entered a city thunder-struck with terror, for it was believed that he would storm Rome's walls with black fire and scatter the gods, as if he had captured the city.

Lucan's description of Rome as *urbs capta* provides the model for his depictions of other cities in his opening books, many of which literally qualify as *urbes captae*.[95] Just as Lucan first suggests Rome's 'sack' by Caesar, in the other cities that Caesar invades he presents mirrors—or shadows—of Rome. To this end, the lengthy digression on Marius and Sulla with which the second book begins sets the stage for the city narratives to follow: here we are told the story of *two* successive 'sacks' of Rome, the effect of which is to place Caesar in the company of generals who have attacked their own city (2.64-233).[96]

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[95] On the motif of the *urbs capta,* see Paul (1982); on Lucan's use of the motif, see Hunink (1992 ad 3.98). Lucan extrapolates the imagery of 'siege' to the Italian narrative in books one and two as a whole. The Ariminians, whose city is Caesar's first stop, refer to their position as the "door–bolts of Latium" (*claustra Latii,* 1.253). In this, they certainly presage Caesar's movements toward Rome, but the phrase also suggests that Caesar's successive occupations of various cities in Italy as he moves southward is akin to besieging the whole of the peninsula itself.

[96] Cf. Fantham (1992a, 28-9). The motif is revisited – to great effect – at the battle of Pharsalus. Pompey's pre-battle speech invites his men to view the battle as if it were a fight, quite literally, for and around the walls of Rome itself. He asks the men to envision that Roman matrons are looking out at them from the walls, and that Roman senators are prostrating themselves at their feet (7.369-76). Once the battle is over, Lucan describes how Caesar's men, who had hoped to sack Rome itself, are disappointed in having only the Pompeian camp to plunder (7.758-60). Lucan undoubtedly returns to the imagery of the *urbs capta* here at Pharsalus to emphasize, even further, the destructive consequences of that battle for Rome itself.

As the military narrative in the second book progresses, many of the *urbes* that find themselves along Caesar's path, like Rome earlier, are overwhelmed by terror (*urbes Latii dubiae primo terrore ruentis / cessurae belli,* 2.447-8) and quickly capitulate when threatened by Caesar's approach (*facilis sed vertere mentes / terror erat, dubiamque fidem fortuna ferebat,* 2.460-61). In a display of *dubia fides*, many cities also switch sides (*pronior in Magnum populus, pugnatque minaci / cum terrore fides* 2.453-4). At 2.461-77, Lucan presents a veritable catalogue of cities that change their allegiance, among which Lucan's treatment of Corfinium is the most expansive (2.478-525). Here, Lucan describes how L. Domitius Ahenobarbus attempts to resist Caesar at that city, until he is unwillingly and unwittingly delivered to Caesar by the frightened populace—a *nefas belli* (2.507). The idea of rapidly shifting allegiance is brought to the fore again, soon after, at Brundisium: Pompey has just barely escaped from the harbor when the citizens of Brundisium switch sides (*conversa fides*, 2.705) and open their gates to Caesar. The wavering *fides* of these cities picks up on one of the major motifs of Lucan's portrait of Rome in the first book. Here, Lucan highlights two notable breakdowns in *fides* that precipitate the war in Rome: the death of Julia leads to *discussa fides* among the triumvirs (1.118), just as *concussa fides* is listed prominently at the end of Lucan's list of causes for the war among the general populace (1.182).[97]

Considered against the backdrop of these other 'city narratives,' Lucan's Massilia builds on many of these motifs but is also quite exceptional. As opposed to other cities along Caesar's *iter*, Massilia provides the first real impediment to Caesar's speedy and unrelenting progress in his pursuit of Pompey (cf. the city as *una mora*, 3.392). Prior to his arrival at the city, Caesar has met opposition from only two figures: Domitius at Corfinium and the tribune L. Caecilius Metellus, who attempts to block Caesar's despoliation of the Roman treasury at 3.112-168.[98]

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[97] Cf. 1.92, on the triumvirs: *nulla fides regni sociis*. On the act of civil war itself as a rupture of *fides,* see Lucan's remarks about fighting at Ilerda: *itur in omne nefas, et quae Fortuna deorum / invidia caeca bellorum in nocte tulisset / fecit monstra fides* (4.243-5).

[98] These two figures are linked as opponents of Caesar by a common epithet, *pugnax* (2.479, 3.114). See Hunink (1992, ad 3.82-3) for more points of comparison/contrast between the two men. On the treasury scene more generally, see Fantham (1996, 140-7).

An Ovidian Digression: Metellus at the Treasury

Before I discuss the particulars of the resistance at Massilia, Lucan's portrayal of Metellus deserves some comment: not only does the treasury scene play into (and, in some respects, cap off) many aspects of the city narratives as presented thus far, but Lucan also alludes to Ovid therein as a means of articulating his ideas about freedom, especially freedom of speech, under Caesar.

When Metellus makes his 'heroic' stand at the treasury doors, Lucan casts the struggle as one of Caesar versus *Libertas*, and suggests that the two are competing in a battle of *ira*.[99] He begins the narrative by describing how *Libertas* "breaks out into anger," using Metellus as her champion (*exit in iram…/ Libertas*, 3.112, 114); Caesar, in response, is angered by Metellus' defiance (*his magnam victor in iram / vocibus accensus* 3.133-4). He mocks Metellus for presuming he is a *vindex Libertatis* (137-8) and refuses to grant him a heroic death by killing him at the treasury doors. Lucan's engagement with *Libertas* finds its fullest expression when Metellus is finally persuaded to yield to Caesar by an onlooker, whom Lucan identifies only as Cotta:[100]

> libertas, inquit, populi, quem regna coercent,
> libertate perit. Cuius servaveris umbram,
> si, quidquid iubeare, velis. (3.145-7)
>
> [Cotta] said: 'The freedom of a people whom tyranny coerces dies by the exercise of freedom. You can preserve the shadow of it, though, if you wish for whatever is ordered of you.'

Having thus defined the parameters of 'freedom of speech' under tyranny, Cotta rounds out his argument by claiming that he and all others can take solace in the fact that it is impossible to 'say no' to any of Caesar's requests (*nullam potuisse negari*, 3.149).

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[99] 'Heroic' because even this moment is cast in a sardonic light when Lucan suggests that love of money is really the true motivation for Metellus' opposition (*ferrum mortemque timere / auri nescit amor,* 3.118-19).

[100] For a discussion of the problem of Cotta's identity (whom the *Comm. Bern.* identifies as a colleague of Metellus), see Hunink (1992 ad loc).

Cotta's remarks engage with the problem of free speech under tyranny quite directly, but Lucan has already alighted on the problem of free speech, albeit more obliquely, earlier in the epic. Caesar's pardon of Domitius at Corfinium plays out much the same way as the treatment of Metellus here. Not only does Lucan highlight the shame Domitius feels because he is not given the chance to die in battle, but he also makes a point about freedom of speech: as Domitius hurries to re-join Pompey, Lucan writes that he must suppress his anger (*premit ille graves interritus iras*, 2.521) and, tellingly, reports his speech thereafter in the form of an internal monologue (*et secum…*, 2.522).[101] Alongside his similarities to Domitius, Metellus' attempt at obstruction is also ultimately a reflection of the silencing effect that Caesar has on the Roman people more broadly. As he variously depicts the Roman people in grief over the fate of their city, Lucan also emphasizes the fact that they have chosen to silence their laments: *et <u>tacito</u> <u>mutos</u> volvunt in pectore questus* (1.247); *<u>vox nulla</u> dolori / credita* (1.258); *tum questus tenuere suos, magnusque per omnes / erravit <u>sine voce</u> dolor* (2.20-1). We see a return to this idea once more when Caesar actually arrives at Rome for the first time. Entering the city in parody of a triumph, the 'triumphant' general is met with dumb fear rather than happy cheers: *non illum laetis vadentem coetibus urbes / sed <u>tacitae</u> videre <u>metu</u>* (3.81-2).[102]

In the Metellus scene, which in many ways functions as a culmination of these earlier hints at Caesar's 'silencing' effect, Lucan bolsters his earlier points and raises still others by including an echo of Ovid's Tereus, whose barbaric treatment of Philomela Ovid narrates at *Met.* 6.412-674. When Caesar explains the rationale for his 'gift' of *clementia* to Metellus,

> his magnam victor in iram
> vocibus accensus: vanam <u>spem mortis</u> honestae
> <u>concipis</u>: haud inquit <u>iugulo</u> se polluet isto
> nostra, Metelle, manus. (3.134-6)

[101] Within the context of the imagery of fear that dominates the opening books, it is worth noting that Domitius, though silenced here, is described as *interritus*. Lucan does allow him some last words as he dies at Pharsalus, at 7.597-615. On Lucan's portrayal of Domitius more generally (and discussion as to his heroism, especially at Pharsalus), see Lounsbery (1975).

[102] For more on this 'silence' motif, see Roche (2009 ad 1.247 and 1.258). The imagery of grief is most fully delineated in Lucan's description of Cato, whom Lucan suggests is *parens patriae*, grieving at the funeral of his child, Rome (2.297-303). Also comparable are Lucan's descriptions of citizens as mournful parents (2.21-28).

> The victor was worked up into a great anger by these words, and he said: "You have conceived a hope for an honorable death in vain. By no means will I pollute my hands with your murder, Metellus."

his words echo Ovid's description of Philomela's hope for death when she sees Tereus draw his sword:[103]

> talibus ira feri postquam commota tyranni
> nec minor hac metus est, causa stimulatus utraque
> quo fuit accinctus, vagina liberat ensem
> arreptamque coma fixis post terga lacertis
> vincula pati cogit; iugulum Philomela parabat
> spemque suae mortis viso conceperat ense…(*Met.* 6.549-54)
>
> The anger of the savage tyrant was, afterward, incited by such words, no less also by his fear. Spurred on by both of these causes, he frees his sword from its sheath where it was hanging at his side, and having seized her by the hair, he chains her with hands bound fast behind her back. Philomela was preparing her throat, and she conceived a hope for death when she saw his sword.

On one level, the reminiscence underscores Lucan's depiction of Caesar as a quick-to-anger tyrant and plays into the barbarian invasion motif that colors the whole of Caesar's entry into Rome.[104] But when we consider the context of Ovid's scene, one is left with the unsettling conclusion that like Tereus, Lucan's Caesar has in mind far worse outcomes than death for both Metellus, to whom he gives the 'gift' of clemency, and Rome itself. Given the links already drawn between clemency and silence in the Domitius narrative and Lucan's commentary on freedom of speech in Cotta's remarks, Caesar's silencing of Metellus is fundamentally akin to

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[103] Cf. Siciliano (1998, 311).

[104] Tereus is Thracian, after all (cf. *Met.* 6.424-5, where Ovid also stresses his military prowess: *Threicius Tereus haec auxiliaribus armis / fuderat et clarum vincendo nomen habebat*). On the barbarian motif in Lucan, cf. Ahl (1976, 107-112), especially for discussion of Caesar's assimilation to Hannibal; I shall discuss this motif further below in my remarks on the Massilian embassy. Apart from Hannibal, Caesar's invasion of Rome also recalls those other invaders of Rome from the North: the Gauls. They are mentioned in conjunction with the Carthaginians as the proverbial enemies of Rome in the lament of the people at Ariminum (1.254-6), and Caesar's raid on the treasury is itself evocative of Brennus, whom Lucan actually mentions within the treasury narrative at 3.159.

Tereus' mutilation of Philomela's tongue, which he excises to prevent her from revealing that he has raped her.[105]

It is worth noting, as well, that both Philomela (*si tamen haec superi cernunt, si numina divum sunt aliquid /…mihi poenas dabis, Met.* 6.542-3) and Metellus (*certe violata potestas / invenit ista deos,* 3.125-6) *threaten* divinely sanctioned retribution – Philomela once she has suffered violence and Metellus in the anticipation of a violation of his *sacrosanctitas*. This detail lends yet another mordant touch to Lucan's Tereus-esque Caesar. Whereas Ovid's narrative seriously calls into question the agency of the gods as avengers of human crime (among other facets of the divine), Lucan has gone one step further and left the gods out of his poem entirely. Furthermore, although Tereus is punished, Lucan—at this juncture at least—leaves Caesar's ultimate fate and whatever forces may underpin it quite unclear.[106]

In light of these issues, Caesar's assault on the treasury might be profitably compared with another violation scene that occurs not long after: his desecration of the Druid grove outside Massilia (*lucus…numquam violatus*, 3.399).[107] Here too, Lucan reports that the Massilians, like Metellus, believe Caesar will meet with divine vengeance for this act; and yet, in his own editorializing remarks on the scene, Lucan implies that Caesar, who is Fortune's favorite, will not be punished at all:

> quis enim laesos inpune putaret
> esse deos? Servat multos fortuna nocentes
> et tantum miseris irasci numina possunt (3.447-9)
>
> For who would think that the gods can be injured with
> impunity? Yet Fortune preserves many who are guilty,
> and the gods can grow angry only at the unlucky.

[105] Given that Ovid goes on to present Philomela as a poet figure (as she weaves her web at *Met.* 6.574-80), O'Higgins' suggestion that Cotta's words may be a reflection of Lucan's views about his own 'speech' is given added resonance (see O'Higgins 1988, 210 n. 9). Of course, despite how 'silenced' Lucan feels, his poem as a whole is a Philomelan *indicium sceleris* (*Met.* 6.578).

[106] Though Lucan does allude to Caesar's death (perhaps most notably when Brutus is addressed at the battle of Pharsalus, 7.587-96), I think it is fair to say that he does not conceive of the event, at least in any consistent way, as a result of divine justice or order. For a reading of the druid grove scene that emphasizes Caesar's future punishment, see Augoustakis (2006, 636-8).

[107] The Ovidian underpinnings of the grove scene (e.g., Caesar is modeled on Ovid's Erysichthon) are well-known, on which see Phillips (1968).

As at the treasury earlier, these lines leave us wondering not only (to borrow from Ovid's Philomela) if the gods are real (*si numina divum sunt aliquid*), but whether they are even watching (*si…haec superi cernunt*). If there is one thing that Lucan does make clear at the treasury and the grove, it is that fears of divine reprisal prove no hindrance to Caesar.

The Massilian Embassy

Though both Metellus and Domitius mount failed attempts at resisting Caesar's onslaught, Massilia earns the distinction of providing the first real roadblock to his advance. Continuing in the vein of his earlier city narratives, Lucan presents Massilia in a way that invites us to compare it with Rome. This is a feature of the narrative brought into special relief by Lucan's choice to juxtapose Massilia at the end of book three with his account of Caesar's entry into Rome at its beginning. Massilia is one in a chain of cities, Rome included, slated to fall to Caesar, but in many respects, it is also notably different from these other *urbes.* Not only does Lucan differentiate Massilia from its counterparts in highlighting how the Massilians are *not* frightened (*urbem haud trepidam,* 3.373), but he also suggests that Massilia, unlike the *urbes Italiae*, is a paragon of *fides* (*fidem signataque iura / et causas, non fata, sequi,* 3.302-3).[108] He explicitly praises the city for its steadfast resistance to Caesar at 3.388-92, and more implicitly associates the city with the virtue in the speech that the Massilian peace delegation delivers to Caesar. Hoping to convince Caesar not to attack them, the Massilians confront Caesar outside their city and argue that if he should attack, they are ready to endure the same horrors that were endured at Saguntum during Hannibal's siege in 218 (3.350).[109] The perseverance of the Saguntines is all but proverbial as an example of fidelity to Rome and plays into a whole series of imagery that idealizes the Roman achievements in the Punic Wars and contrasts them with the

[108] Further discussion of this theme, as it relates to Massilia, can be found in both Rowland (1969, 205) and Opelt (1957, 445). For more on *fides* as a theme throughout books three and four, see Masters (1992, 78 n. 80). In emphasizing Massilia's *fides*, Lucan seems to gloss over Caesar's claim in his *commentarii* that the Massilians actually broke a truce they negotiated with him early on in the siege (*Civ.* 2.14.1-4). Lucan does not mention the truce and presents Caesar as the aggressor throughout his own narrative of events.

[109] For a description of which, see Liv. 21.11-12.

present *impia bella.*[110] The contrast between past and present is made even more readily apparent by the Massilians themselves when they delineate for Caesar the only type of civil war they are willing to engage in—i.e., one to which they are compelled, like the Saguntines, by a long siege:

> pectoribus rapti matrum frustraque trahentes
> ubera sicca fame medios mittentur in ignes
> uxor et a caro poscet sibi fata marito,
> vulnera miscebunt fratres bellumque coacti
> hoc potius civile gerent (3.351-55)
>
> Snatched from their mothers' embrace and tugging vainly at breasts dry with famine, our infants will be thrown into the midst of the flames. A wife will seek death at the hands of her dear husband, and brothers will mix wounds with brothers. This is the civil war we would wage, if so compelled.

While suggesting that Massilia is like Saguntum certainly differentiates it from Rome on the score of its *fides*, Lucan also indicates that the Romans and Massilians share a lot in common. In this respect, the reference to Saguntum actually does double duty: not only does it elicit memories of a fundamental yet now lost Roman value (one of Lucan's favorite things to do), but given that Lucan has already associated Caesar and his invasion of Rome with Hannibal's invasion of Italy (1.304-5, 1.183), it also effectively likens Massilia to Rome. To this end, Lucan's seemingly passing remark that Caesar crosses the Alps again on his way north to Massilia is more than a mere geographical detail (3.299): Massilia is soon to become an *urbs capta* in the vein of Saguntum, with Caesar playing the part of Hannibal.[111] Having just left Rome itself, Lucan's Hannibalic Caesar will now turn to destroying a city that effectively functions as its substitute.

Apart from suggesting Saguntum as a model for their city, Lucan also has the Massilian embassy recount their foundation myth, which, not coincidentally, is strikingly similar to Rome's.[112] In a misguided appeal for sympathy, the Massilians relate to Caesar that their city was founded by exiles who fled the destruction of their ancestral home in Phocaea:

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[110] See p. 55, n. 104, above.

[111] Caesar's first crossing, *en route* to Rome, is mentioned at 1.183.

[112] Cf. Rowland (1969, 206).

patriae primis a sedibus exul,
et post translatas exustae Phocidos arces
moenibus exiguis alieno in litore tuti
inlustrat quos sola fides (3.339-42)

> [We are] exile[s] from the ancestral seats of our fatherland, and after the burnt-up citadels of Phocis were transferred, we are safe on a foreign shore with small walls, with loyalty our only claim to glory.

We have seen already that Lucan uses several recurring patterns of imagery to suggest that 'Rome' is on the move, so to speak;[113] his reference to the Massilian foundation myth has a similar effect here.

It is worth noting that this foundation myth trick is one that Lucan has played before—and will play again. Lucan foregrounds two foundation myths in his descriptions of Pompey's retreat through Italy in book two. First, when Pompey arrives at Capua Lucan reminds us of how this city was founded, by Capys, from good Trojan stock (*interea trepido descendens agmine Magnus / moenia Dardanii tenuit Campana coloni,* 2.392-3). We are likewise told that Pompey's next stop, Brundisium, was founded by exiles from Crete (*urbs est Dictaeis olim possessa colonis / quos Creta profugos vexere per aequora puppes*, 2.610-11).[114] Just as Caesar's descent through Italy implies that with each city he meets, he is sacking Rome itself, Pompey's flight suggests a related pattern: each new city is a Rome abandoned.[115] The pattern continues even

[113] On the theme of 'Rome on the move' with Pompey: Caesar's early campaign shows, ironically, how little he is worried about taking the city itself in comparison with pursuing Pompey (cf. Fantham 1996, 138); he instead sacks a series of cities (*alterae Romae*) that Pompey has occupied. As Lentulus later suggests when the Senate meets at Epirus, this is because 'Rome' is actually wherever the Senate and Pompey are (5.15-47); especially resonant is Lentulus' reference to Camillus relocating Rome to Veii when the Gauls attacked (*illic Roma fuit*, 5.28). Pompey invokes the idea of 'Rome on the move' in his comments on Lesbos: *hic sacra domus carique penates / hic mihi Roma fuit* (8.132-33). For more on the motif of the displacement of Rome (with special attention to Delphi, Pharsalus, and North Africa), see Bexley (2009). Cf. also Masters' (briefer) remarks on the geographic displacement of the city (1992, 93-99).

[114] These lines recall Vergil's Carthage at *Aeneid* 1.12-18 (cf. Fantham 1992a, ad loc.). The reminiscence is significant in the context: given that Pompey's departure from Italy is described in a way that evokes Aeneas (2.728-31) and Vergil himself foreshadows Carthage's sack and destruction upon Aeneas' departure from that city (*A.* 2.226-71), Lucan uses the echo to suggest that Pompey has here deserted yet another soon-to-be ruined city, just like he did to Rome earlier.

[115] This pattern contributes to readings of Pompey as an 'anti-Aeneas,' on which see Ahl (1976 182-9), Rossi (2000), Roux (2008, 37-9). Pompey's Aeneas-esque flight from various cities essentially invokes (and re-invokes) the idea of city destruction – without the promise of any future city foundation(s).

when Caesar is no longer even pursuing Pompey directly. At Ilerda, Lucan uses a Vergilian reminiscence to suggest that the environs of the Spanish city are *like* Vergil's portrait of primitive Italy: Ilerda (*super hunc fundata vetusta / surgit Ilerda manu*, 4.12-13) evokes Vergil's description of Agylla (*haud procul hinc saxo incolitur fundata vetusto / urbis Agyllinae sedes*, *A*. 8.478-9).[116]

By suggesting that Massilia is both like and *un*like Rome, Lucan crafts a portrait of the city that allows him to reflect on Rome's reaction to Caesar and civil war. In casting Massilia as a mirror for Rome and yet contrasting the city's un-frightened response to Caesar's advance, Massilia functions as an example of how Rome *should* have reacted. Lucan even underscores the irony of the situation in mentioning that the Greeks at Massilia do not succumb to *Graia levitate* (3.302): these unexpectedly courageous Greeks make Rome and its speedy capitulation to Caesar look even worse by comparison. Lucan raises a similar point by presenting the exchange between Caesar and the Massilians in a way that evokes the political maneuvering that preceded Caesar's decision to cross the Rubicon. When the embassy requests—in an ominous echo of the lines of Lucan's proem—that Caesar enter the city without arms (*terribiles aquilas infestaque signa,* 3.30; cf. *infestisque obuia signis / signa, pares aquilas*, 1.6-7), Caesar responds that to do so would be an affront to his status (*degener…dimissis armis,* 3.367). His reasoning here recalls his rationale for refusing to disarm in the negotiations leading up to outbreak of the war. Just as the Massilians provide a model for how Rome *should* have reacted, Lucan reminds us here as well of how Caesar *should* have treated Rome. [117]

In the end, the Massilians' pleas for neutrality are naïve and misguided; their city is doubly marked out for attack by Caesar. On the one hand, insofar as it is a veritable image of Rome itself, Massilia cannot escape attack precisely *because* Caesar is waging war on Rome. And yet, even when the Massilians emphasize that theirs is a foreign city (and should therefore be exempt from Roman civil wars, 3.310-14), their argument is still unconvincing.[118] What the Massilians have failed to realize is that they cannot remain a neutral party in the war because it is a worldwide conflict, a struggle that not only pits Romans against Romans but nations against

[116] See Thompson and Bruère (1970, 152) and Asso (2009, ad loc).

[117] See Rowland (1969, 206). Cf. Caes. *Civ*. 1.9, Plu. *Pomp*. 58.4, and App. *BC* 2.30.

[118] Lucan purposefully omits mentioning any of the Pompeians who were at Massilia (e.g., L. Domitius Ahenobarbus, L. Nasidius), though they are mentioned by Caesar (*Civ*. 1.34, 2.3).

nations. As if to highlight this very fact, Lucan positions a lengthy catalogue of Pompey's foreign troops between his account of events at Rome at the beginning of the third book and Massilia at its end (3.169-207). Before he begins the catalogue, Lucan even foregrounds the idea that the war is universal: *interea <u>totum</u> Magni fortuna <u>per orbem</u> / secum casuras in proelia moverat urbes* (3.169-70). Massilia is unfortunately no different from these other *urbes per orbem*, and when Caesar involves the unwilling city in the war, he ironically confirms the claim that the embassy makes at the beginning of its plea: the two cities do indeed share *communia…fata* (3.308-9).

(The) *Bellum Civile* goes to Sea

Given the associations that Lucan carefully builds between Massilia and Rome, it is no surprise that he casts the ensuing battle fought at Massilia as a re-enactment of the civil war. Lucan begins his description of the conflict with the Romans failing to make much progress on land (3. 452-508), but the battle heats up when they decide to move their attack to the sea (3.509-72). The fighting ranges from the ramming of ships, to attacks launched at great distances, to man to man combat, and many of the soldiers on both sides die in wildly unusual—and incredible—ways. Lucan even draws special attention to the fact that his catalogue of deaths is extraordinary, claiming that the day presented many examples of strange deaths (*multaque ponto / praebuit ille dies varii miracula fati*, 3.633-4).[119] As the narrative unfolds, it becomes clear that Lucan's characterization of the battle as such will not disappoint: the series of deaths in the naval conflict owe more to Lucan's literary goals than to any sort of verisimilitude.

Indeed, the battle is full of imagery associated with the act of civil war elsewhere in the text. For instance, before the fighting even properly begins Lucan signals that it is a conflict between *pares*. Accordingly, he describes how each contingent draws up its ships on opposite sides of the harbor, in terms that are evocative of gladiatorial combat:[120]

[119] Cf. Opelt (1957, 437, 442-3), Metger (1957, 27-9), Leigh (1997, 249-59). Hömke, though her remarks center on Lucan's Scaeva, also discusses Lucan's "choreography of death" (2010, 101). Hunink aptly characterizes the whole of the narrative as one that presents a shift from the more typical description of heroes who mete out death to a series of figures who simply meet death (Hunink 1992, ad 3.583-646). For an analysis of battle violence and battle wounds in Neronian literature more generally, see Most (1992).

[120] On this motif in Lucan, one of the best treatments is still Ahl (1976, 82-88). On *par/pares* and its importance in Lucan's poem see Henderson (1988, 45).

> quisque suam statione ratem, paribusque lacertis
> Caesaris hinc puppes, hinc Graio remige classis
> tollitur (3.525-7)
>
> Each one started his ship from its station, and with rival strength of arms: on one side Caesar's ships, on the other the fleet powered by Greek rowers.

When the initial maneuvers of each side prove ineffectual, Caesar's admiral, D. Brutus, decides on a change of strategy, and orders the Romans to turn the broadsides of their ships towards the Greeks so as to invite them to attack (3.559-61). When the Greeks attack the Romans' exposed flanks, the beaks of their ships get stuck and they become entangled in their own oars:

> tum quaecumque ratis temptavit robora Bruti,
> ictu victa suo percussae capta cohaesit;
> ast alias manicaeque ligant teretesque catenae,
> seque tenent remis. (3.563-66)
>
> Then, whatever ship tested the strength of Brutus, defeated by its own blow, clung captured to the ship it rammed. Still others are bound up in their grappling hooks and smooth chains, and they entangle themselves with their own oars.

These lines are an articulation in miniature of Lucan's cosmic principle *in se magna ruunt* (1.81): the ships and their crews, like Rome turning inward on itself, become part of their own downfall.[121]

Lucan also provides examples of deaths that amount to outright enactments of the fatal divisiveness of civil conflict. One victim finds himself literally caught between opposite sides: his body is crushed by the beaks of two ships as they crash into one another (3.652-3). In another grisly yet similarly suggestive scene, a Massilian named Lycidas is actually torn into two pieces. As the Romans catch him with a grappling hook and try to pull him overboard, his comrades try to 'save' him by holding his legs (3.635-46).[122] Apart from presenting us with this image of

[121] The action of the naval battle on a more general level is suggestive in this regard: as Lucan describes how ships ranged against each other on opposing sides ram into each other (cf. *diversae…carinae*, 3.654), he creates an image of inward implosion. Accordingly, Masters' remarks on Lucan's emphasis on the "mass" and "bulk" of the ships in the Massilia narrative are especially pertinent (1992, 34-42). Lucan's depiction of a mass of ships running into one another (*in se magna ruunt*) reflects the inward implosion of the poem's 'massive' universe.

[122] Not to be overlooked here is the fact that Lycidas' own countrymen play a pivotal role in his destruction.

division, Lucan takes the idea one step further in his description of the actual process of dying as Lycidas experiences it:

> pars ultima trunci
> tradidit in letum vacuos vitalibus artus;
> at tumidus qua pulmo iacet, qua viscera fervent,
> haeserunt ibi fata diu luctataque multum
> hac cum parte viri vix omnia membra tulerunt. (3.642-46)
>
> The lower part of his body consigned to death the limbs that lacked vital organs. But where the lungs were swollen with air, where his vitals were still warm, there his death got stuck and struggled for a while with that part of his body until it was able to overtake all his limbs.

Not only is Lycidas' death (*fata*) quite literally divided between the two parts of his body (*ultima pars*; *hac cum parte*), but Lucan creates an additional level of microcosm by suggesting that even death itself is at war with and within Lycidas' body (*luctataque… / hac cum parte*).

In many scenes Lucan also portrays the deaths of the soldiers in the battle in terms that are either literally or figuratively evocative of suicide.[123] Some of the men who are thrown overboard in the course of the fighting drown in water that is saturated with their own blood (3.576-7). Others are happy to drown themselves as long as they drag their enemies down with them (3.695-6). Still others affix their bodies to their ships so that they might 'soften the blow' when their ship is rammed by the enemy (3.707-8). During one of his more extended descriptions of the carnage, Lucan describes how one man dies by committing a *double* suicide. In a rather bizarre instance of the grieving parent *topos*, we are told of an unnamed father who, after witnessing the injury of his son Argus, commits suicide so as to prevent Argus from dying before him (3.721-51).

As with the death of Lycidas, Lucan incorporates multiple levels of civil war imagery within this one scene. In the first place, Lucan's description of the son's injury is in itself highly suggestive. Wounded by a missile that strikes him *qua…medius descendit in ilia venter* (3.724), he slumps over and 'helps' in his own evisceration by driving the weapon further in with his own

[123] On the prevalence of suicidal imagery in Lucan's poem, see Roche (2009, 104).

weight (*adiuvitque suo procumbens pondere ferrum*, 3.725).[124] As he watches his son die, the father cannot bear the thought of his son 'preceding' him in death; instead of giving Argus a last hug and kiss (745-6), he hastens to kill himself before his son dies (*letum praecedere nati / festinantem*, 750-1). Lucan's use of *praecedere* is significant. The father's death temporally 'precedes' his son's, but also surpasses it in its excess: for dad, just *one* death is not enough (*animam morti non credidit uni*, 3.751). Lucan has presented us with a struggle between father and son not only over who can die first, but who can die better! Stabbing himself *per viscera* (7.748) and then throwing himself overboard to drown (749-50), Argus' father not only doubles his son's suicidal death, but in even more of a turn inward, does so by doubly killing himself.[125]

Ovidian Contexts

As this scene and many others have shown, Lucan presents the battle with great sensitivity to varying levels of microcosm, and it is on this note that I now want to consider several instances where Lucan makes use of Ovidian models to convey his idiosyncratic ideas about martial violence. Unlike Lucan's allusion to Tereus at the treasury scene earlier (where Lucan invokes a specific Ovidian moment in order to draw a pointed comparison between characters in Ovid's text and his own) in considering Lucan's use of Ovidian material here, I will adopt a slightly different interpretive approach. Apart from isolating several scenes that seem to have been inspired by Ovid, I want to comment on how and why Lucan manipulates traditional battle *topoi* for which Ovid has provided the primary model.[126]

Of these two concerns, the 'how' is fairly clear: as Esposito's work has illustrated, Lucan almost always chooses to amplify many of the already grotesque details of his chosen model. [127] This is true of Lucan's technique, generally speaking, throughout the *Bellum Civile* and will be

[124] Of course, Lucan suggests that the suicidal stabbing of one's own *viscera* is a metaphor for civil war as early as the poem's third line: *in sua victrici conversum viscera dextra* (cf. Verg. *A*. 6.833: *neu patriae validas in viscera vertite viris*).

[125] On the 'doubling' motif as a part of depictions of civil war, see Hardie (1993, 10-11, 22-26); Masters (1992, 91-3); Dyson (2001, 210-27); and Stover (forthcoming).

[126] On *topoi* as areas for allusivity, see Hinds (1998, 34-47).

[127] See my comments on Esposito, with bibliography, at p. 49, n. 91, above.

apparent in the examples I have selected below. As to the question of 'why,' this is an area where much of Lucanian criticism has still been lacking. Though one might certainly attribute Lucan's amplificatory technique to his desire to surpass his model, the shortcoming of this explanation is that it ultimately does not take us very far in our understanding of the poem as a whole. My goal here, therefore, is to outline some ways we might contextualize Lucan's borrowings from Ovid with a view toward the themes of his battle narrative as I have delineated them thus far.

In order to better explain what is meant by Lucan's tendency to 'amplify' his models for battle violence, let us first consider an example cited by Esposito: Lucan's treatment of the injury of a Roman soldier named Tyrrhenus. Hit in the head with a bullet from a sling, Lucan describes how the injury causes Tyrrhenus' eyes to erupt from their sockets:

> stantem sublimi Tyrrhenum culmine prorae
> Lygdamus excussa Balearis tortor habenae
> glande petens <u>solido fregit cava tempora plumbo</u>.
> sedibus expulsi, postquam cruor omnia rupit
> vincula, <u>procurrunt oculi</u>, stat lumine rapto
> <u>attonitus mortisque illas putat esse tenebras</u>. (3.709-14)
>
> Lygdamus, wielder of the Balearic sling, struck Tyrrhenus as he was standing on the topmost part of the prow of his ship. The bullet shattered his hollow temples with solid lead. After the blood broke through all its restraints, his eyes, driven from their sockets, run forth. His sight snatched away, he stands there astonished and thinks he is looking at the shadows of death.

One of the principal models for this scene is Vergil's description of one of Mezentius' victims in *Aeneid* 9:[128]

> stridentem fundam positis Mezentius hastis
> ipse ter adducta circum caput egit habena
> et <u>media adversi liquefacto tempora plumbo</u>
> diffidit ac multa porrectum extendit harena (*A*. 9.586-89)
>
> Having put away his spears, Mezentius whirled his whistling sling around his head three times, with its band pulled tight. He split open the middle of his enemy's temples with molded lead and laid him out dead on the heap of sand.

[128] Cf. Narducci (1979, 81-2).

But comparable as well is one of Ovid's adaptations of this particular battle wound. He describes how a centaur named Amycus bashes the head of a Lapith named Celadon with a chandelier, which, in turn, causes his eyes to burst out:[129]

> exsiluere oculi, disiectisque ossibus oris
> acta retro naris medioque est fixa palato (*Met.* 12.252-53)
>
> His eyes jumped out of their sockets, and with the bones of his face shattered, his nose, driven backward, was fixed in his throat.

Lucan has melded Vergil's description of the wounding to the temples with Ovid's description of the dislocation of the eyes. Apart from combining the models, he has the rather gory detail about the swelling mass of blood behind the eyes (*cruor omnia rupit / vincula*), which causes them to pop out of their sockets.

Apart from the example from Ovid's Centauromachy, however, Lucan also has in mind another Ovidian scene: Achilles' brutal attempt to kill Cycnus.[130] At one point in his attack on the impervious Cycnus, Achilles beats his victim about the face with the hilt of his sword:

> ter quater ora viri capulo et cava tempora pulsat,
> cedentique sequens instat turbatque ruitque
> attonitoque negat requiem; pavor occupat illum
> ante oculosque natant tenebrae (*Met.* 12.133-36)
>
> Three and four times, he beats the face of the man and his hollow temples
> with his sword-hilt, and following him as he withdraws, he presses on, confuses him, and rushes at him. He denies rest to his astonished foe. Fear overcomes Cycnus and shadows float before his eyes.

Though Cycnus does not lose his eyes, Lucan has incorporated elements of Ovid's description of blurry vision in his own depiction of Tyrrhenus' loss of sight. The allusion is also a particularly nice touch when considered in the broader context of Lucan's Tyrrhenus vignette. Although Tyrrhenus sees the shadows and initially thinks he is dead, he soon realizes otherwise. In itself,

[129] Cf. Esposito (1994, 95).

[130] Cf. Siciliano (1998, 311).

this is a significant divergence from the earlier models—and it is, furthermore, a change that Lucan's evocation of Cycnus underscores. His Tyrrhenus (like Ovid's Cycnus) does not die from his wound(s). The Ovidian dimension of Lucan's presentation also looks ahead to Tyrrhenus' new life without eyes. He asks his colleagues to 'transform' him into a human ballista, so that he is not made useless by his injury (*vos, ait, o socii, sicut tormenta soletis / me quoque*, 3.716-7). As he goes on to explain, if they configure him properly, he will throw the spears as if he were one of the war machines positioned on deck (3.717-8).

Another example of Lucan's mixing of Ovidian models is found in his treatment of the Massilian sailor Gyareus. His death scene begins properly when one of his comrades, a helmsman named Telo, steers his ship into view (3.592-99). When Telo is killed by a javelin wound to the heart, Gyareus tries to climb onto Telo's ship, and is soon rewarded with a grisly death. Pierced by a weapon, *per ilia*, his dying body is affixed to the ship:

> dum cupit in sociam Gyareus erepere puppem
> excipit inmissum suspensa per ilia ferrum
> adfixusque rati telo retinente pependit (3.600-2)
>
> Gyareus, hoping to climb onto his ally's ship, is taken out by a missile sent
> flying through his guts, and suspended, he hangs there, affixed to the ship
> by the clinging weapon.

In constructing this scene, Lucan has in mind one of the deaths from Ovid's description of the wedding-feast row of Perseus and Phineus in *Metamorphoses* 5. Ovid describes therein how the spear of a certain Corythus pins the hand of Pelates to a door post. When he is subsequently stabbed in the side by Abas, Pelates dies, hanging from the door by his pinned hand:[131]

> demere temptabant laevi quoque robora postis
> Cinyphius Pelates; temptanti dextera fixa est
> cuspide Marmaridae Corythi ligno cohaesit;
> haerenti latus hausit Abas, nec corruit ille,
> sed retinente manum moriens e poste pependit. (*Met.* 5.123-7)

[131] Esposito (1994, 91), cites these lines in his discussion (cf. Esposito 1995, 62-3). He does not connect them to Lucan's Gyareus, but instead to other scenes of mass suffering, at 3.661-8, where hands cling to the side of a boat. I discuss this passage at p. 74, below.

> Cinyphian Pelates was also attempting to tear off a beam from the left door post. His hand was caught in the attempt by the spear point of Marmaridan Corythus and pinned to the wood. Abas stabbed him in the side as he hung there, and he did not fall to the ground, but hung down, rather, from the post that was holding his hand as he died.

Lucan has certainly borrowed from Ovid many of the details dealing with the affixation of parts of the body, ensuing suspension, and death while hanging. One of his notable changes, however, is that he has changed the body part that is pierced and subsequently affixed from *manus* to – perhaps not surprisingly – *ilia.* This change explains why Lucan is able to collapse Ovid's two assailants into one,[132] but it is also suggestive of the types of suicidal imagery seen elsewhere in the battle and in the poem at large. I have already demonstrated how Lucan uses this type of imagery in the death of Argus (*medius …in ilia venter,* 3.724) to suggest that the death is a suicide.[133] Lucan's alteration of his model has much the same effect here. To further highlight this effect, Lucan phrases his depiction of the wound (*inmissum suspensa per ilia ferrum*, 3.601) in a way that evokes the suicide scene of Ovid's Pyramus:

> quoque erat accinctus, demisit in ilia ferrum
> nec mora, ferventi moriens e vulnere traxit.
> ut iacuit resupinus humo, cruor emicat alte (*Met.* 4.119-21)
>
> And he took the sword at his side and plunged it into his guts
> with no delay, and as he was dying he pulled the sword from his
> warm wound. As he lay there on the ground on his back,
> his blood spurted out high into the air.

As with his treatment of Tyrrhenus, Lucan manipulates Ovidian models here to achieve a specific effect: Gyareus' death is to be understood—just like many other *miracula fati* that Lucan narrates—as emblematic of civil war. And indeed, Gyareus' death foreshadows one of Lucan's more explicitly emblematic deaths that occurs later in the battle (but which I have already discussed): Lycidas' death by division.[134] Before Lycidas is torn apart, he is caught up by a

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[132] As Ovid says of a groin injury at *Met.* 5.133: *letifer ille locus*.

[133] p. 63-4, above.

[134] p. 62-3, above.

grappling hook (*affixit*, 636), and he hangs suspended (*suspensa*, 637) between the two ships as the crews on both sides pull him apart.[135]

I have saved Lucan's Catus for last not only because his death is an excellent example of the amplification and pointed adaptation of an Ovidian model, but because Lucan also presents Catus' death as a veritable microcosm of *multiple* facets of civil war. We first meet Catus in the context of Lucan's description of a Roman ship surrounded by enemies (3.584-5), and are told, suggestively, that its very crew is divided between defending the left and right flanks of the ship (*robore diducto*, 3.584). As Catus attempts to grasp the stern ornament of one of the opposing ships, he is pierced in the chest and the back at the same time by two different weapons. Lucan describes how the two spears meet in the middle of his body and are eventually expelled from their entry points by blood as it bursts out of the wounds:

> terga simul pariter missis et pectora telis
> transigitur; medio concurrit pectore ferrum
> et stetit incertus, flueret quo volnere, sanguis,
> donec utrasque simul largus cruor expulit hastas
> divisitque animam sparsitque in volnera letum. (3.587-91)

> He is pierced in back and chest at the same time by weapons hurled together. The points run up to meet each other in the middle of his chest, and his blood stands uncertain as to which wound it will flow out of, until a welling gush of blood expels both spears at the same time, dividing his soul and spraying out his death between the wounds.

Lucan's depiction of Catus' double wound draws from Ovid's description of Hercules' wounding of Nessus (*Met.* 9.127-30). Ovid depicts Nessus' wound as a 'double wound,' since Hercules shoots him through both the back and the chest with one arrow (*missa fugientia terga sagitta / traicit. exstabat ferrum de pectore aduncum* 9.127-8). Ovid is also rather preoccupied with Nessus' blood, describing how it gushes from each side of the wound Hercules' arrow has created: *sanguis per utrumque foramen / emicuit* (129-30).

Lucan's adaptation is decidedly more expansive in its grotesque detail, but also effectively 'doubles' Ovid's double wound. Catus is killed by a truly double wound, caused by two weapons, hurled with equal force at the same time by two assailants (*pariter missis telis*), from two different sides. What is more, he also dies a double(d) death: both his life (*divisitque*

[135] I owe this point of comparison to Hunink (1992, ad loc).

animam) and his death are divided (*sparsit…in volnera letum*). Though Lucan is certainly having a bit of fun here, the effect created by all the doubling also encapsulates many of the motifs that Lucan has expressed throughout the narrative. In the wounding and death of one man, Lucan presents a powerful image not only of two sides ranged against one another as *pares*, fighting with equal force and in equal time (*simul pariter missis telis*), but also the inward-turning and mutual rush to death by collision (*concurrit medio pectore*).[136] Not only has Lucan outdone his model, but he has done so in a way that is reflective of his interest in creating microcosms of civil war. Here in Catus' death is a microcosm of the entire battle – and the entire war.

Memories of Sulla

We have seen thus far that Lucan's list of emblematic deaths at Massilia (whether inspired by Ovid or not) are indeed variously vivid, grotesque, and, admittedly, often evocative of pathos; at the same time, they are also configured in ways that ultimately serve to connect the events of the battle at that city with those at Rome. Even though Massilia is a Greek city, it is doomed to suffer Rome's fate, and a *bellum civile* is fought in its harbor. By way of concluding my remarks on Lucan's Massilia narrative, I want to outline below two further (and final) aspects of Lucan's presentation of the battle violence that enhance the connections he has built between the Greek city and Rome itself: first, the internal echoes of Lucan's account of the Marian and Sullan proscriptions within the battle narrative (2.64-233), and second, various images he uses within the battle to suggest that it represents the Roman ship(wreck) of state.

First, the Sullan echoes at Massilia. As one of the earliest places in the epic where Lucan describes a scene of civil-war carnage in great detail, the proscriptions inform Lucan's conception of civil violence elsewhere in the epic. The imagery used to characterize the violence of the Sullan period recurs in various battle narratives throughout the remainder of the text. The Roman elder who describes the carnage in book two even calls attention to this very fact:

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[136] The mutual onrush of the weapons toward Catus' heart creates a suicidal image, but if we allow that Lucan's description of Catus' blood, aside from drawing on Nessus, also recalls Ovid's description of the suicide of Ajax, the image is even further enhanced. Just as Catus' blood expels the weapons from his wound, so also is Ajax's sword forced out of his self-inflicted wound by his blood (*nec valuere manus infixum educere telum / expulit ipse cruor*, *Met.* 13.393-4). Though out of the two of these possible models Nessus is more compelling, the hints of Ovid's Ajax are nonetheless suggestive when considered against the backdrop of all the suicidal imagery Lucan employs both here at Massilia and elsewhere in the text.

haec rursus patienda manent, hoc ordine belli
ibitur, hic stabit civilibus exitus armis. (2.223-4)

These things remain to be suffered again, this will be gone through
again in the order of war, this outcome will remain again for civil arms.

Many elements of the Massilian naval battle fulfill this ominous prediction. The description of the Tiber clogged with the bodies of the proscribed (2.208-14) finds its analogue in Lucan's description of the sea at Massilia, where Greek and Roman ships can hardly maneuver around the crowd of corpses blocking their way in the water (3.575). As the battle progresses, Lucan also broaches the idea that dead bodies become weapons unto themselves (e.g., Tyrrhenus' remarks: *ingentem militis usum / hoc habet ex magna defunctum parte cadaver / viventis feriere loco*, 3.719-20, cf. 3.626) in a way that echoes his earlier claim that the heap of dead bodies in Rome during the proscriptions killed many of the living (*peraguntque cadavera partem / caedis: viva graves elidunt corpora trunci,* 2.205-6).

Even once the battle is over, Lucan alights again on a motif first presented in his digression on Sullan violence: confusion regarding the identity of the corpses. Once Sulla has exacted his vengeance and bodies lie in heaps everywhere in the city, grieving relatives search for the heads that belong to the bodies of the slain (*perque omnes truncos, cum qua cervice recisum / conveniat, quaesisse, caput,* 2.172-3). Lucan ends his Massilia narrative with the detail that many grieving wives and parents struggle to identify the unrecognizable bodies of the dead:

coniunx saepe sui confusis voltibus unda
credidit ora viri Romanum amplexa cadaver
accensisque rogis miseri de corpore trunco
certavere patres. (3.758-761)

Often a wife mistook a face disfigured by the waves and embraced a Roman corpse, thinking it her husband. And wretched fathers fought with each other over a headless body beside lit pyres.

These lines provide one final meditation on the similarities between Massilia and Rome and underscore the fact that the battle is a microcosm of Roman *bellum civile*. The fact that the Massilian wife mistakes a Roman corpse for that of her husband contributes to the analogy between Rome and Massilia that Lucan first establishes in the pre-siege conference with Caesar;

that grieving fathers contend for the possession of cadavers is yet another disheartening example of the divisiveness that Lucan has emphasized throughout.

Ship(wreck)s of State

Apart from these echoes of the proscriptions, Lucan also invites us to compare Massilia and Rome by evoking the ship of state metaphor at different points during the battle and suggesting that the mass *naufragium* that happens at Massilia functions as a metaphor for the wrecking of Rome itself.[137] Lucan first broaches the metaphor—and programmatically so—in book one when he likens the desertion of Rome to the abandonment of a storm-wrecked ship by its crew. According to Lucan's depiction, the frenzied mob of Roman citizens (*volgus inani / percussum terrore*, 1.486-7; *turba…/ praecipiti lymphata gradu*, 1.495-6) leaves the city with the same degree of alacrity that a crew bails out of a sinking ship:[138]

> qualis, cum turbidus Auster
> reppulit a Libycis inmensum Syrtibus aequor
> fractaque veliferi sonuerunt pondera mali,
> desilit in fluctus deserta puppe magister
> navitaque et nondum sparsa conpage carinae
> naufragium sibi quisque facit, sic urbe relicta
> in bellum fugitur. (1.498-503)

> As when a stormy North Wind has pushed back the vast
> sea from Libyan Syrtes, and the weight of the sail-bearing mast has
> broken and cracked, the helmsman and sailors jump into the waves,
> abandoning the ship, and before the framework of the vessel becomes scattered,
> each one makes a shipwreck for himself; thus with the city

[137] On shipwreck (*naufragium*) as a defining motif in the *B.C.*, see the discussion in Matthews (2008, ad 5.521). On the ship of state metaphor more generally, see Nisbet and Hubbard (1970) on Hor. *Carm.* 1.14. The motif occurs prominently at 4.87-88 (a storm at Ilerda) and at 5.492-4 (Caesar's Adriatic Storm), where Caesar's soldiers chide him and call him a *felix naufragus* (5.699). Considering that the 'shipwreck of Rome' is both caused by Caesar and ends up directly benefitting him, the soldiers' remark is as prescient as it is paradoxical.

[138] I discussed this passage (partially) above at p. 50-51. It is significant that Lucan specifies that the storm here is one that is spawned off the coast of Libya and even mentions the Syrtes, because he will go on to describe a storm in this very region later on in book nine. For my discussion of this particular storm within the context of book nine, see Ch. 3, p. 131-132, below, and on storms in Lucan generally, see Morford (1967, 20-58). Lucan's mention of the desertion of the ship by its *magister* (at least at this moment in the text) certainly refers at least in part to Pompey's abandonment of Rome. In fact, Pompey is even likened to Rome's helmsman (about to desert the 'ship of state' once more) just before his loss at Pharsalus (7.125-7).

abandoned, there is a fleeing into war…

Lucan's simile invites us to identify *bellum civile* itself with the *naufragium* described here. Just as the city is abandoned so that its citizens might engage in civil war (*in bellum fugitur*, 503), so too is the ship abandoned so that each man on board might "make a shipwreck for himself" (*naufragium quisque sibi facit*, 502).[139] This is an idea to which Lucan notably returns, via internal echo, in his Sullan narrative in book two. In the midst of the mass carnage ordered by Sulla, before he goes on to detail the atrocities committed by various citizens, Lucan claims that *fecit sibi quisque nefas* ("each man made his own *nefas*," 2.147). To pursue *bellum nefandum* is, in effect, to contribute to the *naufragium* of Rome—to abandon and fracture the ship of state.

The same type of imagery Lucan uses in this early simile to describe the abandonment of the city and ship of state is reprised in the Massilian naval battle in several key places. As the battle narrative progresses, we meet more than one frenzied *turba,* less inclinced to save their ship than either to abandon or go down with it. At 3.647-52, for instance, Lucan describes how a *nimium pugnax turba* crowds together on one side of a ship and thereby causes it to sink:

dum nimium pugnax unius turba carinae
incumbit prono lateri vacuamque relinquit
qua caret hoste, ratem, congesto pondere puppes
versa cava texit pelagus nautasque carina
bracchia nec licuit vasto iactare profundo
sed clauso periere mari.

While one vessel's throng, too aggressive,
Leans over the tilting side and leaves unmanned the section
Free from enemy, by their massed weight the ship

[139] The interpretation of these lines is not uncontroversial. Getty (1940, ad loc.) glosses their meaning as "each man makes a shipwreck (i.e., wrecks the ship) to save himself" and thinks Lucan means that the men are tearing the ship into pieces so as to have something to float on while in the water. Roche (2009, ad loc.) deems Getty's gloss an 'overinterpretation,' claiming that Lucan means that in abandoning the ship, the sailors are also abandoning their chances of survival. Apart from overlooking Lucan's mention of the scattered, broken-up ship parts (*sparsa conpage carinae*) in conjunction with each sailor making his own personal shipwreck (*naufragium sibi quisque facit*), Roche's quibble with Getty's gloss misses the point. The image is one of many of Lucan's inward-turning metaphors for civil war: the sailors do indeed play a part in their own downfall by bailing from the ship but also by further dismantling it for their own survival. Not far from Lucan's mind, perhaps, is his description of the *semina belli* (1.158-182) as catalogue of the reasons citizens found the war profitable for their own ends (cf. *multis utile bellum*, 1.182).

Was overturned and covered sea and sailors with its hollow keel:
They could not strike the vast deep with their arms
But perished in their ocean prison. (trans. Braund)

The image is, like many others in the poem, evocative of suicide. After all, it is the crew itself—not the enemy—that causes its own ship to sink.

Just as this *turba* has ruinously rushed into choosing sides (so to speak), in his next vignette, Lucan describes another *turba* whose actions exemplify the motif of confusion of friends and enemies in a most extreme form. Refusing to allow a group of fellow sailors entry onto their vessel, this *inpia turba* cuts off their allies' hands as they attempt to climb up the sides of the ship:

pars maxima turbae
naufraga iactatis morti obluctata lacertis
puppes ad auxilium sociae concurrit; at illis
robora cum vetitis prensaret altius ulnis
nutaretque ratis populo peritura recepta,
inpia turba super medios ferit ense lacertos:
bracchia linquentes Graia pendentia puppe
A manibus cecidere suis. (3.661-8)

Most of a shipwrecked
Crew struggled with death by tossing their arms
And resorted to an allied ship for help; but as they
Tried to grab the timbers higher up with arms forbidden so to do
And as the ship rocked, doomed to sink if she took the crowd on board,
The wicked crew above with swords chopped off their arms. (trans. Braund)

In the crew's defense, they do engage in such action in order to save their ship (*ratis peritura*) from the very overcrowding that caused the ship in the preceeding scene to capsize (3.649-52). And yet, while the previous crew emblematized civil war in causing their own ship to sink, in this scene Lucan ups the ante in terms of both gore and civil war imagery itself; that the *turba* is *inpia* (3.666) is especially evocative to this end. As these men mutilate their allies in the interest of their own self-preservation, analogies to the various rationalizations for engaging in civil war cannot be far from Lucan's or his readers' minds.

Not only do these ships reflect the larger Roman ship of state, but the dissolution of various ships at Massilia also replicates the macrocosmic disintegration of Lucan's universe. In

the first example I discussed above where the combined weight of the crew causes their ship to capsize, Lucan's explicit reference to the the crew's *congesto pondere* suggests that the sinking of this ship may be likened to his conception of weighty, universal self-implosion. Lucan's emphasis on the cracking "bonds" of various ships (e.g., *postquam ruptis pelagus conpagibus hausit*, 3.629; *hic Latiae rostro conpagem ruperat alni*, 3.597) within the battle narrative is also evocative of his imagery of universal dissolution (cf. *cum conpage soluta / saecula tot mundi suprema coegerit hora*, 1.72-73).[140]

In delineating these links between universal destruction and the destruction of ships, Lucan is contributing to a poetic dialogue begun by Lucretius and Vergil. In an important precedent for Lucan's 'universal' ships of state, Lucretius famously compares the fracturing of a ship in shipwreck to the scattering of atoms in the universe:

> sed quasi naufragiis magnis multisque coortis
> disiactare solet magnum mare transtra cavernas
> antemnas prorem malos tonsasque natantis,
> per terrarum omnis oras fluitantia aplustra
> ut videantur et indicium mortalibus edant,
> infidi maris insidias virisque dolumque
> ut vitare velint…
> sic tibi si finita semel primordia quaedam
> constitues, aevom debebunt sparsa per omnem
> disiectare aestus diversi materiai (Lucr. 2.552-8, 560-2)

> But as when a great many shipwrecks have occured, the sea is accustomed to toss about rowers' seats, holds, yardarms, prows, masts, and set the oars all to swimming so that stern ornaments can be seen floating all over the shores and provide a warning for mortals not to trust the sea, with its snares and treachery, and to wish to avoid it… Thus if you establish that certain beginnings of things are finite, they, scattered through all time, must be tossed on the sweeping tides of matter.

At the same time, Vergil's storm scene in book one of the *Aeneid* is also an important intertext for Lucan as it also mediates between cosmic and political imagery in ways that looks ahead to Lucan's treatment. Not only does Vergil compare the loosening of the storm winds to the

[140] Lucan also notably refers to *conpages* in his ship of state simile: *nondum sparsa conpage carinae* (1.502). The word can be used to describe the joints or bonds of a framework, as of a ship, or the structure/framework of the universe itself, cf. *OLD* s.v. 3a and 3c.

outbreak of war (e.g., *ac venti veluti agmine facto*, *A.* 1.82), [141] but he also plays on the idea of dissolution and the breaking of *compages* to draw connections between the various macro and microcosmic events in his poem. For instance, Vergil describes the fracturing and dissolution of Abas' ship in terms similar to Lucan's various depictions of sinking ships (*laxis laterum compagibus omnes / accipiunt inimicum imbrem, rimisque fatiscunt*, *A.* 1.222-3), and reprises the imagery once more with his description of the closing of the Gates of War:

> dirae ferro et compagibus artis
> claudentur belli portae; Furor impius intus
> saeva sedens super arma et centum vinctum aenis
> post tergum nodis fremet horridus ore cruento. (*A.* 1.293-6)
>
> The dread Gates of War will be sealed with iron and tight-fitting
> bolts; impious Furor, sitting within, on a pile of weapons and with
> hands bound behind him with a hundred bronze knots will
> rave, terrible, with a bloody mouth.

These gestures, among others, suggest a link between cosmic and political chaos in Vergil's narrative, but the connections between these macro and microcosmic conflicts find their fullest and most explicit expression in the *Aeneid*'s opening simile. Here, Vergil likens Neptune's calming of the storm to a revered stateman's soothing of an angry mob:

> ac veluti magno in populo cum saepe coorta est
> seditio, saevitque animis ignobile volgus,
> iamque faces et saxa volant—furor arma ministrat;
> tum, pietate gravem ac meritis si forte virum quem
> conspexere, silent, arrectisque auribus adstant;
> ille regit dictis animos, et pectora mulcet. (*A.* 1.148-53)
>
> And just as when in a great nation strife has arisen
> And the base mob grows violent in its anger, and now torches
> And rocks fly – rage supplies the weapons;
> Then, if by chance they see a man distinguished in his duty and
> service, they grow quiet and stand alert with pricked-up ears.
> He rules their minds with words and soothes their hearts.

[141] For more discussion of the storm (and its Lucretian antecedents), see Hardie (1986, 190-1).

In many ways, Lucan's Massilia narrative reprises the themes of Vergil's opening book, but with a characteristically Lucanian twist. The nexus of imagery Vergil builds throughout his first book has the effect of suggesting that Aeneas' storm-wracked crew might be profitably interpreted through the lens of the ship of state metaphor, and his opening simile suggests that, under the right leadership, the ship might navigate through the storm of political chaos and war to a peaceful safety. Lucan's spin on the imagery is not nearly so optimistic, and this is a point made abundantly clear within the Massilia narrative itself, where Lucan seems to have had Vergil's famous simile in mind in one particular description of the fighting. As the battle drags on, Lucan describes how the sailors run out of missiles and resort to some rather unconvential weapons instead:

> iamque omni fusis nudato milite telis
> <u>invenit arma furor</u>. remum contorsit in hostem
> alter, at hi totum validis aplustre lacertis,
> avolsasque rotant expulso remige sedes.
> in pugnam fregere rates. (3.670-4)

> And now that the soldiers were stripped of weapons and had all thrown their missiles, rage finds arms. One launched an oar at an enemy; others launched a whole stern ornament with sturdy arms, and, with the rowers tossed from their places, they wrench away the benches and hurl them too. They broke apart their ships to use in the fighting.

Here is yet another Lucanian vision of the Roman ship of state, and the Vergilian echo within is jarring. In the *Bellum Civile,* there is no statesman (and certainly no Neptune!) to calm the 'storm' of war; and furthermore, whereas Vergil's *furor*-driven mob throws stones and torches, Lucan's sailors turn inward, to their own ships, in their search for arms. Similar to the sailors in Lucan's *naufragium* simile in book one, these men also make their own shipwreck (*naufragium quisque sibi facit*) by breaking apart their own ships (*in pugnam fregere rates*)—and dismantling their own state—in their pursuance of war.[142]

As the events of the battle draw to a close, Lucan devotes a few lines to credit Caesar's admiral Brutus for winning the battle, and then, just as promptly ends book three (761-2). In

[142] Getty (1940, ad 1.502) compares this moment to the one described earlier in the ship-wreck simile at 1.501-2, where, sailors 'make their own shipwreck' by breaking apart their ship. Lucan's return to a similar idea here—where men break apart their own ship for weapons—bolsters Getty's point about the correct interpretation of the shipwreck simile in book one (the controversy about which I discussed on p. 73, n. 139, above).

reflecting on the sudden and hurried ending, Duff draws attention to Lucan's failure to mention that the city itself was successfully overtaken by Caesar's forces.[143] Given the fact that so much of what has happened at Massilia has been cast in terms that liken it to Rome, whose own sad fate looms over and colors the whole of the *Bellum Civile*, he hardly needs to.

Vulteius and His *Ratis*

We have seen thus far that Lucan uses a variety of techniques to suggest that Massilia is a microcosm of civil war: not only are many of the *miracula fati* of the battle emblematic of suicide and civil conflict, but the overall effect of Lucan's presentation is to suggest that Massilia's capture by Caesar is fundamentally akin to his 'capture' of Rome. I now want to shift my focus to a narrative that shares much in common with Massilia and will comprise the remainder of my discussion in this Chapter: Lucan's description of Vulteius and the mass-suicide of his crew midway through book four (4.402-581). As with his account of events at Massilia, Lucan constructs the Vulteius scene as a microcosm of civil war, [144] but, as we shall see, the narrative also contributes substantially to my stated concern in this Chapter—the *urbes* motif within the *Bellum Civile* as a whole.

It is safe to say that Vulteius has attracted more scholarly notice than Lucan's Massilia narrative, and most discussions of the episode focus on how Lucan's narrative constitutes a perversion of traditional heroic values.[145] Leigh's reading of Vulteius is representative: connecting Vulteius with other Caesarian soldiers (including Scaeva and Laelius), Leigh argues that Lucan's Caesarian 'heroes' exemplify the "distortion wrought on traditional values by

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[143] 1928, 171 n. 1. See also the similarly puzzled comments of Hunink (1992, ad loc).

[144] A not uncommon claim; on the episode as microcosm see Ahl (1976, 120) and Eldred (2002, 57-9).

[145] In this, Rutz's analysis has been particularly influential. He argues that Lucan uses this scene (as well as the Scaeva episode at 6.138ff.) to redefine *virtus* as a sort of *amor mortis*, (1960, 466-9). Other 'subversive' readings include: Ahl (1976, 119-21); Saylor (1990, 291); Leigh (1997, 191-233); Rudich (1997, 130-2); Hershkowitz (1998, 212-14); Esposito (2001) and Sklenář (2003, 26-34). Johnson's remarks, as applied to the battle narratives of books three and four more generally, are also relevant: "[Lucan's] parodic subversion of the martial arts entails a radical rejection of the idea of *virtus* on which the epic is founded "(1987, 57). Further discussion of Lucan's conception 'epic' heroism/*virtus* can be found in Gorman (2001, see 280-5 on Vulteius especially) and Fantham (1995), whose analysis focuses on both Lucan and Statius.

zealots of a civil war."[146] As my discussion unfolds below, I will not diverge from this *communis opinio* regarding Vulteius' (lack of) heroic status as much as bolster it—by way, not coincidentally, of pointing to two particularly Ovidian moments within the narrative that serve to underscore, to borrow Ahl's language, Vulteius' status as a "paradigm of misdirected virtue." [147]

Before delving into specifics, a brief overview of the scene will prove helpful. Following Lucan's account of Caesar's undertakings in Spain, we meet Vulteius and the soldiers under his command about midway through book four. Caesar himself is absent, but his legate C. Antonius and his forces are hemmed in by the Pompeians on the island of Curicta, just off the coast of Illyricum. Famine within the Caesarian camp has forced the soldiers there to try to make an escape—through hostile waters—toward an allied force on the mainland (4.402-14). The Caesarians build three rafts, two of which (characteristically termed *geminae comites* in relation to the third, 4.431) make a successful escape, but the third raft, which is under the command of Vulteius, is ensnared by the Pompeians (4.415-73). Trapped and out-numbered, Vulteius convinces his men to kill one another rather than capitulate, and within view of both enemies and allies, he and his crew slaughter one another down to a man (4.474-570).

As the narrative unfolds, we learn that Vulteius and the men trapped with him on the *ratis* are Caesarian allies from the city of Opitergium in Cisalpine Gaul (*Opiterginis moles onerata colonis* 4.462). References to the Opitergians and their role in the war are largely lacking in the extant historical record, though the scholiast does report that Caesar rewarded the Opitergians for their loyalty after the conclusion of the war.[148] Beyond his initial reference to the *Opitergini coloni* on the raft, Lucan himself also does not explicitly mention Opitergium again, but he does suggest that what happens on board Vulteius' *ratis* is an emblem of loyalty—perverse though it may be—to Caesar. As Vulteius addresses his men to exhort them to suicide, he laments the fact that he and his men have been denied the opportunity to fully realize their *fides* and *militiae*

[146] 1997, 210.

[147] 1976, 119.

[148] *Comm. Bern*. ad 4.462. The Opitergians are also mentioned, though only briefly, in Liv. *Per*. 110.10-15, Flor. 2.13.32-33. Surprisingly, Vulteius and the Opitergians make no appearance in Caesar's commentaries. For further discussion of the historical sources (or lack thereof) for the episode, see Leigh (1997, 193-4), Esposito (2001, 40), and Asso (2009, 190-91), who speculates that Lucan may have followed a now-lost Caesarian account of the event while crafting his narrative.

pietas. At the same time, however, he hopes that the mutual killing will be interpreted by Caesar as *tanti… pignora amoris*:

> praebebunt aequora testes
> praebebunt terrae, summis dabit insula saxis
> spectabunt geminae diverso litore partes
> nescio quid nostris magnum et memorabile fatis
> exemplum, Fortuna, paras. Quaecumque per aevum
> exhibuit monimenta fides servataque ferro
> militiae pietas, transisset nostra iuventus.
> Namque suis pro te gladiis incumbere, Caesar,
> esse parum scimus; sed non maiora supersunt
> obsessis, tanti quae pignora demus amoris.
> Abscidit nostrae multum fors invida laudi,
> quod non cum senibus captis natisque tenemur. (4.493-504)

> The sea and land and island with its high cliffs will provide witnesses, twin parties will look on from opposite shores; in our deaths, Fortune, you are preparing some great and memorable example. Whatever monuments loyalty has exhibited through the ages, whatever martial devotion has been preserved through use of the sword, our band would have surpassed. For we know, Caesar, that it is too little to merely fall on our swords for you; but besieged as we are, there remains no greater option as a final pledge of our loyal devotion. Envious fortune has taken away much from our glory because we are held captured without our old men and children.

In emphasizing devotion and loyalty as such within Vulteius' speech, there is a sense in which Lucan has not strayed too far from the *fides* theme he earlier broached at the siege of and battle for Massilia.[149] Vulteius even envisions his situation in terms that are evocative of a siege (*sed non maiora supersunt / <u>obsessis</u>*) and wishes he could achieve the glory (*multum…laudi*) granted to those who find themselves under siege (*non cum senibus captis natisque tenemur*).[150] Although the Opitergians' display of loyalty is made to Caesar—not in resistance to him—it is noteworthy that the outcome of their devotion is not much different than that experienced by the Massilians. The Gauls at Massilia are destroyed despite their *fides*; the Gauls from Opitergium

[149] On which, see my discussion, p. 57-58, above.

[150] D'Allesandro Behr (2007, 37) also picks up on the siege imagery and even draws a comparison to the siege of Saguntum (cf. Liv. 22.14.3-4).

destroy themselves precisely because of it.[151] In both narratives, and from two distinct vantage points, Lucan thus presents a fundamentally similar message about 'heroism' in civil war: despite the best intentions of actors on *either* side, *bellum civile* necessarily warps and perverts their attempts at heroic acts and pretensions to heroic values.[152]

Lucan achieves this effect, in large part, by emphasizing the disconect between Vulteius' construction of the act as heroic in his pre-suicide speech and Lucan's own description of the killing that follows it.[153] We have seen already how Lucan hints at the perverse nature of Vulteius' *fides* to Caesar's cause, but his deconstruction of traditional Roman values within the scene is perhaps nowhere more apparent than in his treatment of *virtus* and *pietas*.[154] As to the former: even though Lucan foregrounds *virtus* early in the narrative and Vulteius' speech suggests that he considers his actions as *dux ratis* heroic, by the end of the narrative, Lucan leaves his readers questioning whether and to what extent Vulteius' actions display any evidence of such *virtus*. Before Vulteius even begins to consider suicide and exhort his men to do so,

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[151] As if to further confirm the ultimate perversity of his brand of loyalty, Vulteius even calls on men with *certa fide* to strike the first blow against him as the mutual killing on board the raft begins (4.543).

[152] *Fides* and the ways in which it is warped by civil war also play a prominent role in the Ilerda narrative, which directly follows Massilia and directly precedes Vulteius. When Petreius' troops have recognized their fellow countrymen (and kinsmen!) in Caesar's army, they refuse to engage in battle. Petreius rouses them to battle, in part, by invoking their loyalty to the 'rightful' cause (4.229-231: *at vobis hoc est / vestra fides*...) and their sense of duty to *patria* (4.212). Once the battle begins, Lucan leaves us in no doubt as to its depravity (*itur in omne nefas*, 4.243) and the ill-effects that the soldiers' misplaced *fides* has wrought (…*fecit monstra fides*, 4.245).

[153] As has been noted, Lucan further enhances this dissonance by including echoes of Aeneas as a foil for Vulteius. For instance, Vulteius strikes quite the heroic pose as he prepares to address his men (*rexit <u>magnanima</u> Vulteius <u>voce</u> cohortem*, 4.475), and this introduction, alongside the speech that follows it, has reminded many readers (e.g., Thompson and Bruère 1970, 165-66; Eldred 2002, 74-5; Sklenář 2003, 26-8) of Vergil's Aeneas as he addresses his beleaguered crew at *A.* 1.97-204. The two commanders and their situations are broadly comparable. Not only are both 'magnanimous,' but Vulteius and his cohort find themselves trapped in an area (4.455-61) similar to Vergil's washed-up Trojans (*A.* 1.159-68). The contents of the speeches that each leader delivers could hardly be more different, however. At the heart of Aeneas' speech is a message of endurance and trust in eventual success (cf., e.g., *A.* 1.207); Vulteius advises his men to trust and find comfort in death, not preservation (4.486-7). Apart from these resonances of Aeneas as *dux* in *Aeneid* one, I think that Lucan may also have in mind a much different (and more problematic) Aeneas as a model for his Vulteius: the Aeneas of *Aeneid* two. For example, Aeneas' wish to die in battle (*moriamur et in media arma ruamus, A*. 2.353-4) is broadly comparable to Vulteius' meditations on the *gloria leti* (4.479) to be gained through suicide (*proieci vitam, comites…felix esse mori*, 4.516, 520). Further comparisons might be drawn between Aeneas' statement *arma amens capio nec sat rationis in armis* (*A.* 2.314, cf. Sklenář 2003, 29-30) and Vulteius' *totusque futurae / mortis agor stimulis: furor est* (4.516-7). Both calls to die in arms have similar effects on their men, as well (*cum sociis ardent animi furor iraque mentem / praecipitant, pulchrumque mori succurrit in armis*, *A.* 2.316-17; cf. *sic cunctas sustulit ardor / mobilium mentes iuvenum*, *B.C.* 4.520-1).

[154] On which, Esposito's discussion is well-attuned to discussing Lucan's terminology (e.g., *virtus, pietas, furor,* etc.) with a view toward contextualizing it within the ideas of the *B.C.* as a whole (2000, 41-56). For further discussion of *virtus* specifically, see Sklenář (2003, 29).

Lucan describes how they try to engage the Pompeians in combat and thereby exercise their *virtus* (*quantum deprensa valebat / effecit virtus*, 469-70). However, when it becomes clear (to Vulteius, at least) that engaging the Pompeians in battle is no longer a viable option, he adjusts the parameters of martial valor to suit his situation. He tells his men that killing themselves in a memorable and spectacular way will allow their *virtus* to shine (so to speak), much moreso than if they died in a real battle, where virtue actually goes to die: *virtus obruta perit* (4.491).[155] He goes on to claim that it will require great valor (*magna virtute merendum est*) to carry out the suicide and convince Caesar that he has lost such a valuable cohort of men (*hoc damnum clademque vocet*, 4.512). And yet, despite Vulteius' claims, by the time he and his men actually begin to kill one another, Lucan seems to question the extent to which the killing is to be considered virtuous at all. As the men on board kill and are killed in turn, Lucan seems to imply that their chosen mode of death actually requires the *least* amount of *virtus* (*<u>minimum</u>que in morte virorum / mors <u>virtutis</u> habet* 4.557-8).[156]

Vulteius' similar misunderstanding and eventual perversion of *pietas* is even more jarring. When he addresses his men, he mentions their capacity for *militiae pietas* (4.499), but as the narrative progresses, Lucan notably undermines Vulteius' pretensions to *pietas* achieved by suicide. In the midst of the act itself, for instance, Lucan declares that the only *pietas* inherent in this killing is for a man to successfully kill his comrade with a single blow: *pietas ferientibus una / non repetisse fuit* (4.565-6). Lucan also makes it clear throughout his depiction of the event that

[155] To be fair, Vulteius makes a good point when we consider many of the battles in the *Bellum Civile*, where Lucan essentially refuses to devote attention to describing the hallmarks of traditional epic *aristeiai* (including even providing the names of those killing and being killed!) in favor of depicting instead heaps of corpses, rivers of blood, and a grim portrait of mass death and desolation (on which, see Gorman 2001, 263-84). In this light, the phrase *virtus obruta perit* could be considered an apt description (or motto?) for many of Lucan's battle narratives, and insofar as Vulteius does not die the nameless death given to so many others in the text, he is, true to his own prediction, *memorabilis.*

[156] Braund translates this line "and in the warriors' deaths, death / involves the smallest amount of valour." Duff (whose translation reads: "in the death of those heroes death itself called for least courage") finds the line problematic enough to provide an explanatory gloss in his translation: he suggests that Lucan means to imply that it requires more "courage" for the men to kill one another than to "face death themselves." This gives the line perhaps *too* positive a spin. But even if Duff is correct, to suggest that killing one's own comrades (which amounts to civil war) has any measure of *virtus* is still decidedly perverse. I might also add that Lucan's juxtaposition in this line of *mors* and *virtutis* (though it depends on *minimumque*) is suggestive: does this suicidal act symbolize the death of *virtus*?

it is furor—not *pietas*—that is a prime motivating force for Vulteius and his crew.[157] As he delineates the merits of suicide, Vulteius himself, for instance, claims that the Pompeians will fear the Opitergians in their fury: *viros timeatque furentes* (4.505), and as his speech builds to its climax, he claims to be overtaken completely by such madness: *totusque futurae / mortis agor stimulis: furor est* (4.516-7). Just before the killing takes place, Lucan notes how the Opitergians turn their *furor* away from the enemy and direct it inward upon themselves (*versus ab hoste furor*, 4.540).

Lucan plays into this theme of (*im*)*pietas* further still by suggesting a perverse sort of 'model' for the Opitergian crew: as the Opitergians enact their mutual suicide, Lucan calls them a *devota iuventus* (4.533). Not only does this language suggest that we might view the suicidal act itself as a heroic *devotio* in the grand tradition of exemplars like the Decii,[158] but Vulteius bolsters the idea with his own evocations of sacrificial imagery when he suggestively bares his throat (*iugulo retecto,* 4.541) and calls upon his men to kill him first. As with Lucan's treatment of *pietas* and *virtus*, however, we are quite aware that Vulteius' heroic act of sacrifice is misdirected. The suicide is not carried out for the good of the Roman state – or even made in return for a victory. Rather, Lucan presents the self-destruction of the Opitergians as an act

[157] Or at least not *pietas* in an *un*problematic sense; if we allow that Vulteius is acting with *pietas*, it must be *pietas* of a deliberately perverted sort. Along these lines, comparable to Lucan's portrayal of Vulteius' *pietas* here is his portrayal of Pompey's son Sextus, who after the death of his father, is described as *furens* with *iusta pietate* (9.147). In the case of Sextus, as with Vulteius, Lucan juxtaposes these two seemingly antithetical ideas to suggest that acts of *pietas* in civil war ought also to be viewed as acts of *furor*. This sort of nuanced treatment of these two ideas is not isolated to Lucan. The interplay between *pietas* and *furor*, and the extent to which a hero might act out of one or both impulses, plays a prominent and controversial role in the final scene of the *Aeneid*. Ovid also examines the sometimes contradictory underpinnings of *pietas* in various narratives, e.g., when Antenor exiles his son Cadmus, Ovid muses: *facto pius et sceleratus eodem* (*Met.* 3.5).

[158] On the *devotio* of Decius, see Liv. 8.6.9-14. See Eldred (2002, 67-9), for further discussion of Lucan's scene as a parody of *devotio;* on *devotio* in Lucan more generally, see Leigh (1997, 128-43); on sacrifice/sacrificial language in epic, see Hardie (1993, 19-56, 29-32 on Cato especially). Thompson and Bruère (1970, 166) see echoes of Turnus throughout the scene and at 167 n. 26, especially, see in Vulteius' plight hints of Juturna-as-Camer's assertions about the fame to be won by Turnus through self-sacrifice (cf. *se devovet aris / succedet fama A.* 12.234-5). Apart from the echoes of Vergil's Turnus, Vulteius' 'devotion' recalls two other figures within Lucan's own text as well. I have noted already (p. 81, n. 152, above) the thematic continuities between this episode and the Afranius/Petreius material which precedes it earlier in book four: the Pompeians, after being harangued by Petreius, are similarly devoted (*ad certam devotos tendere mortem,* 4.272). Many aspects of the suicide also evoke Cato, whose own suicide, while not depicted in Lucan's text, looms over it nonetheless (cf. Gorman 2001, 284-88, who also connects Vulteius and Cato, though I disagree with her conclusions). Lucan suggests, for instance, throughout the Vulteius narrative that suicide will confer a sort of *Libertas* (cf., e.g., *libera non ultra parva quam nocte iuventus* 4.476; *non cogitur/ullus velle mori*, 4.484-5; *indomitos sciat esse viros timeatque furentes*, 4.505).

performed for Caesar alone, who, as Lucan reminded us earlier in book three, now effectively (and regrettably) *is* the state (*omnia Caesar erat*, 3.108).

If the effect of all of these gestures is essentially to challenge (if not outright undermine) Vulteius' pretensions to heroic grandeur, Lucan's overall presentation of the act as a mini-*bellum nefandum* constitutes his ultimate condemnation of the act.[159] Throughout his depiction of the events on board the *ratis* Lucan uses the same types of imagery he employs elsewhere in the text to signify acts of civil war. As each man kills and is killed in turn, Lucan emphasizes the 'parity' of each act of carnage (*pariter sternuntque caduntque*, 4.558), and kin–killing abounds as brothers kill brother and sons kill their fathers (*fratribus incurrunt fratres natusque parenti*, 4.563). Lucan also returns once more to the imagery of implosion from within as he describes how the inward rush of all the men to attack one another forms a singular image of *nefas* (*concurrunt alii totumque in partibus unis / bellorum fecere nefas*, 5.548-9). The resulting heap of men is so densely packed that weight of bodies on weapons performs the killing, and Lucan revels in describing various body parts as if they themselves have a death-wish—indeed, weapons do not find bodies to kill as much as the bodies seek out the weapons with which to kill themselves (*nec vulnus adactis / debetur gladiis: percussum est pectore ferrum / et iuguli pressere manum*, 4.560-2)![160] Nor, finally, does Lucan leave out the ever-present imagery of suicide *per viscera*. As he addresses his men, Vulteius describes the impending suicide as one that they will accomplish *per viscera* (4.511), and when the killing begins, Lucan describes how Vulteius himself—despite his call for his men to strike him *per iugulum* (3.541)—is wounded as such (4.545). Once the killing is complete, Lucan caps off the scene with a particularly gruesome image: as Vulteius and his crew die, they collectively drag their now *viscera lapsa* overboard and stain the sea with their blood (*iam latis viscera lapsa / semianimes traxere foris multumque cruorem / infudere mari* 565-7).[161]

[159] Eldred (2002, 57-8).

[160] See the discussion of Leigh (1997, 219).

[161] This imagery recalls a similarly gruesome moment from Ovid's centauromachy: *prosiluit terraque ferox sua viscera traxit / tractaque calcavit calcataque rupit* (*Met.* 12.390-1). Lucan returns to the image of treading on entrails as emblematic of death in a civil war at the battle of Pharsalus (7.620, 7.722).

Monumental *Nefas*

Though many aspects of Lucan's presentation of Vulteius are certainly typical of his portrayal of *virtus, pietas,* and *bellum nefandum* elsewhere in the text, Lucan nonetheless singles out Vulteius for special treatment, gives him his own scene, and dwells explicitly on his 'exemplarity' as both the Pompeians and Caesarians positioned on opposite shores watch the mass-suicide. Vulteius' speech to his men calls special attention to the spectacle of the event and his perceived status as a sort of *exemplum* for future ages:

> praebebunt aequora testes
> praebebunt terrae, summis dabit insula saxis
> spectabunt geminae diverso litore partes
> nescio quid nostris magnum et memorabile fatis
> exemplum, Fortuna, paras. Quaecumque per aevum
> exhibuit monimenta fides servataque ferro
> militiae pietas, transisset nostra iuventus. (4.493-99).
>
> The sea and land and island with its high cliffs will provide witnesses, twin parties will look on from opposite shores; in our deaths, Fortune, you are preparing some great and memorable example. Whatever monuments loyalty has exhibited through the ages, whatever martial devotion has been preserved through use of the sword, our band would have surpassed…

The emphasis on spectacle within this speech and the narrative as a whole has attracted a great deal of attention; Eldred, for instance, has recently examined the ways in which Lucan casts the episode as a model for viewing (and thereby becoming implicated within) the act of civil war itself.[162] And yet, the speech is so full of allusive tropes – *fama*, *memorabile*, *monimenta per aevum*, *exemplum*—that Lucan also intends for Vulteius to provide a lesson in *reading* civil war. Vulteius's words not only call attention to the fact that he wants the mass-suicide to be watched by Caesar and the *mirantibus ducibus* on both sides (4.572), but his words also contain notable echoes of earlier calls to lasting fame in Lucan's literary forebears.[163] I want to draw attention to

[162] Eldred (2002, 77-81). For a fuller discussion of 'exemplarity' and its importance in the Vulteius episode and Lucan's text overall, see Leigh (1997, 160-84).

[163] D'Allesandro Behr (2007, 40) for instance, compares Vulteius' fashioning of the suicide as a sort of heroic *exemplum* of a 'fortunate death' (cf. *felix esse mori*, 4.520) to the Vergilian narrator's address to the *fortunati* Nisus

one such poetic claim to fame that seems to have influenced Vulteius' choice of words here: the parting shot Ovid's Perseus pays to his defeated foe Phineus in *Metamorphoses* five. As he reponds to Phineus' calls for leniency at the end of the wedding-banquet-turned-brawl, Perseus makes it clear he intends to show his humbled rival a novel form of mercy:[164]

> quod ait, timidissime Phineu,
> et possum tribuisse et magnum est munus inerti
> pone metum! Tribuam: nullo violabere ferro
> quin etiam mansura dabo monimenta per aevum
> inque domo soceri semper spectabere nostri… (*Met*. 5. 224-8)
>
> What you've spoken of, most cowardly Phineus, I am able to give you—and it is a great gift for a slug like you—put aside your fear. I will grant that you will not be wounded by the sword. But instead I will turn you into a monument that will last through the ages, and you will always be on display for view in my father-in-law's house…

After speaking these words, Perseus makes good on his threat and quite literally 'monumentalizes' Phineus: he employs his weapon of choice, Medusa's head, to turn the suppliant Phineus into a statue (*imago*). Apart from lending added resonance to Eldred's assertion that Vulteius intends to construct himself as a sort of *imago* for Caesar's gaze,[165] Lucan's choice to recall Perseus at this moment has several noteworthy implications. In the first place, Lucan has ingeniously interwoven into his own *monumentum* of *bellum civile* two other layers of civil war narrative. The Perseus-Phineus material is, after all, Ovid's own mythologized version of a civil conflict—a fight between a *socer* and dueling *generi*. The Ovidian civil war scene reads, furthermore, as a parody of Vergil's own dueling *generi*, Turnus and Aeneas, and especially their interaction in the finale of the *Aeneid*.[166] Lucan's echo of Ovid's Perseus is thus a bravura poetic move, a 'window' reference that ultimately underscores his overall presentation of the suicide as a mini-*bellum nefandum* in and of itself.[167]

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and Euryalus in *Aeneid* 9: *Fortunati ambo! si quid mea carmina possunt/ nulla dies umquam memori vos eximet aevo, / dum domus Aeneae Capitoli immobile saxum / accolet imperiumque pater Romanus habebit* (*A*. 9.446-49).

[164] Cf. Siciliano (1998, 313).

[165] 2002, 66.

[166] On Ovid's engagement with Vergil to this end, see Anderson (1997, ad 214-27).

[167] On which terminology, see Thomas (1986, 188).

In a related vein, Vulteius' Perseus-esque claims to future fame also provide lessons about 'reading' and interpreting civil war, as I suggested above. In Ovid's portrayal of Perseus and his monumentalizing act, he casts Perseus as both *actor* in and *auctor* of the narrative: in turning his enemies into statues, Perseus becomes an artist, using the evil powers of Medusa to create an entire hall full of artifacts. Lucan also presents Vulteius as both *actor* and *auctor*. As he crafts his arguments pro-suicide and convinces his men to carry them out, Vulteius is an *actor* within and *auctor* of an act of civil bloodshed. And yet, although Vulteius effectively tries to craft his own poetic narrative –one in which he posits that there can be *virtus* and *pietas* in the midst of civil conflict, complete with a claim to his enduring fame –Lucan highlights how Vulteius ultimately has no control over how we (and Lucan as narrator) choose to 'read' Vulteius' gestures.[168] The acts themselves, whether or not they seem virtuous or pious, cannot be separated from the context (i.e., *bellum civile* and the *Bellum Civile*) in which they occur.[169]

Lucan explicitly comments on the difficulties of interpreting Vulteius' heroic act. As the episode draws to a close, Lucan meditates on the nature of the *fama* that Vulteius and his men achieve and muses that some people will undoubtedly misinterpret the true import of Vulteius' *exemplum.* He begins with the hyperbolic (if not cheeky) claim that no other ship has achieved as much fame (infamy?) as Vulteius': *nullam maiore locuta est / ore ratem totum discurrens Fama per orbem* (4.573-4). Lucan seems to be having fun here at his character's expense: not only does he know as much as we do that Vulteius' ship is not *the* most famous ship (that prize, as Asso points out, goes to the Argo),[170] but Vulteius and his ship do not even show up in any other major account of the civil war except Lucan's![171] Apart from deliberately problematizing the

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[168] This sort of dissonance is at work in Ovid's narrative as well, where the *actor/auctor* distinction is complicated even further by the fact that Perseus is also the narrator at this moment in the text. Though Perseus himself presumably believes that his telling of the tale casts him in a heroic light, the effect of the narrative is to challenge Perseus' status as such.

[169] Cf. Lucan's editorializing on Scaeva, who does not realize that *virtus* in civil war is actually a *crimen: nesciret in armis / quam magnum virtus crimen civilibus esset* (6.147-8). Were Scaeva a warrior in another epic besides the *Bellum Civile*, our interpretation of his battle-field exploits might be much different!

[170] 2009, ad loc. I might also note that these lines can be included in the list of Argonautic moments I discussed in Ch. 1, p. 32-37. If Vulteius is meant to be a famous and enduring *exemplum* of *bellum nefandum,* comparing his ship to the Argo here (which is itself emblematic of the transition to and trangressions of the Iron Age) plays into Lucan's suggestions that the civil war is akin to the moral lapses of the Iron Age.

[171] On the historical sources, see p. 79, n. 148, above. This is probably just an accident of preservation, but the irony is too compelling to omit mentioning here. In a strange way, we might say that Lucan-as-poet is rivaling Vulteius-

nature of Vulteius' *fama,* Lucan also calls into question how the *exemplum* of the Opitergians will and should be received by others: [172]

> non tamen ignavae post haec exempla virorum
> percipient gentes, quam sit non ardua virtus
> servitium fugisse manu (4.575-7).
>
> After the *exempla* of these men, cowardly nations will
> nevertheless fail to realize how it does not take an act of strenuous
> courage to flee slavery by one's own hand.

These lines are difficult, but their ultimate message is one of caution: though others may think that what Vulteius did is courageous, we should not. To commit suicide when the circumstances are right, is not difficult (*sit non ardua virtus*), and this fact is something that cowards will never understand (*ignavae…/ percipient gentes*). In other words, despite the fact that those who have no real understanding of such acts might view the suicide of the Opitergians as an act of bravery, Vulteius and his men have not committed suicide under the right circumstances, nor have they done so to flee *servitium*. Rather, they commited their act as a pledge of fealty to Caesar. These lines thus give final sentence on Lucan's treatment of *virtus* throughout the episode and confirm once more that Vulteius is misguided. We might question whether Vulteius' suicide is, after all, *magnum et memorabile* or (to use his own words against him) simply a *damnum et clademque* (4.514)—yet another senseless loss in civil war.

Theban Paradigms

We have seen thus far the various techniques Lucan uses to construct the Opitergian suicide as an *exemplum* of civil war—yet another microcosmic *bellum civile* within the *Bellum Civile.* I want now to turn my attention to one final aspect of Lucan's presentation of Vulteius'

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as-poet for ultimate control of the narrative and its interpretation: in the end, it is not Vulteius who makes his own fame; rather, it is Lucan who makes him famous.

[172] Leigh also recognizes that Lucan's interpretation of the event is different from Vulteius,' (1997, 183 n.36, 259-64). See also the remarks of Hill (2004, 36), who comments on a Roman audience's inability to read the scene correctly.

act of suicide: Lucan's invocation of the mythic tradition of Thebes within his Vulteius narrative.[173] I have chosen to single out the Theban material here for two main reasons: first, it plays into a larger Theban leitmotif within the *Bellum Civile* as a whole. And second, Lucan's overt gestures towards Ovid's Theban saga, both in this simile and in other parts of the epic, have important implications for how we should, I think, interpret Lucan's use of the Theban imagery more generally.

Before looking at the specifics of the simile Lucan uses within the Vulteius narrative, I want to begin by calling attention to Lucan's first explicit evocation of the myth in book one. Lucan's earliest reference to Thebes in the poem comes as part of an extensive list of prodigies and omens that herald the start of the war:

> vestali raptus ab ara
> ignis, et ostendens confectas flamma Latinas
> <u>scinditur in partes</u> geminoque cacumine surgit
> Thebanos <u>imitata</u> rogos (1.549-52)
>
> The flame was snatched from Vesta's altar and the fire showing the end of the Latin festival is split into two parts and with a twin crest it rises up, imitating the pyre of the Theban brothers.

Lucan's description of the split flame at the funeral pyre of Eteocles and Polyneices (*Thebanos rogos*) evokes a similar description of the same phenomenon in Seneca's *Oedipus,*

> sed ecce pugnax ignis <u>in partes duas</u>
> discedit et se <u>scindit</u> <u>unius sacri</u>
> discors favilla. (321-3)
>
> But behold the warring fire splits into two parts and the discordant ash of one sacred ritual tears itself apart.

[173] Part of my goal here is to discuss many of the key instances where Lucan invokes the Theban tradition because most treatments up to now have been rather cursory. Two of the best recent discussions are in Wheeler (2002, 376-77) and Ambühl (2005, 264-75), who studies Lucan's Theban material not in relation to Ovid as much as Seneca (at 275-89, especially). Fantham (2010, 217), makes passing mention of Ovid's Thebes and its importance to Lucan; Hardie (1990, 226), gestures in that direction as well. The discussions of McNelis (2007, 4-5) and Braund (2006, 267) are also worth mentioning here, though their primary focus is Statius, not Lucan.

which itself borrows from Ovid's description of the same splitting flame in *Tristia* 5.5:[174]

> consilio, commune sacrum cum fiat in ara
> fratribus, alterna qui periere manu,
> ipsa sibi discors, tamquam mandetur ab illis,
> scinditur in partes atra favilla duas. (33-6)
>
> It is by design, when the communal sacrament is made on the altar for the two brothers who died at one another's hand, the dark discordant ash itself is split in two, as if by their command.

Lucan's own fleeting reference to the flame draws from both of these, and his use of the term *imitata* signals not only his linguistic debts but also that Lucan envisions his own subject matter—the fratricidal civil war(s) at Rome—as an imitation of the example set by the Theban brothers Eteocles and Polyneices. The very terminology that Lucan uses to describe the splitting of the flame itself (e.g., *scinditur in partes*; *gemino cacumine*) is suggestive to this end: it is omnipresent in Lucan's descriptions of *bella civilia* throughout the text.

In her analysis of the use of Theban myth among Roman poets of the late Republic and Empire, Braund argues that the city is a vehicle for the Romans to examine their "origins-in-fratricide" and their ultimate inability to escape from them.[175] As an example of fraternal enmity whose effects reach beyond death itself, Lucan's mention of the Theban funeral pyre certainly plays into both of these concerns, and a similar strand of thought underlies Lucan's mention of Romulus and Remus, the Roman analogues of the *Thebani fratres*, earlier in book one. Lucan views this fratricide as an act that is as primal as its effects are long lasting. Lucan conceives of Remus' murder as an *exemplum* for a whole series of future civil wars, including the one that is presently his subject: *credite nec longe fatorum exempla petantur / fraterno primi maduerunt sanguine muri* (1.94-5).[176]

[174] The story of the splitting flame is well-known, and in the very next couplet of *Tristia* 5.5, Ovid refers to the fact that he 'learned' about it from Callimachus (*Aet.* 105). For more on the Senecan subtext of Lucan's reference to the brothers' pyre, see the discussion in Ambühl (2005, 261-64).

[175] 2006, 267.

[176] Cf. my discussion of this passage as part of Lucan's 'cycles' of civil war, Ch. 1, p. 17-19, above.

Lucan exploits the myth of the Theban Spartoi to a similar—if not even greater—effect. His most overt reference to the Sown-Men occurs within the Vulteius narrative, an *exemplum* of civil war in its own right.[177] As the act of mutual-killing takes place on board the raft, Lucan compares the Opitergians to the Spartoi that spring from the dragon's teeth that Cadmus has sown into the ground:

> sic semine Cadmi
> emicuit Dircaea cohors ceciditque suorum
> vulneribus dirum Thebanis fratribus omen.
> … Sic mutua pacti
> fata cadunt iuvenes. (4.549-51, 556-7)
>
> In such a way did the Dircaean cohort sprout forth from the seed sown by Cadmus and fall by their own wounds, a dire omen for the Theban brothers…
> Thus bound by an oath of mutual destruction, the young men die.

As with his earlier treatment of Romulus and Remus, here too Lucan emphasizes that the fratricidal conflict (*suorum… vulneribus*) first enacted by the Spartoi points ahead as a *dirum omen* to future acts of fratricide. In the same way that the blood of Remus has polluted the walls of Rome, so too does Lucan suggest that the Theban Spartoi embody a primal – and ultimately inescapable – burden of guilt: The Theban tradition of fratricide has been sown (cf. <u>*semine*</u> *Cadmi*) into and sprung from the very land itself and is all but destined to repeat itself in the future *exemplum* of Eteocles and Polyneices.[178]

Lucan uses the image of the Spartoi to make a similar point about the site of Caesar and Pompey's decisive battle at Pharsalus. Just as the land at Thebes and the walls of Rome are forever tainted by fraternal bloodshed, so too are the plains of Pharsalus.[179] In a lengthy meditation on Thessaly and its environs in book six, Lucan emphasizes throughout how the land is tainted, doomed by the fates (*damnata fatis*, 6.413) to be the site of multiple *bella nefanda*,

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[177] Phillips (1962, 33) sees Caesar's comment about Pompey's ability to raise *milites subiti* (1.312) as possible reference to the Theban Spartoi (cf. Ovid's *subiti fratres*, *Met.* 3.123, quoted below, at. p. 93).

[178] Cf. Ovid's own reference to the teeth as *semina*: *spargit humi iussos, mortalia semina, dentes* (*Met.* 3.105).

[179] Cf. Detienne (2003, 39-40) for a discussion of the "first evil" in the land of Thebes and its various re-embodiments in both Theban and other mythic traditions (including many that Lucan highlights in his own Thessalian excursus). Cf. Hardie (2008, 310-11) on the stain/miasma of civil war on the land more generally.

from the Gigantomachy up to the impending battle between the former triumvirs (6.333-412).[180] Using language reminiscent of his earlier Sown-Men simile, Lucan ends his description of Thessaly by referring to the fact that this land has been planted with the seeds of war, which have periodically sprouted forth: *hac tellure feri micuerunt semina Martis* (6.395). Lucan's reference to the 'seeds of Mars' not only plays into the imagery of the Theban Spartoi, but also hearkens back to his explanation of the current iteration of Roman civil conflict in book one – his analysis of the *semina belli* (1.159). Nourished by the breakdown of the triumvirate and the abandonment of Roman *mores*, the *semina* of civil war are preparing to spring forth once more when Pompey and Caesar's armies meet on the plains.

Lucan's mention of the Spartoi within the Vulteius narrative is not, therefore, just an isolated and passing reference; rather, it provides a model for how Lucan views the cycles of civil discord among the Romans. From Romulus and Remus onward, Lucan envisions the pollution of civil conflict as something that is almost inborn, planted into the Roman psyche and bound to spring forth with regularity. Lucan's choice to assimilate the Spartoi to Roman civil discord is not, of course, peculiar to him alone. In fact, his reference to the Spartoi in the Opitergian Lucan combines Ovid's description of the Theban Spartoi in *Metamorphoses* three as well as the Colchian Spartoi in *Metamorphoses* seven.[181] Here is Lucan's simile once more, but this time, in full:

> sic semine Cadmi
> emicuit Dircaea cohors ceciditque suorum
> vulneribus dirum Thebanis fratribus omen;
> Phasidos et campis insomnia dente creati
> terrigenae missa magicis e cantibus ira
> cognato tantos implerunt sanguine sulcos,
> ipsaque inexpertis quod primum fecerat herbis,
> expavit Medea nefas. Sic mutua pacti
> fata cadunt iuvenes. (4.549-557)

> In such a way did the Dircaean cohort sprout forth from the seed sown by Cadmus and fall by their own wounds, a dire omen for the Theban brothers. And thus also the

[180] See my discussion of this section of the poem, Ch. 1, p. 28-9. The 'seeds of war' are also mentioned by Cotta at 3.150: *dira mala semina belli.*

[181] Cf. Rutz (1960, 467-8); Phillips (1962, 33-35); Esposito (1987 58-60; 2000, 56-8).

> earthborn men who sprang from the teeth of the sleepless dragon in the fields of Phasis, their anger inspired by magical incantations, filled such furrows with kindred blood. Even Medea herself was frightened by the wickedness which she first brought forth with untried herbs. Thus bound by an oath of mutual destruction, the young men die.

Ovid has laid much of the groundwork for Lucan's description: not only has he already linked the two sets of Spartoi by describing them in strikingly similar terms when they appear in two different narratives within the *Metamorphoses*, but he has also linked the two sets of the Spartoi very explicitly to the idea of civil war.[182] One of Ovid's Theban Spartoi even calls their conflict a *bellum civile* and tells Cadmus not to "sow himself into" it:

> territus hoste novo Cadmus capere arma parabat.
> ne cape de populo quem terra creaverat, unus
> exclamat nec te civilibus insere bellis.
> atque ita terrigenis rigido de fratribus unum
> comminus ense ferit; iaculo cadit eminus ipse.
> Hunc quoque qui leto dederat, non longius illo
> vivit et expirat, modo quas acceperat, auras,
> exemploque pari furit omnis turba, suoque
> Marte cadunt subiti per mutua vulnera fratres (*Met.* 3.115-123)

> Frightened by this new enemy, Cadmus was preparing to take up arms, when one from the group who had sprung from the earth cried out, "Don't draw your arms! Don't involve yourself in our civil wars! And thus speaking he attacked one of his earth-born brothers in close combat with his unyielding sword, and he himself also fell, struck in the throat by a javelin thrown from afar. The one who had killed him—he didn't live longer than his victim and he breathed out the last breaths which he has just taken away from the other. The entire horde of men raged in the same way, and these sudden-born brothers fell in their own war by mutually inflicted wounds.

Lucan's phrase, *sic mutua pacti fata cadunt iuvenes*, certainly echoes Ovid's description of the Spartoi's mutual wounds (*per mutua vulnera fratres*), but Ovid has also already hinted at the Spartoi's exemplarity (*exemploque*), their 'parity' in death (*pari*) and their furor (*furit omnis turba*). We have seen how all of these elements feature into Lucan's depiction of Vulteius and his men as they kill and are killed in turn, and Lucan's unrelenting blow-by-blow account of the killing (at 4.540-7) even mimics Ovid's depiction thereof above.

[182] Ovid, it should be noted, is the first in the Latin tradition to link the Spartoi and their mutual killing to *bellum civile*, on which see Wheeler (2002, 376).

Lucan's portrait of the frightened, carmen-spinning Medea at lines 452-6 of his simile owes much to Ovid as well. As Medea watches Jason do battle with Colchian terrigenae, Ovid describes how she is fearful of the outcome and chants a *carmen auxiliare* to aid Jason in battle:

> ipsa quoque extimuit, quae tutum fecerat illum.
> utque peti vidit iuvenem tot ab hostibus unum,
> palluit et subito sine sanguine frigida sedit,
> neve parum valeant a se data gramina, carmen
> auxiliare canit secretasque advocat artes.
> ille gravem medios silicem iaculatus in hostes
> a se depulsum Martem convertit in ipsos:
> terrigenae pereunt per mutua vulnera fratres
> civilique cadunt acie. (*Met*. 7.134-142)

> Medea was also afraid, though it was she who had made Jason safe. And as she saw the young man being attacked by so many enemies, she grew pale and sat, suddently cold and bloodless, and lest the herbs she had given to him fail, she sings a song of aid and calls upon secret arts. He threw a heaven stone in the midst of the enemy and turned their war away from him and against themselves: the earth-born brothers die through mutual wounds and fall in civil strife.

Though a full discussion of Medea (and Lucan's Medea) here will most certainly derail me from my stated goal of discussing Lucan's Theban imagery, I might at least note that Lucan's inclusion of Medea in his simile –alongside his reference to charms (*magicis cantibus*), herbs (*inexpertis herbis*), and fear (*expavit*)—constitutes what is arguably an even more overt reference to Ovid than Lucan's nod to Ovid's Theban *terrigenae*. Wheras Lucan rather straightforwardly appropriated the Theban material, when it comes to Medea herself, Lucan has notably transformed Ovid's relatively innocent girl-in-love to make his own point about the re-iterative nature of *nefas.*[183] Unlike Ovid, Lucan attributes the responsibility for the Spartoi and their conflict to Medea by calling their act of killing Medea's *primum nefas*. As with the Theban Spartoi, who initiate the first *bellum nefandum* at Thebes, Lucan's reference to the *primum nefas* of Medea cannot help but bring to mind all her subsequent *nefanda* acts as a mythic heroine, including, of course, both fratricide and infanticide. [184] Lucan even invokes Medea as a model for

[183] Lucan has also cast her here as a poet-figure: is she a reflection of Vulteius as *auctor*?

[184] Perhaps as important is the fact that including Medea is a further mobilization of the Argonautic myth (on Lucan's intimation that Vulteius' *ratis* is like the Argo, see p. 87, above) and therefore taps into the pattern of Iron

fratricidal killing (and cycles of vengeance-killing) later in the epic, likening Caesar as he thinks about killing Ptolemy to Medea post-fratricide:

> sic barbara Colchis
> creditur ultorem metuens regnique fugaeque
> ense suo fratrisque simul cervice parata
> expectasse patrem (10.464-6)
>
> Thus the Colchian barbarian is believed to have waited in fear on her father, the avenger for her treason against the kingdsom and her flight, as she held both her sword and the severed head of her brother.

Lucan's mention of the severed head of Medea's brother refers, in the immediate context of the simile, to Caesar's s willingness to behead Ptolemy to gain a political upperhand at Alexandria (10.459-63). At the same time, however, the image of Lucan's Medea-esque Caesar holding the head of his own Roman 'brother,' Pompey, with whose head Caesar had only just earlier been presented (9.1032-1108), can also not be far from our minds.[185]

Lucan's references to Ovid's Theban and Colchian *terrigenae* suggest that he envisions Vulteius and his men – as well as the *bellum civile* they represent in microcosm – as a sort of repetition or re-embodiment of the events that took place in the mythic past; Roman civil war has effectively sprung forth from the earth once again to enact *nefas.* Apart from his use of the Spartoi as paradigm, Lucan also makes frequent reference to Pentheus and his mother Agave in a way that suggests that this doomed pair has also been re-embodied by various actors within the text. One of his earliest explicit references to mother and son occurs in the midst of the Thessalian excursus in book six, which we have seen already as primary *locus* in Lucan's poem for expressing his ideas about cyclic repetition. As part of his catalogue of primal evils that have occurred in Thessaly and its environs, Lucan mentions Agave's savage dismemberment of her

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Age imagery I discussed already in Chapter 1. Lucan's mention of the fact that Medea shudders at this *primum...nefas* (4.555-6) places her own trajectory of future *nefas* in line with the imagery of *nefas* and decline Lucan associates with the *primus* ship.

[185] The image of the severed head as a symbol of the *nefas* of civil war is as central to the poem as its other dominnant anatomical image—suicide *per viscera*. Apart from Pompey's head, which is, of course, one of the primary examples of the motif, Lucan dwells on severed heads at 2.124, 2.166-7, 2.171-3, 2.190-1 (all from the proscriptions), 3.760-1 (at Massilia), 6.357-9 (Pentheus and Agave), 7.626-8 (at Pharsalus) and finally the *caesa caput Gorgon* of Medusa at 9.679. For further discussion of the importance of the *caput* in Lucan, see Dinter (2005, 301-4).

son and grief over the fact that, once her madness had subsided, all that remains of Pentheus is his severed head:

> veteres ubi fabula Thebas
> monstrat Echionias, ubi quondam Pentheos exul
> colla caputque ferens supremo tradidit igni
> questa quod hoc solum nato rapuisset Agave. (6.356-9)
>
> Where legend shows the old Thebes of Echion, where Agave, carrying the severed head of her son, lamented that she had carried off no more of her son's body and gave it over to the funeral fire.

Lucan's mention of Pentheus' severed head (*colla caputque*) should not be overlooked, as it plays into a larger leitmotif of dismemberment that runs throughout the entire poem, and indeed we have just seen Lucan alight on this common theme in his description of a Medea-esque Caesar above. As with the Spartoi, the legacy of Ovid's Theban saga may lurk in the background here too (as elsewhere in Lucan's descriptions of the violence of dismemberment). Ovid's depiction of the sparagmos of Pentheus forms the climax and finale of the third book of the *Metamorphoses*, and there are many elements within Ovid's description that seem to have influenced Lucan. As Agave, for instance, sees her son and mistakes him for a wild boar, she calls for help from her *geminae sorores* (3.714) and the women attack Pentheus in a frenzied horde (*ruit omnis in unum turba furens*, 715-6). Ovid depicts the ensuing dismemberment and decapitation of Pentheus in graphic terms:

> non habet infelix quae matri bracchia tendat,
> trunca sed ostendens dereptis vulnera membris
> adspice, mater! ait. visis ululavit Agave
> collaque iactavit movitque per aera crinem
> avulsumque caput digitis conplexa cruentis
> clamat: io comites, opus hoc victoria nostra est!
> non citius frondes autumni frigore tactas
> iamque male haerentes alta rapit arbore ventus,
> quam sunt membra viri manibus direpta nefandis. (*Met.* 3.722-31)
>
> The poor man has no arms left now
> to stretch out to his mother, but he shows her
> the gaping wounds where his arms used to be,
> crying, 'Mother look!' Agave howls at the sight
> and whips her hair around in the wind. Then,

> tearing off his head, she holds it in her bloody fingers
> and shouts, 'Sisters, see what I've done, see what I've won!'
> Leaves touched by the frost are not more quickly whirled
> from the high branches to which they barely cling
> than the man is dismembered by their impious hands. (trans. Lombardo)

Shadows of Ovid's Pentheus may well inform many of Lucan's own scenes of similarly graphic violence (e.g., the mutilation of Marius Gratidianus, 2.174-91), but particularly striking is the tree simile with which Ovid ends his depiction of Pentheus' transformation from a man to *truncus.* If Lucan's imagery of the severed head cannot help but evoke Pompey, the imagery of the headless body, or *truncus,* works to the same effect, and just as Ovid envisions Pentheus' *truncus* as a tree that has lost its leaves, thus also has Lucan depicted Pompey. From Lucan's programmatic oak and lightening simile onward, Pompey is linked to the image of a leafless trunk of an oak tree (*nudosque per aera ramos / effundens trunco, non frondibus, efficit umbram*, 1. 139-40), and though Lucan's image of Pompey as such has been most often discussed in light of Vergil's famous description of of Priam lying on the shores at Troy (*iacet ingens litore truncus / avulsumque umeris caput et sine nomine corpus, A*. 2.557-8),[186] might we also consider alongside this Trojan model for Pompey's *truncus* a Theban one? If Lucan's epic is meant to be read as a re-imagining of the fall of Troy itself with Pompey its new headless figure-head,[187] the inward-turning attack of Roman against Rome (the very *caput mundi* itself) is also a repetition of an infamous act of Theban intra-familial violence.[188]

Lucan returns again to the image of Pentheus and Agave at the battle of Pharsalus itself. Noting how Caesar and his army are haunted by hissing and torches for the various acts of kin-killing they have performed in the battle (7.771-5), Lucan singles out Caesar for special attention on these grounds. As all the ghosts of the slain crowd onto Caesar (*omnes in Caesare manes*, 7.776), Lucan describes the effect of his 'haunting' by way of a simile in which he compares

[186] A well-known and much discussed allusion. Cf. Narducci (1973, 317-25), Hinds (1998, 8-10). See also Berno (2004) for a discussion of Senecan intertexts for the *truncus*.

[187] Cf. Gnaeus Pompey's question, where he links the downfall of his father as *caput orbis* with the downfall of Rome: *dic ubi sit germane, parens? Stat summa caputque / orbis, an occidimus Romanaque Magnus ad umbras abstulit?* (9.123-5)

[188] Notable is that Ovid has already cast this particular act of violence as a re-enactment of Actaeon. As he is being torn apart, Pentheus calls upon his aunt to remember the fate of his cousin: *Autonoe! moveant animos Actaeonis umbrae* (*Met.* 3.720)!

Caesar to Orestes (hounded by the Furies), Pentheus (in his fury), and Agave (in her post-fury guilt):

> haud alios nondum Scythica purgatus in ara
> Eumenidum vidit voltus Pelopeus Orestes,
> nec magis attonitos animi sensere tumultus
> cum fureret, Pentheus, aut cum desisset, Agave. (7.777-80)
>
> Hardly differently did Pelopean Orestes, not yet purified at the Scythian altar, see the faces of the Furies; nor did Pentheus, as he raved or Agave when she stopped raving, feel more thunderstuck and disturbed in mind.

As Hardie has noted, the scene Lucan has set here, as well as the simile he employs to describe Caesar, is a reworking of Vergil's description of Dido's pre-suicide dream in *Aeneid* four.[189] Having realized the full implications of her abandonment by Aeneas and intent on death, Dido dreams that a *ferus Aeneas* (4.466) goads her, and as she wanders, Vergil likens her plight to that of Orestes and Pentheus as both are driven by the Furies:

> Eumenidum veluti demens videt agmina Pentheus
> et solem geminum et duplices se ostendere Thebas,
> aut Agamemnonius scaenis agitatus Orestes,
> armatam facibus matrem et serpentibus atris
> cum fugit ultricesque sedent in limine Dirae. (*A*. 4.469-73).
>
> Just as when Pentheus in his madness sees the bands of bacchants and a double sun and two-fold Thebes rises up, or when Agamemnon's son Orestes, hounded by the Furies, flees his mother armed with torches and black serpents and the avenging Dirae sit on the threshold.

Vergil's simile points ahead in various ways to Dido's tragic *furor*-driven fate, but insofar as Dido's own fate is also linked to that of her city (whose destruction is imagined by Vergil at *A*. 4.669-71), the reference to Thebes here is particularly resonant. In having Dido meeting her own Pentheus-like doom, Vergil suggests a connection between Carthage and Thebes.[190] In assimilating Dido's Carthage to Thebes, Vergil holds up Dido's city as in many ways the *other* –

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[189] 1993, 42.

[190] So argues Hardie (1990, 228-30).

a foil for Aeneas' city, whose successful foundation and persistence (cf. *imperium sine fine*, *A*.1.279) forms both the subject and culmination of the *Aeneid*.[191] Lucan's adaptation of Vergil's dream simile shows that he rejects Vergil's presentation of Thebes as such. In Lucan's hands, it is not Dido who is hounded by the Eumenides, nor Dido who is likened in her *furor* to Pentheus or Agave, but Caesar himself; the *furor* of kin-murder and the furies of the tragic stage have not been re-embodied by Rome's great enemy, but within the Romans themselves.[192]

Urbes per Orbem

As one of her goals in discussing Thebes and Theban imagery in the Latin epic tradition, Braund claims that she hopes to offer a "corrective" to "the Iliocentric view" of Roman self-constuction. My motivation here has been to some extent the same, though narrowed specifically to Lucan's use of the Theban myth. [193] Still, the importance of Braund's term "corrective" cannot be overstressed: Lucan does not suggest that Thebes is the only or the primary paradigm through which to view Roman identity; rather, Thebes is one of many paradigms that Lucan revels in evoking and re-evoking at various points and in many narratives. Part of my reason for pairing Lucan's Massilia and his account of Vulteius within this very Chapter plays into this concern: Lucan constructs Massilia as a mirror for a Rome founded by Trojan exiles. One book later, he turns for paradigms to the Theban myth, with its emphasis on autochthonous origins as exemplified by the Spartoi. Though Lucan arrives at it by different routes and by utilizing different patterns of imagery, the ultimate outcome for the Massilians and the Opitergians is fundamentally the same. As Lucan describes the heap of dead on board Vulteius' *ratis* (*iam <u>strage cruenta</u> / conspicitur <u>cumulata ratis</u>*, 4.570-1), his words remind us of the ship at Massilia

[191] This model for viewing Thebes in Athenian tragedy and developed for Roman literature by Hardie (1990) and Braund (2006) was first suggested by Zeitlin, who argues that Thebes functions as an anti-Athens on the tragic stage (1990, 144).

[192] And, to a large extent, this is true because the Romans are their *own* enemies in Lucan's tale. The image of Thebes cannot be projected onto the 'other' because the other is oneself. In fact, Lucan wishes that the Romans were fighting the Carthaginians (see especially his remarks at 1.30-32)!

[193] 2006, 259. I might expand on this point to say that much of the discussion of Lucan's use of myth has been 'Iliocentric' in nature as well. I have purposefully avoided discussing Lucan's famous Caesar at Troy scene at 9.950-999. The bibliography on this moment is ever expanding, but recent treatments include Zweirlein (1986), Rossi (2003), Eigler (2005), Ambühl (2010). For a list of basic verbal parallels between Vergil (especially Evander's tour of Pallanteum in *Aeneid* 8) and Lucan's Troy scene, see Thompson and Bruére (1968, 16-20).

that sinks under the weight of its own crew (*strage* *virum* *cumulata ratis* *multoque* *cruore*, 3.627).[194] Both ships are, in essence, *rates* of state that recall the sinking of Rome under its own massive weight (*nec se Roma ferens,* 1.72).

Lucan's poem is all-encompassing. Not only does the narrative of his epic include actual visits to the ruins of great *urbes antiquae* like Troy and Carthage, but also many figurative visits to cities like Thebes, all channeled through the lens of mythic memory. In likening these cities—and their literary pedigrees—to Rome, while also assimilating all of the smaller cities within his historical narrative (e.g., Massilia, Opitergium, Ariminum, and Brundisium) to Rome, Lucan collapses all of these city narratives into *the* great city narrative—in the ruin of Rome is the ruin of all.[195] Lucan makes this very point during the battle of Pharsalus as he comments on the lasting ruin the battle will cause:

> non aetas haec carpsit edax monimentaque rerum
> putria destituit: crimen civile videmus
> tot vacuas urbes. Generis quo turba redacta est
> humani! Toto populi qui nascimur orbe
> nec muros inplere viris nec possumus agros;
> urbs nos una capit (7.397-402)
>
> It is not devouring time which has eroded and abandoned in decay
> These memorials of the past: it is the crime of civil war we see,
> So many empty cities. To what has the multitude of humankind
> Been reduced! We peoples born in all the world
> Are not enough to fill with men the town-walls and fields;
> A single city holds us all. (trans. Braund)

As Lucan claims here, the *Urbs* brought down with it the populations of cities throughout the *orbs* in its suicidal distintegration. The battle of Pharsalus has caused the entirety of the world to turn inward, to shrink back to a singularity: one city can now hold all. As Lucan channels this idea through Horatian (and Ovidian) conceits about the immortality of poetry, he also comments on his place within the poetic tradition of writing about great cities. If the poetry of Horace and Ovid is able to escape the wear of time and these poets will live as long as Rome itself endures, Lucan has claimed here for himself a perverse form of poetic immortality: in singing the long-

[194] On Vulteius manning a "*ratis* of state," see Henderson (1987, 139) and Eldred (2002, 73-7).

[195] On the importance of memory, ruins, and landscape in Lucan, see Spencer (2005, 48-56).

lasting and enduring effects of *crimen civile* Lucan will always enjoy his own brand of poetic fame.

CHAPTER THREE

MONSTERS AND HEROES

In the previous two Chapters, I examined facets of Lucan's cyclical view of chaos and discussed the imagery that Lucan uses to articulate his view of cities (and the City) within the larger context of his epic project. In the final Chapter of this study, I shall turn my attention to yet another major and broadly defined topic of inquiry: Lucan's portrayal of the struggle of heroes and monsters. We saw in the previous Chapter how Lucan manipulates both standard and explicitly Ovidian battle *topoi* so as to align them with his poetics of civil war. Here again my concern will be Lucan's use of models (many of them Ovidian) for heroes and monsters in two of his North African narratives: Curio's defeat by Juba (4.581-824) and Cato's 'battle' with the Libyan serpents (9.294-949).

Lucan connects both of these episodes by framing them with models for heroic achievement.[196] In addition to patterning the undertakings of both Curio and Cato with hints of the Argonautic myth, both episodes also contain lengthy mythological digressions. Before Curio engages in battle with the Pompeian lieutenant Varus and the African prince Juba, Lucan explains the history of the locale with an extended excursus on Hercules and his wrestling match with the Libyan giant Antaeus (4.581-660). Hercules resurfaces in book nine as well (hints of his presence inform Lucan's presentation of Cato's *labores* and the suffering endured by his men on their *durum iter*),[197] but Lucan's Cato narrative also contains a lengthy mythological digression of its own. Prior to the encounter with a horde of Libyan serpents, Lucan tells the story of their origin, describing Perseus' triumph over Medusa and the snakes' subsequent birth from her severed head (9.619-699). As we shall see, Lucan adapts previous models for both Hercules and Medusa so as to make his own versions of the myths uniquely suitable for his tale of *bellum*

[196] On connections between the two African episodes see Grimal (1949, 60) and Saylor (1982, 169). More recent analyses of Lucan's use of myth (and history) in the episodes include Leigh (2000), Lowe (2010), and Bexley (2010).

[197] See Schoaf (1978) and Moretti (1999) for readings that foreground this Herculean material in relation to Cato; both conclude that Lucan's efforts to associate Cato with Hercules cast both Cato and Hercules in a positive light. Viarre (1977) also deals with the connections between Hercules and Cato, but her conclusions on the matter are more ambivalent regarding Cato's heroic status.

nefandum, and his overt references toward the mythic tradition in these African narratives ultimately suggest that he is up to some myth-making of his own.

Given the distinctly mythic *color* of both narratives, it should perhaps come as no surprise that Lucan has turned to Ovid in several key places as he builds his heroic framework. In the case of the Curio narrative, Lucan pointedly draws on Ovid's description of Hercules and Achelous (*Met.* 9.1-97) as one of the models for his own Hercules and Antaeus match, [198] and I argue that Lucan constructs the whole of the Curio narrative so as to provide a 'reading lesson' when it comes to interpreting mythical stories against the backdrop of *bellum civile*. Lucan uses Curio's failure to read his situation correctly to underscores the fact that in civil war—unlike myth—there can be no victor.

As for the Cato material in book nine, I suggest that Lucan's presentation of Cato and his relationship to the mythic tradition against which Lucan sets his story is fundamentally similar to that of Curio. [199] Though Lucan casts Cato's *durum iter* in a distinctly Herculean mold, he does not ultimately allow Cato and his men victory over their reptilian foes. Lucan foreshadows this outcome in his Medusa excursus, which he uses to delineate what I will call his statement of 'Medusaean poetics,' a type of poetry whose centerpiece is monsters and the monstrous. As in the Curio narrative, Lucan's gestures toward the mythic tradition in book nine also suggest that he is creating his own, new form of myth: the myth of civil war, wherein there are no true heroes and the monsters must win.[200]

[198] Ovid is rarely analyzed in discussions of this excursus (which in and of itself has not attracted a great deal of attention, though some recent work includes Asso 2002, Uhle 2006, and Lowe 2010). One may find a cursory analysis of the Ovidian models for Lucan's Hercules/Antaeus in Thompson and Bruére (1970, 168-70), which follows up on work first done by Phillips (1962, 38-9).

[199] The 'Ovidian tone' of the snake episode has been generally recognized. See especially Johnson (1987, 36, 64). My own views here owe much to Johnson's in spirit; however, my treatment of the material will in part be a response to Johnson's strategy, as Masters puts it, of "rigidly refusing to be drawn into a close reading of the text" (1992, xiii). Batinski (1992a, 78) also notes, in passing, the Ovidian tone of the mock-epic snake battle.

[200] Contrary to Fantham (1992b, 122), who also suggests that Lucan is doing some myth making in the Cato narrative, but concludes that he means to create "a new Stoic myth of heroism."

Audax Curio

Before discussing Lucan's presentation of Cato and all its attendant controversies, I want to begin with an analysis of the Curio material in book four. Lucan crafts the whole of the Curio narrative as a sort of prelude to Cato's *durum iter* in book nine, and much of what happens to Curio at the hands of his African enemies will, I think, inform how we should view Cato and his own subsequent *inredux via* through the African desert. At the same time, however, whereas (as I will argue below) Lucan's presentation of Cato and his 'heroic' achievement is marked by hints of ambivalence, his view of Curio is decidedly less forgiving. Indeed, Lucan emphasizes Curio's corruption—in contrast to Cato—from his very first appearance in the epic. When we first meet Curio in book one as he joins Caesar's army on its way southward to Rome, he delivers a speech in which he urges Caesar to invade Rome and defend the affronts to his reputation. As Lucan sketches out aspects of Curio's character prior to the speech, he highlights how the rise of triumviral politics and the outbreak of the war has changed Curio for the worse:[201]

> audax venali comitatur Curio lingua
> vox quondam populi libertatemque tueri
> ausus est armatos plebi miscere potentes (1.269-71)
>
> Bold Curio, whose tongue was for sale, accompanied him. He was once the voice of the people; he dared to protect Freedom and level those powerful in arms with the plebs.

Though Curio once engaged in the admirable pursuit of being the *vox populi* against the *potentes* and protecting *libertas* prior to the war (very Catonian pursuits), [202] he has now been corrupted by money and sells his talents to the highest bidder (*venali lingua*). Like many of the Romans mentioned in Lucan's earlier description of the *semina belli* (1.158-72), Curio has fallen prey to

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[201] Cf. 2.282, where Cato is described as protecting liberty (*libertatem tueri*). I make this point because I think that Lucan may intend for us to begin to compare Curio to Cato even at this early stage. The interchange between Curio and Caesar in book one may be read as parallel to the conference of Brutus and Cato in book two in which these two men debate about whether to engage in civil war. Cato's speech rouses Brutus to action (*sic fatur/ et acres irarum movit stimulus iuvenisque calorem/excitat in nimios belli civilis amores,* 2.323-5) just as Curio's does here to Caesar (*Sic postquam fatus, et ipsi /in bellum prono tantum tamen addidit irae/ accenditque ducem,* 1.291-3).

[202] In this Curio is a foil for Metellus, the tribune whom Caesar later encounters at the treasury in book three. For my discussion of Metellus' Philomelan *lingua* see, Ch. 2, p. 53-7, above. See Roche (2009 ad 1.269) for a discussion of Lucan's acceptance of the tradition that Curio (who once gained political prominence for attacking the triumvirate) was won over to Caesar's side by massive bribes.

greed and other vices of the times, an aspect of his character that has led Roche to call him a "synecdochic representation of his Age."[203] To Roche's estimation I might add that Lucan's emphasis on Curio's *audacia* in these lines even further underscores his characterization as such: *audax* Curio is indeed a synecdochic representation of his Age, which Lucan envisions elsewhere in terms of the Iron Age itself.[204]

Lucan picks up on this type of imagery once more when Curio weighs anchor on the shores of Africa in book four.[205] Here too Lucan presents an *audax* Curio, though this time, Curio's *audacia* is linked explicitly to his sea-voyage to the African coast-line (*namque rates audax Lilybaeo litore solvit / Curio*, 4.584-5).[206] Lucan's suggestive pairing of *rates* and *audax* gives an Argo-like undertone to Curio's voyage and provides what is the first of many mythic frameworks through which to view the narrative. Though it is clear that Curio views his own 'bold' enterprise in a positive light (cf. his defense of his strategy of boldness in battle at 4.702-709), he is unaware of what these 'Argonautic' undertakings really mean within the context of the *Bellum Civile*. We have seen already how Lucan patterns the outbreak of civil war and its connections to *crimen*, *nefas*, and *scelus* after the sailing of the Argo as initiator of the Iron Age. In undertaking his own 'Argonautic' voyage to Africa, Curio will actually be the first in Lucan's epic to bring civil war to that continent, and this is a fact that Lucan will soon emphasize in his portrayal of Curio's defeat as a recreation in miniature of civil war itself.[207]

These hints of the Argonautic myth are admittedly subtle, and I raise them here primarily to set the stage for the similar Argonautic patterning that Lucan will evoke in book nine. That said, Lucan also suggests more explicit heroic and mythic models for viewing Curio's undertakings as the narrative develops further. Indeed, as Curio begins his preparations for battle

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[203] Cf. Cato's eulogy of Pompey: *sed in hoc tamen utilis aevo* (9.191). Ahl (1976, 116-132) has many excellent discussions of individual characters, including Curio, who fit this pattern and discusses it more generally as a leitmotif in the text. See especially for Curio (87-88). The corruption of the Age (*perdita saecula*) and Curio's emblematic representation thereof returns again at the end of the Curio narrative in book four (4.816-20).

[204] See Ch. 1, p. 24-31, above.

[205] On the relevance of the first appearance of Curio to his later appearance in book four (with conclusions different from my own) see Saylor (1982, 177).

[206] Lucan has suggested only some ten lines earlier (in the preceding episode) an analogy between Vulteius' *ratis* and the Argo (4.774-5).

[207] With the exception, perhaps, of Marius whose exile in Africa Lucan describes at 2.88-93. On Marius' connections to the African narrative(s) see Ahl (1976, 103-7).

with the provincial governor and Pompeian ally Varus and the Numidian prince Juba, he learns that the part of Africa in which he has landed has quite a storied and glorious past.[208] As Curio proceeds inland to a site between Clipea and the ruins (*semirutas arces*) of Carthage, for instance, Lucan tells us that he sets up camp near the River Bagrada (4.588), the site of Regulus' battle with a monstrous serpent.[209] Curio will go on to learn, moreover, from a *rudis incola,* that the locale was also once the realm of the mythical giant Antaeus (*regna Antaei*, 4.585), whose defeat at the hands of Hercules the *incola* describes for Curio at length (4.593-660). Apart from its Herculean connections, the *incola* also adds that this same location housed Scipio's armies during the Second Punic War and even shows Curio the decayed ramparts of Scipio's former camp (*en, veteris cernis vestigia valli*, 4.659).[210]

Though both Lucan and his readers know that Curio will eventually suffer defeat in this place of so many past victories, Curio himself is blissfully unaware of this fact. He is overjoyed that he has chosen such an auspicious location for his camp, and Lucan highlights the fact that he is foolish for believing that the 'good luck' of the place will help him:

> Curio laetatus, tamquam fortuna locorum
> bella gerat servetque ducum sibi fata priorum
> felici non fausta loco tentoria ponens
> indulsit castris et collibus abstulit omen,
> sollicitatque feros non aequis viribus hostes (4.661-65)

> Curio was delighted as if the luckiness of the spot would fight for him and preserve the success of its former commanders. Placing his ill-fated tents in that spot, he entrusted himself to his camp, took away the good omen from the hills, and provoked a fierce enemy with unequal strength.

[208] Although Asso (2009, ad loc.) does point out that *audacia* is often a trait of Curio's in the historiographical tradition. Even if this is the case, Lucan has seized on Curio's well-known characterization and manipulated it for his own ends.

[209] For a poetic take on Regulus and the Serpent, see Sil. *Pun*. 6.140-293 (with Bassett 1955). On Lucan's reference to the Bagrada as a gesture toward Regulus, see the comments of Hardie (2008, 319) and Asso (2009, ad loc).

[210] For more on the various heroes and heroic narratives associated with the land of Libya (e.g., the Argonauts, Hercules, Alexander, etc.), see Leigh (2000, 95-6). Africa was known traditionally as a land of marvels (on which, see the discussion in Grimal 1947, 57-9), and Lucan may have included his only two overtly mythological digressions within the *Bellum Civile* in his African material partly for this reason.

As Lucan foreshadows ominously enough here, it is not Curio's fate to follow in the glorious *vestigia* of Hercules, Regulus, or Scipio. Rather, as Lucan will go on to describe, Curio and his army will meet with an ignominious and largely self-inflicted defeat that is in keeping with the presentation of civil strife throughout the epic. I will discuss Lucan's presentation of the defeat itself in more detail below, but I raise this point here because Lucan has included these details about Curio's reaction to the *incola* in order to show that Curio is a terrible interpreter of the information he has been told about the site. Though he thinks that he will be able to replicate the successes of both Hercules and Scipio, his own defeat, which Lucan will go on to cast as another microcosm of civil war, ends up amounting to a reversal of the glorious victories of these *priores* over their enemies. In his misinterpretation, Curio is thus akin in some ways to Lucan's Vulteius who, as we saw in my earlier discussion of that scene, hopes to effect a heroic deed that will be a traditional *exemplum per aevum*, but is ultimately thwarted in that attempt due to the type of war (and the type of epic) in which he is striving for such recognition.[211]

Herein, I think, lies one reason for Lucan's inclusion of the *incola*'s lengthy tale of Hercules and Antaeus: Lucan has constructed and framed the excursus so as to highlight the fundamental disconnect between the *exempla* that Curio hopes he will follow and his own horrible failure and defeat in *bellum civile*.[212] Lucan highlights this inconsistency in his presentation of Curio as a bad reader: the *incola*'s vignette does indeed provide a model through which Curio might view his own impending battle—Curio just fails to interpret it properly. And while Curio may be a bad reader, Lucan has read his models quite carefully. He pointedly situates his own Hercules story within the larger *topos* of the 'Hercules scene' in Latin epic,[213] and his *incola*'s tale is, accordingly, a pastiche of several earlier Herculean models. The most prominent of these is Vergil's Hercules and Cacus narrative (*A.* 8.184-279), though discernable as well are borrowings from Vergil's own precursor to this narrative in the *Aeneid,* Entellus and

[211] See Ch. 2, p. 87-88, above.

[212] Contra Phillips, whose analysis of Lucan's Hercules episode comes to the unsatisfying conclusion that "no immediate explanation of this mythological excursus presents itself" (1962, 39).

[213] In this, I am drawing from Galinsky (1972, 114) who writes that a Hercules scene becomes almost *de rigueur* for poets after Vergil. The *topos* of the wrestling/boxing/struggle of two combatants (Hercules or otherwise) is as old as Homer (cf. the boxing matches of *Od*. 18.1ff. and *Il*. 23.651ff., as well as Apollonius' Amycus and Polydeuces at *Arg*. 2.1-96). I am largely limiting my discussion to the Latin epic tradition here not only to avoid becoming bogged down by the sheer number of models but also because of the larger point I will make about the use of the *topos* by Vergil, Ovid, and Lucan, specifically, as metaphor for Roman civil war.

Dares (*A.* 5.362-484) and Ovid's Hercules and Achelous (*Met.* 9.1-97).[214] Lucan's own mobilization of the *topos* makes it clear that he has read these earlier versions of (near) *pares*-in-conflict as reflective of civil war,[215] and Lucan, in turn, makes his own reading as such so plain and explicit that Curio's failure to interpret it correctly stands out quite starkly in contrast. [216] Indeed, Lucan not only provides clues throughout his presentation that might reveal for Curio the true symbolic purpose of the stock 'Hercules scene,' but many details therein also point ahead (predictably enough, as a model) to the ways in which Curio himself will meet with defeat.

In order to further explain what I mean, let us examine more closely Lucan's presentation of the Hercules and Antaeus fight, as well as the details that he has drawn from his various models. Before the *incola*'s narration of the fight itself even begins, Lucan signals that Vergil's presentation and framing of Hercules and Cacus is not very far from his mind. The *incola* introduces his story in a way that evokes Evander's introduction to the tale of Hercules and Cacus:

> Antaei quas regna vocat non vana vetustas
> nominis antiqui cupientem noscere causas
> cognita per multos docuit rudis *incola* patres (4.589-91)
>
> A not empty tradition calls this region the realm of Antaeus, and a local inhabitant taught [Curio], who was eager to learn the origin of the ancient name, the tale that was passed down through many generations.

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[214] On the Vergilian models for the fight, Asso (2002, 59-60, 61-2, 66-9) is especially good.

[215] On aspects of civil conflict in Hercules/Cacus, see the discussion of Morgan (1998). Hardie (1993, 22-5) traces the origins from Ennius up through Valerius Flaccus and Statius (including a discussion of dueling bulls as complement to the dueling wrestlers/boxers/fighters). Ovid's 'reading' of Vergil in his Hercules/Achelous scene lays the groundwork for Lucan's own reading here. Achelous paints Hercules as a *gener externis ab oris* (*Met.* 9.19), and goes on to compare their fight to the struggle of two bulls (9.46-8, cf. V. *A.* 12.716ff.). Hardie has noted that Ovid's (and Vergil's) dueling bulls draws from Ennius' depiction of Romulus and Remus' augury scene (Ennius *Ann*. 78, Skutsch)—the first Rome's fratricidal conflicts (1993, 23, n. 10).

[216] In this I might quibble slightly with Ahl (1976, 94), who claims that "Lucan carefully avoids going too far." It seems that going just a bit "too far" is Lucan's point. The fact that Lucan has a *rudis incola* narrate his tale is probably meant to be a somewhat humorous touch in this respect. The *incola* certainly knows his way around the standard features of the Hercules *topos,* and in this sense it is ironic that Lucan calls him *rudis*. At the same time, however, his very obvious gestures toward besting the models that he knows so well (Ovid's Achelous is also overly bombastic in this respect) reflect something of a lack of refinement on his part: is the *incola* also a bit of a *rudis poeta*?

The language immediately recalls that of Vergil's Evander, as he explains to Aeneas the origins of the rites celebrated in honor of Hercules at the Ara Maxima (*non…vana superstitio veterumque ignara deorum / imposuit*, *A*. 8.187-88). As *incola*'s tale proceeds he builds on this framework and he sketches out a portrait of Antaeus that is quite similar to Vergil's Cacus.[217] From their elemental, giant-like natures to the chthonic caves in which they reside, Antaeus and Cacus share much in common. We learn that Antaeus was born in (*terribilem Libycis partum concepit in antris,* 4.594) and lives in, appropriately enough, a cave (*haec illi spelunca domus,* 4.601). Antaeus, like Cacus, does not shy away from killing men, and his victims of choice are farmers (*periere coloni / arvorum Libyae,* 4.605-6), and sailors (*pereunt quos appulit aequor*, 4.606).[218] In an especially clever move on Lucan's part, alongside his human victims, the *incola* even mentions that one of Antaeus' favorite meals is lions (*epulas raptos habuisse leones*, 4.602). As Galinsky has noted, Libyan lions are associated in Vergil's *Aeneid* with the forces of *furor* and Turnus is, of course, notably compared to one in this capacity at *Aeneid* 12.4-9.[219] In having his Antaeus eat Libyan lions for lunch, Lucan indicates that the *incola* has read his Vergil. His Antaeus is not only assimilated here to Cacus *and* his analogue Turnus, but also surpasses them both in his connections to *furor.* What was a finely delineated nuance in Vergil's presentation of the connections between Cacus and Turnus has been put on prominent display in Lucan's narrative.

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[217] This framing also evokes another heroic model for Curio (whom he fails to live up to): Aeneas. Lucan's parody of Vergil is especially powerful in reinforcing his depiction of Curio as a 'synecdoche of his Age,' an example of the decay of Roman *mores*. A perverse shadow of Rome's founder, Curio is now actively engaging in Rome's destruction through civil war, and in lieu of a nascent Rome bound for future glories, Lucan ironically depicts a Roman defeat at the ruined and decayed site of its former greatest enemy, Carthage itself—a fact which makes Curio's hope that he will become a *Scipio redivivus* even more absurd by contrast. See further, discussion in Ahl (1976, 91-4).

[218] Though Lucan does not mention it, Antaeus is supposed to have built a temple to Poseidon from the skulls of human victims (cf. Plato *Tht.* 169b, Pindar *Isth*. 4.56ff., Apollod. 2.5, Diod. 4.17.4, 27.3). This detail recalls Cacus' habit of displaying the faces of his human victims on his door posts (V. *A*. 8.196-7), while also linking Antaeus to one of Cacus' own models, Homer's Polyphemus, the son of Poseidon. It is clear that Lucan is at pains to make his Antaeus a truly worthy foe for the greatest of heroes. He is cast as a paradigmatic enemy of civilization, an enemy whom Hercules must conquer as part of his role as culture hero in cleansing the world of monsters.

[219] Cf. *A*. 12.4-9, with Galinsky's comments (1966, 174-5). The lion-eating Antaeus is also notably evocative of Caesar: Ahl (1972, 1006-7; 1976, 103-7) has shown the influence of Vergil's lion simile on Lucan's programmatic lion simile as used to describe Caesar at 1.205-12.

If Vergil's narrative is patterned so as to suggest that Cacus is Giant-like and that the battle between Hercules and Cacus itself is evocative of the Gigantomachy,[220] Lucan also seizes on these details and has his *incola* make them very explicit. Along these lines, we learn that Antaeus is the son of *Tellus,* who after she gave birth to the Giants, produced even more terrible offspring like Antaeus in Libya (4.594-3). Hercules, of course, was an instrumental fighter for the Olympians in the Gigantomachy, and Lucan's *incola* shows off that he knows this fact too.[221] After comparing Antaeus to Typhon, Tityos and Briareus, he goes on to claim that it was surely a fortunate event for the gods (and by extension, Hercules) that Antaeus did not participate in the Gigantomachy (4.594-7).

In evoking the Gigantomachy as such, Lucan surely means for us to connect this scene with all the episodes in which he uses the Gigantomachy as an analogue for *bellum civile,* but the *incola*'s remarks also hint at another theme on which he is soon to elaborate further: the astounding parity between the two contenders. Antaeus is so powerful—and so evenly matched with Hercules and other Olympian foes—that he could have changed the outcome of the Gigantomachy itself. As he describes the preparations for the match, the *incola* manipulates many traditional details so as to highlight even further the parity of his two contenders. Boxers and wrestlers commonly disrobe before the match, as Vergil's Entellus does (*haec fatus duplicem ex umeris reiecit amictum / …exuit atque ingens media consistit harena*, 5.422, 24).[222] Ovid incorporates this detail in his Hercules and Achelous narrative: Achelous readies himself for the match by throwing off his cloak, which is green and thus humorously apropos of a river god (*reieci viridem de corpore vestem, Met.* 9.32). Lucan follows Ovid's lead in his version of this traditional detail, having *both* of his combatants throw their own aptly imagined though 'equal' cloaks—lion skins!—to the ground: *ille Cleonaei proiecit terga leonis / Antaeus Libyci*

[220] On which see Hardie (1986, 110-18). Ovid recognizes this as well. Achelous describes himself and Hercules at different points in his narrative in terms of their size and bulk. When Hercules jumps on Achelous' back and Achelous claims he felt as heavy as a mountain (*siqua fides,—neque enim ficta mihi gloria voce/ quaeritur—inposito pressus mihi monte videbar, Met.* 9.54-6) he has actually recreated the Gigantomachy in piling his mountainous bulk on top of Achelous' own mountainous bulk. Vergil's appropriately named Entellus is also characterized throughout by his bulk in a way that is suggestive of Gigantomachy.

[221] Cf. esp. 3.315, 7.144-7. Hercules himself took part in defeating these monsters in the Gigantomachy (see Wernicke's "Antaios" *RE* 1.2339-2343), and Antaeus is thus a fitting opponent for him on this level. The detail recalls Apollonius' description of Amycus (*Arg*. 2.37-40), whose match with Polydeuces is also cast in Gigantomachic terms.

[222] Cf. *Arg*. 2.30-34, where both boxers disrobe.

(4.612-3). Lucan adapts Ovid in a similar way in his next detail, so as to highlight the different though equal sources of each man's strength. Ovid's Hercules throws sand on both himself and Achelous pre-fight (*ille cavis hausto spargit me pulvere palmis, / inque vicem fulvae tactu flavescit harenae, Met.* 9.35-6); Lucan's Hercules-as-culture-hero oils himself in *more palaestrae* while it is Antaeus who covers himself with sand, so as to gain help from his mother Tellus (4.613-16).

As the match begins, the *incola* continues to emphasize how the combatants are evenly matched. As he wrestles Antaeus, Lucan's Hercules is amazed that he has found an 'equal' (*mirantur habuisse* <u>*parem*</u>*,* 4.620), and although they derive their strengths from different sources, the ultimate parity of the two contestants is on display throughout the struggle: *conflixere* <u>*pares,*</u> *Telluris viribus ille, / ille suis* (4.636-7).[223] In a surprising inversion of expectation, Antaeus is even likened explicitly to Hercules himself when the *incola* calls him by Hercules' well-known epithet *invictus* (4.608), while Lucan similarly appropriates Herculean language to describe Antaeus' mother Tellus, who 'labors' in a very Herculean fashion, to give aid to her son (*Tellusque viro luctante* <u>*laborat*</u>, 4.644).

As the match proceeds, Lucan's *incola* describes how Hercules tries to wear down his man and includes a number of stock details:

conseruere manus et multo bracchia nexu;
colla diu gravibus frustra temptata lacertis,
inmotumque caput fixa cum fronte tenetur;
mirantur habuisse parem. Nec viribus uti
Alcides primo voluit certamine totis
exhausitque virum, quod creber anhelitus illi
prodidit et gelidus fesso de corpore sudor.
Tum cervix lassata quati, tum pectore pectus
urgueri, tunc obliquo percussa labare
crura manu. (4.618-26)

They linked hands and arms in many a clasp,
Long tested the others' neck in vain with massive biceps,
And each head is held unmoved with forehead rigid;
And they are amazed to meet their match. Alcides, not wishing
To use all his strength at the contest's start,
Wore out his opponent, as the frequent gasps

[223] Cf. Vergil's Dares and Entellus: *et* <u>*paribus*</u> *palmas amborum innexuit armis* (*A.* 5.425)

And cold sweat from his tired body revealed to him.
Then his neck grows weak and trembles, then breast by breast
Is shoved, then legs totter, struck by hand
Aslant. (trans. Braund)

Lucan's description here recalls Vergil's depiction of Dares and Entellus as their boxing match begins:

immiscentque manus manibus pugnamque lacessunt
ille pedum melior motu fretusque iuventa
hic membris et mole valens; sed tarda trementis
genua labant, vastos quatit aeger anhelitus artus (*A.* 5.429-32)

They mix hands with hands and provoke the fight. This one lighter on his feet and reliant on his youthfulness. That one strong in his limbs and bulk. But the slow-moving knees of the trembling man totter, and a painful panting shakes his massive limbs.

Entellus stands firm (*stat gravis Entellus, A.* 5.436), even though Dares circles him and tries to attack him as if assaulting a mountain or a city (*velut celsam oppugnat qui molibus urbem / aut montana sedet circum castella sub armis, A.* 5.439-40).[224] Achelous' description of Hercules trying to wear him down draws from Vergil, but also looks ahead to Lucan's match as well. Hercules attacks Achelous at first from every angle (*et modo cervicem, et modo crura, modo ilia captat*, *Met.* 9.37), but the river god is able to withstand the first onslaught and stands firm using his weight to brace himself like a huge cliff being buffeted by waves:[225]

me mea defendit gravitas frustraque petebar,
haud secus ac moles, quam magno murmure fluctus
oppugnant: manet illa suoque est pondere tuta… (*Met.* 9. 39-40)
inque gradu stetimus, certi non cedere, eratque
cum pede pes iunctus, totoque ego pectore pronus

[224] This particular Vergilian simile looks ahead to both the meeting of the 'mountainous' Hercules/Cacus as well as the struggle of Aeneas and Turnus around the walls of Latinus' city.

[225] Esposito (1994, 110-11) has seen in Lucan's programmatic description of Pompey as *quercus* a possible allusion to Ovid's Achelous: *nec iam validis radicibus haeret, / pondere fixa suo est, nudosque per aera ramos / effundens, trunco non frondibus efficit umbram* (1.138-140), cf. *manet illa suoque est pondere tuta* (*Met.* 9.40). He interprets it as a sign that Lucan means to imply Pompey's ultimate inferiority to Caesar's Herculean strength. Lucan seems to pick up on this idea, again and unsurprisingly given the parameters of the *topos*) in his famous Pompey-as-bull simile. Pompey withdraws from Italy like a bull from a fight, recognizing that he is *viribus inpar* (2.607) and hopes to regain his strength (*cum cervice recepta / excussi placuere tori, mox reddita victor,* 2.604-5).

et digitos digitis et frontem fronte premebam. (9.42-45)

My weight itself defended me and I was attacked to no avail. I was hardly different than a huge cliff which the waves beat against with a great roar and yet it stands there fixed solid in its own bulk…
We stood in our stances determined not to yield, joined foot to foot, chest entirely to chest, finger to finger, brow to brow, I was pressing on him.

When Hercules jumps on Achelous' back, however, he begins to sweat profusely under the pressure (cf. Lucan's *gelidus fesso de corpore sudor*) and has trouble extricating himself from Hercules' grasp:

vix tamen inserui sudore fluentia multo
bracchia, vix solvi duros a corpore nexus.
instat anhelanti, prohibetque resumere vires,
et cervice mea potitur. Tum denique tellus
pressa genu nostro est, et harenas ore momordi (*Met.* 9.57-63)

I was scarcely able to thrust my arms in, dripping as they
were with sweat; with difficulty I loosened his hard grasp
from my body. He presses down on me, gasping for breath, and keeps me
from regaining my strength. He caught me by the neck
then finally I fell to the earth on my knees and bit the dust.

It seems as though Achelous, who has earlier acknowledged that he is *inferior virtute*, is about to meet the fate of Cacus, bound up as he is in Hercules' grasp, and being strangled at the neck (cf. *corripit in nodum complexus et angit inhaerens / elisos oculos et siccum sanguine guttur*, *A.* 8.260-1). Though Hercules is preventing him from resuming his strength (*resumere vires*), he resorts to his power of transformation to escape (*devortor ad artes, Met.* 9.62). As Lucan's Hercules throws Antaeus to the ground (4.626-9), Antaeus also resorts to his special power (his *virtus cadendi*) precisely in order to resume his strength (*calido conplentur sanguine venae*, 4.630).[226] As a result of his renewed body, he—unlike Cacus—is able to loosen Hercules' hold: *Herculeosque novo laxavit corpore nodos* (4.632). Lucan's reference to Antaeus' loosening of the Hercuelan knot demonstrates his indebtedness to both Vergilian and Ovidian models. Antaeus has bested Cacus, who was unable to escape Hercules' grip, but also pulled from

[226] Antaeus' rejuvenation recalls that of Vergil's Entellus after he falls to the earth: *at non tardatus casu neque territus heros / acrior ad pugnam redit ac vim suscitat ira* (*A.* 5.453-4).

Achelous' play-book in turning to his special power for help once Hercules has pinned him to the ground (note Ovid's mention of *tellus* at 9.62).

Achelous meets with Hercules' derision, who mocks his choice to change his form to that of a snake (*falsum anguem, Met.* 9.75) and reminds him that snakes are his specialty. Citing the Lernean Hydra as an example of his mastery over snake-like foes, he tells Achelous that he is not nearly as fierce an enemy (*pars quota Lernaeae serpens eris unus echidnae*? *Met.* 9.69). He then tries to inflict Cacus-esque death on the river god, grasping him by his snaky-throat to strangle him (*angebar, ceu guttura forcipe pressus, / pollicibusque meas pugnabam evellere fauces*, 9.78-9), before Achelous escapes death by changing his form to that of a bull (9.80-1).[227] Unlike Ovid's arrogant Hercules, Lucan's Hercules, finds himself at a loss due to Antaeus' transformation:[228]

> constitit Alcides stupefactus robore tanto,
> nec sic Inachiis, quamvis rudis esset, in undis
> desectam timuit reparatis anguibus hydram… (4.633-35)
>
> Alcides stood still, astonished by such great strength:
> By the waters of Inachus, he had not feared the hydra
> as much, which re-grew its heads once they were cut off,
> even though he was inexperienced then…

Whereas Ovid's Hercules views the hydra as a more formidable foe than his current opponent, Hercules is here more frightened of Antaeus and his regenerative abilities than those of the Hydra. And, Hercules' dismay is well founded: as a result of Antaeus' rejuvenation, he and Hercules become *pares* once again, and after Antaeus purposefully takes yet another fall (*sponte cadit,* 4.642), it is now Hercules' turn to do the traditional sweating (4.639-40). The final turning point in Lucan's battle occurs when Hercules realizes that Antaeus' renewed *robur* is derived from his contact with Tellus, and he explains how he intends to kill the giant by separating him from the ground:

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[227] I might note that Achelous' change of form here (*tauro mutates membra rebello*, *Met.* 9.81) is a signal that he has recognized the connections between and enveloped both of Vergil's *pares*-in-conflict scenes in the *Aeneid*: the anguiform Achelous reads as a Cacus while the tauroform Achelous reads as Cacus' double, Turnus.

[228] Could this be Lucan's version of the 'stupefied' onlooker (e.g., *stupet ipse Latinus*, at *A.* 12.707 as he watches Aeneas and Turnus)? If so, this is another aemulative gesture: it is not an outsider, but Hercules himself, who is stupefied by the parity of this struggle. On this feature of *pares* conflicts, see Hardie (1993, 24).

standum est tibi, dixit, et ultra
non credere solo, sternique vetabere terra.
haerebis pressis intra mea pectora membris:
huc, Antaee, cades. (4.646-649)

'You must stand,' he said, 'nor will you be entrusted to the ground or be allowed to lie on the earth, you will stay here with your limbs pressed against my chest.
Here, Antaeus, you will die.'

With these lines, Lucan outlines the paradoxical nature of Hercules' victory in this particular match. Instead of throwing Antaeus to the ground to defeat him, Hercules must prevent him from touching the ground at all.[229] Insofar as Hercules' final word, *cades,* means both "you will fall" *and* "you will die," he neatly encapsulates the paradoxical nature of his victory: Antaeus is going to fall (dead) by being made to stand. Up to this point, Antaeus has been able to exercise his own perverse *virtus…cadendi* (4.607) against the paradigmatic *exemplar virtutis* himself – in effect, he is nearly able to win the match by doing the very thing that normally indicates that one has lost it.[230] He is, in effect, nearly able to win by losing.

As my discussion thus far has shown, Lucan's Hercules scene, as told by his Evander-esque *rudis incola*, shows evidence of very pointed knowledge of and engagement with his literary predecessors. Not only does Lucan's manipulation of the *topos* demonstrate his awareness of its use as a vehicle for expressing ideas about civil war, but he even takes what were hints at civil conflict in the earlier models and makes them more explicit in his own. Lucan's emphasis on the parity of his two opponents throughout his excursus is especially unrelenting, and his story comes closer than either of his two models to seeing Hercules meet with defeat as a result. There is certainly a sense here in which Lucan is consciously trying to rival his two models and even succeeds in out-Oviding Ovid in some respects (the dueling lion-skins are a particularly nice touch) –but it is important to note that he does so in the interest of making a larger point about the role of myth, and the role of this mythical excursus within his

[229] On which, see Martindale (1981, 72).

[230] We might think of Lucan's consolation to Pompey after Pharsalus: *peius vincere erat* (7.706).

overall narrative.[231] While Vergil and Ovid's fight narratives suggest models for viewing the struggle of Aeneas and Turnus (and, more obliquely, the civil struggles of the Romans themselves), all of these tales are nonetheless firmly grounded within the confines of mythological, heroic epic. Lucan's Curio is not. Not only does he fail to read the model as reflective of civil war, but he also does not realize that while in a mythic Hercules fight scene there will be a winner and a loser, the same is not true in the epic in which he resides, the *Bellum Civile*. Rather, Curio's army will play the role of both winner and loser and in its demise will exemplify civil war itself, where one loses by winning and wins by losing. There is a sense, then, in which we may also consider Lucan's adaptation of the Hercules *topos* as corrective. Not only does Lucan make his Hercules scene more blatantly civil-war-esque than it had been before, but he also juxtaposes it with a narrative (Curio's defeat) that exposes civil war for what it really is, stripped of traditional mythological machinery and certainly devoid of *gravitas*—namely, a war against oneself, a struggle in which winner and loser are one and the same.[232] Curio's defeat therefore effectively outlines a new, more 'true' Lucanian mythic narrative: the mythos of civil war.[233]

Lucan's intentions in this regard become clear when one considers his presentation of the actual battles that follow the mythological excursus. Just as the *incola*'s tale stresses—to a point—the parity and similarities of his two mythic contestants, Lucan's historically based narrative completely obliterates the distinctions between the two sides by deliberately confusing them. Lucan purposefully problematizes who represents whom in the Hercules/Curio and Antaeus/Juba equation. For instance, although Curio is delighted by the *incola*'s tale and thinks he will recreate the successes of his *priores* at the site, he actually unwittingly casts himself as an Antaeus in thinking the very terrain will fight for him. Unfortunately for this Antaeus-esque

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[231] Contra Thompson and Bruère, who claim that Lucan's "sole purpose" in utilizing Ovid as a model lies in the fact that he "wished to be recognized as challenging Ovid's technical virtuosity," and hoped to "out-Ovid Ovid" (1970, 169).

[232] To re-appropriate a line from Leigh (on Lucan's use of hypallage): "there is considerable difference between making something new simply for the sake of novelty and doing the same in order to force the reader's consciousness into how that thing really is" (1997, 219).

[233] And indeed, so much of Lucan's imagery is often so surreal and unrealistic that it might indeed be properly described as 'mythic' in its own way. Ovid's technique is perhaps somewhat similar to what I am describing here. Many of his narratives dispense with the *gravitas,* but not the standard mythological framework; Lucan rids his text of both.

Curio, his upcoming battle with Juba, unlike the match of Hercules and Antaeus, will not be so even a match (*non aequis viribus,* 4.665). Even though Curio meets with initial success in his defeat of the Pompeian Varus (4.710-714),[234] he soon falls prey to Juba's trickery. Juba sends out forces led by his lieutenant Saburra as a decoy to entice Curio's army to attack, while he hides the remainder of his forces (*ipse cava regni vires in valle retentat,* 4.723).[235] In stark opposition to Curio's hope that the land will fight for him, it is actually the now Antaeus-like Juba who uses the earth to his advantage and exploits his knowledge of the terrain to attack Curio's men by surprise.[236] Curio, in turn, is caught off-guard when he realizes that his enemy is stronger than they appeared at first sight. His reaction to the attack recalls that of the *incola*'s Hercules when he realizes that he cannot defeat Antaeus as easily as he had hoped: *obstipuit dux ipse simul perituraque turba* (4.748, cf. *constitit Alcides stupefactus*, 4.633). Curio is not the only one stopped in his tracks—his whole army is paralyzed, even the cavalry horses, and at this moment, Lucan pauses to describe one of the horses in Curio's cavalry in a way that evokes his earlier description of the sweating, panting, and fatigue felt by *both* Hercules and Antaeus at different points in their match:

> fessa iacet cervix, fumant sudoribus artus,
> oraque proiecta squalent arentia lingua
> pectora rauca gemunt, quae creber anhelitus urguet,
> et defecta gravis longe trahit ilia pulsis…(4.754-57)
>
> his weary neck hangs down, his limbs stream with sweat
> his mouth is dry and rough, with tongue protruding,
> his hoarse chest moans, driven by repeated panting,
> and the labored throbbing far contracts his worn-out flanks…

As Juba attacks, Lucan adds further details that assimilate Curio's situation to the wrestling match itself. Curio's men quickly find themselves encompassed all around by the enemy army and pressed into a tight circle (*ergo acies tantae parvum spissantur in orbem*, 4.777; *densatur globus* 4.780). They even become so densely packed that they can hardly move their own

[234] An Antaeus-like Pyrrhic victory?

[235] Ironically, Lucan likens Juba in an extended simile to the Egyptian mongoose or ichneumon, which tricks a serpent into expending its venom on a shadow and then kills it (4.724-28). This is certainly unexpected: given Juba's association with the land, we might expect to see him in the role of the serpent!

[236] For more on Juba's similarities to Antaeus, see Saylor (1982, 170-1).

weapons (*vix impune suos inter convertitur enses,* 4.779), and as they are pressed together more closely, they begin to wound one other:

> non arma movendi
> iam locus est pressis, stipataque membra teruntur;
> frangitur armatum conliso <u>pectore pectus</u>. (4.781-3)
>
> There was no room to move their weapons, pressed together as they were, and their limbs were piled up and ground together, and the armored breast is crushed as it is pressed by another breast.

Lucan's repetition of the line ending *pectore pectus* is a distinct echo of his earlier description of Hercules and Antaeus as they wrestle one another (*pectore pectus,* 4.624), and as the compression of Curio's army re-enacts the compression of the wrestling hold itself, Curio's army has become both victor and victim. As the Romans crush each other with their weight and wound each other with their weapons, they are both Hercules pressing Antaeus to his chest and Antaeus as he is pressed. Even more surprising is Lucan's wry addition that the African 'conquerors' cannot even enjoy watching the Romans fall to their deaths because the *turba* of Roman soldiers is so closely packed together (*conpressum*) that the corpses of the soldiers stand up:[237]

> non tam laeta tulit victor spectacula Maurus
> quam fortuna dabat; fluvios non ille cruoris
> membrorumque videt lapsum et ferientia terram
> corpora: <u>conpressum turba stetit omne cadaver</u>. (4.784-87)
>
> The victorious Moor did not enjoy the spectacle with which Fortune presented him; he did not see the streams of blood, the collapse of the limbs, and the bodies striking the earth: every body stood upright, pressed into that position by the crowd.

The end of Hercules' and Antaeus' own battle has now been effectively realized in the context of civil war; just like Antaeus, Curio's army is envisioned here as a single body

[237] Masters identifies Lucan's fondness for describing these sorts of situations as the "*sustinuit se cadens*" *topos* (1992, 57, n. 29). See also Saylor (1982, 174-6) on the prevalence of the word *stare* throughout the Curio narrative; I think that Saylor is right to trace the motif of 'standing,' but disagree with his conclusions. He argues that Curio is meant to fully approximate Antaeus insofar as he is ultimately 'separated' from the earth and from nature, a quality which characterizes the Caesarian side throughout the epic. He concludes: "the villains are most often marked by their oblivious, arrogant attitude toward nature in the form of earth…[this] appears in the crossing of Rubicon, at Brundisium in Caesar's treatment of the rivers in Spain, and very prominently in his building of a great wall across the land at Dyrrachium," (174). I think it an oversimplification to cast only one of the two sides as a villain.

(*cadaver*) which cannot fall to the ground and is instead made to stand in its death and defeat. Unlike the *incola*'s Hercules, neither of these sides actually wins. Curio's men and their deaths are emblems for civil war and their defeat is another literal instance of Rome's act of turning the sword inward upon her own *viscera*.

Even though Lucan certainly invites us to compare the excursus to what follows it, he also subverts our expectations insofar as the outcome of the 'real' battle is quite different from the mythic. Though Antaeus is certainly a worthy foe for Hercules, that match ends with a clear winner and clear loser. In the case of Curio and Juba, the presumed *victores,* Juba and his soldiers, are actually denied their victory because Curio's army is the instrument of its own defeat. When Lucan concludes his account of the battle with the wish, *Africa nos potius vincat sibi,* "if only Africa could conquer us for herself" (4.793), he underscores this ultimate irony. It is not Africa that conquered Rome so much as it is Rome that has conquered Rome, a fact that the slaughter of Curio's men literally enacts before the reader's eyes. Civil war can have no Herculean winners, only Antaean losers.

I might note in passing that in the only other place in the epic where Lucan mentions Antaeus, he makes a similar point even more explicitly. Earlier in book two, one of the Roman elders who reflects on the barbarity of the Sullan proscriptions claims that the horrible murders of Antaeus pale in comparison to those that were committed at Sulla's command:[238]

> scelerum non Thracia tantum
> vidit Bistonii stabulis pendere tyranni
> postibus Antaei Libye. (2.162-164)
>
> Thrace never saw so many murders in the stables of the Bistonian king, nor Africa on the door posts of Antaeus.

The force of the comparison is clear: what happens in Lucan's civil war is much more horrible than anything the mythic tradition has to offer.[239] The point is driven home as Lucan luridly describes the heaps of Sulla's victims. Particularly striking—and analogous to the Curio narrative, I might add—is this depiction of the bodies of the proscribed:

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[238] In the mention of Antaeus' door posts, this passage is an instance where Antaeus is likened to Vergil's Cacus (cf. *A.* 8.196-7 on Cacus' doors: *Foribusque adfixa superbis / ora virum tristi pendebat pallida tabo*).

[239] Martindale's conclusion (1981, 75) is similar, though he does not discuss this passage.

densi vix agmina volgi
inter et exsangues inmissa morte catervas
victores movere manus; vix caede peracta
procumbunt, dubiaque labant cervice; sed illos
magna premit strages, peraguntque cadavera partem
caedis; viva graves elidunt corpora trunci (2.201-206)

The victors were barely able to move their hands among the columns and lifeless hordes of the dead. The slaughter complete, the dead could scarcely fall down but tottered with swaying necks. The great heap of the dead pressed down and the bodies performed part of the murder: the heavy torsos of the dead crushed the life out of the living.

As with Curio's men, here too, the bodies of the dead—themselves described as if they were soldiers (*agmina, catervas*)—are so densely packed that they cannot fall to the ground, and when they do fall, they actually contribute even further to the massacre.

Hannibales Redivivi

If Lucan's Hercules and Antaeus provide a distinctly mythological framework through which to interpret Curio's defeat, Lucan has also provided an historical overlay through which we might read the episode as well. Just as Curio fails to understand his models in the mythic tradition, he also fails to live up to his historical forebear, Scipio, and Lucan presents Curio as once more blissfully unaware of the epic in which he resides. Lucan, afterall, has already made it quite clear that the destruction he sings in his epic will decidedly *not* be authored by a foreign enemy:[240]

non tu, Pyrrhe ferox, nec tantis cladibus auctor
Poenus erit: nulli penitus descendere ferro
contigit; alta sedent civilis volnera dextrae (1.29-31)

Neither you, fierce Pyrrhus, nor will a Carthaginian be the originator of such ruin.
No foreign sword was ever driven in so deeply, but the wounds caused by civil war strike home.

[240] These lines look ahead programmatically to the two famous ruined city scenes: Carthage (from *auctor Poenus*), as here in book four, and later, Troy (*Pyrrhe ferox*) in book nine.

What Curio fails to understand is, despite his best hopes and wishes, he can be neither Hercules *nor* Scipio in this conflict. In pursuing civil war, there can only be loss, and though he occupies the camp of Rome's former savior, he at the same time actually plays the role of Rome's former, would-be destroyer Hannibal.

Curio is in fact one of many Hannibal figures throughout the text, and Lucan aligns the Caesarian cause with Hannibal in several other instances.[241] For example, as Caesar moves south from the Rubicon toward Rome early in book one, he observes that the people react to his approach as if he were a new Hannibal:

> non secus ingenti bellorum Roma tumultu
> concutitur, quam si Poenus transcenderit Alpes
> Hannibal (1.303-5)
>
> Rome is shaken by the immense tumult of war no less than
> if Phoenician Hannibal himself had crossed the Alps.

Lucan as narrator later continues to assimilate Caesar to Hannibal at Pharsalus: we learn that this battle is worse for Rome than either Allia or Cannae (7.408-9) and Caesar, in not allowing for the burial of the dead, is an even worse foe than Hannibal (7.799-803).[242] It is important to note that in all of these comparisons, Caesar comes out the worse: just as *bellum civile* trumps myth in its horror, so too does this fraternal bloodshed out-horror the horrors of earlier Roman history.

Lest we think that Caesar and those who fight for him are the only Hannibals in this civil war, it is important as well to note that Juba's status, like Curio's, is decidedly ambiguous. Even though Lucan generally avoids highlighting Juba's connections to the Republican cause, he admits that Juba's 'victory' over Curio, which in actuality amounts to *nefas*, is imputed to the Pompeian side: *Pompeio prodesse nefas* (4.792). When Lucan later laments the consequences of

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[241] Lucan's suggestion that Caesar is like Hannibal is picked up by Silius Italicus. Especially pertinent to my discussion is Silius' mention of Antaeus at *Pun*. 3.40 where Silius describes Hercules' defeat of Antaeus, as depicted on the doors of the temple of Hercules at Gades (has Silius picked up on Lucan's presentation of Hercules and Antaeus as a 'reading lesson'?). As Silius' Hannibal 'reads' the scene on the doors, he plays the role of Caesar himself, who famously visited the temple at Gades and upon observing a statue of Alexander felt shame that he had accomplished so little in comparison to the world conqueror (Suet. *Div. Iul.* 7, Dio 37.52.3).

[242] See Ahl (1976, 107-112), for further discussion on Caesar's assimilation to Hannibal. I might add that the mention of the Battle of Allia evokes Caesar's similarities to those other invaders of Rome from the North: the Gauls. See my earlier note on this motif in Ch. 2, p. 55, n. 104, above.

the civil war for the world and laments the deaths of Juba, Metellus Scipio, and Cato, he acknowledges their alliance and places them in parallel with one another:[243]

> nec Iuba Marmaricas nudus pressisset harenas
> Poenorumque umbras placasset sanguine fuso
> Scipio, nec sancto caruisset vita Catone. (6.309-11).
>
> nor would the naked body of Juba have pressed the Libyan sands,
> nor would Scipio have appeased the Carthaginian shades by the shedding
> of his blood, nor would sacred Cato have lost his life.

At the same time, despite the fact that Lucan has placed Juba squarely on the Pompeian side, Pompey himself later claims that he distrusts Juba because of his *Punica fides*. For Pompey, Juba is simply too reminiscent of Hannibal:

> namque memor generis Carthaginis inpia proles
> inminet Hesperiae, multusque in pectore vano est
> Hannibal (8.284-6)
>
> For that impious scion of Carthage, mindful of his ancestry, threatens
> Italy, and there is much of Hannibal in his empty spirit.

Lucan does not allow us to forget that the Pompeians and their allies play their own part in the destruction of Rome, and he accordingly denies us the satisfaction of an explicit one-to-one correspondence between Scipio and Hannibal, Curio and Juba, or even Caesarians and Pompeians more generally. The analogies between all of the sides are ultimately confused, and neither side can be fully aligned with the historical figures without contradiction. Even though Lucan invites us to read the present conflict in light of the historical opposition between Rome and Carthage, Lucan also emphasizes that civil war is fundamentally different than the struggles of the past. For instance, despite Caesar's fear that he might be a new Hannibal, those dwelling in northern Italy as he descends from the Alps ironically wish that were the case: *O miserae sortis, quod non in Punica nati / tempora Cannarum fuimus Trebiaeque iuventus* (2.45-6). Unfortunately for all those involved, civil war is far worse than another Carthaginian invasion.

[243] We should also compare the description of Juba lying naked on the sands here with that of Antaeus lying on the naked earth: *vires…resumit / in nuda tellure iacens* (4.604-5).

While Africa does indeed get a revenge of sorts in Curio's defeat (cf. 4.788-90), Juba's victory over Curio is tainted by civil war, and it is this very facet of his 'victory' that motivates Lucan's wish that Africa had conquered the Romans for its own ends (4.793).

Curio's *Fama*

Lucan caps his treatment of Curio's battle with Juba with a description of Curio's death in the midst of his own men (*ceciditque in stragum suorum,* 4.797), and proceeds to eulogize him in a way that is befitting his death in civil war.[244] As he falls on the battlefield, Lucan describes Curio as both *inpiger ad letum* and *fortis* in his final moments, though his *virtus* (4.798) is highly-qualified as *coacta* (4.799). Lucan—though with no small measure of resignation—even eulogizes Curio and extends his *fama* as per his role as epic poet:

> at tibi nos, quando non proderit ista silere
> a quibus omne aevi senium sua fama repellit,
> digna damus, iuvenis, meritae praeconia vitae. (4.811-13)
>
> But since it will do no good to keep quiet about those very things whose own fame repels the decay of time, for you, young man, I make an announcement befitting those praiseworthy parts of your life.

Just as Lucan has emphasized throughout his Curio narrative how traditional models for heroism do not apply in civil war, his eulogy of Curio, though couched in the traditional language of poetic praise (notice even the Homeric *iuvenis*), is also adjusted explicitly for the context of the *Bellum Civile*.[245] Lucan admits that Curio's *fama* will endure—but it will do so insofar as it is an inversion of traditional heroic values. As Lucan goes on to eulogize the man, the praise that follows is as heavily qualified as Curio's *virtus*: Lucan does not excuse Curio's behavior, but he does acknowledge that Curio has succumbed to the faults of his age (4.816-20). No one, for

[244] It seems unclear whether Lucan means to imply that Curio was killed *by* his own men or killed by Juba's army *among* his own men. Perhaps the fact that his description of Curio's death here recalls the mutual death of the Spartoi (*Dircaea cohors ceciditque suorum / volneribus*, 4.550-1) is indication that Curio died in the midst of the *turba* of his own men.

[245] Asso (2009 ad loc.) has found this fact puzzling, stating that Curio (some twenty years older than our poet himself) is no *iuvenis*. The incongruity in his application of the term *iuvenis* only calls attention to the fact that Lucan is intentionally waxing Homeric.

instance, had as much promise to uphold the laws as Curio once did before he was corrupted by money (4.815); and yet, as an instrument of and participant in civil war, Curio is a failed hero in the same way that we might consider Vulteius a failed hero.[246] Lucan signals this fact by denoting the praise he chooses to bestow on Curio as *praeconia.* As the poet of *Bellum Civile,* Lucan 'sings' Curio's praises not as poet, but rather as the town crier, or even more fittingly, as auctioneer, and thus provides an apt eulogy for the man who sold his country to the highest bidder (*hic vendidit urbem*, 4.824).[247]

Cato in Libya

In my examination of Lucan's Curio narrative, we have seen how Lucan primes our expectations for heroic achievement by suggestively framing Curio's activities with references to both Hercules and Scipio, but then ultimately thwarts Curio's hopes for victory. In his narration of Curio's defeat, Lucan blurs the relationship between Hercules and Antaeus, Curio and Juba, and even Hannibal and Scipio, and concludes the narrative with a eulogy of Curio that underscores his reasons for treating the myth as such: the corrupt world of civil war has not only helped make Curio what he is, but it also fundamentally warps the parameters of martial *virtus*. At his best, Curio is a failed hero, who, despite his own pretensions, has no chance of approximating the success of a Hercules or Scipio; at his worst, he is a contemptible criminal whose death is punishment for selling Rome to Caesar.[248] In the second of his two major Libyan narratives—Cato's desert march—Lucan also invokes a number of heroic models for Cato and emphasizes the storied, mythic past of the locale. Though Lucan's depiction of Cato is ultimately more sympathetic than his treatment of Curio, the overall effect of Lucan's handling of myth in this narrative is much the same: even Cato cannot escape the corrupt world of civil war, a world where there are no winners and no true heroes. Once more Lucan manipulates the mythic backdrop of his narrative to suggest as much while also raising his own civil war narrative to the

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[246] Cf. my discussion of Vulteius and the terms in which Lucan delineates his *fama*, in Ch. 2, p. 87-88, above.

[247] *OLD* s.v. 2a. Although this is a word often used in a laudatory context (cf. e.g., Tib. 3.7.177, Ov. *Her.* 17.207, *Tr.* 1.6.35-6, 4.9.19-20, *Met.* 12.773), Lucan spins it into a uniquely appropriate double-entendre in Curio's case. For a different take of the Curio 'finale,' see Esposito (2000, 51-54).

[248] Cf. Ahl (1976, 45) on the punitive undertones of the narrative (i.e., Carthage is getting revenge on Rome).

level of myth. And, in the case of Cato especially, Lucan's own 'historical' story of civil war is one that is stranger than fiction.

In mounting all of these arguments about Cato and the nature of his heroism, I should note at the outset that I will be wading into tricky, if not hazardous, critical currents. This is because in contrast to Curio, Cato is one of the poem's central figures, and in the face of Caesar's megalomaniacal temerity and Pompey's failure(s) at leadership, many have tended to treat Cato as, if not the *de facto* hero of the poem, at least the character with whom Lucan most sympathizes.[249] Cato and his endeavors (those in book nine especially) have been described in unabashedly praiseworthy terms by more than one critic. Fantham, for one, describes Lucan's Cato as "the ideal public and private Roman, the godlike man whose desert march is itself a triumph and the achievement of a great leader."[250] Reflecting on Cato's achievement in the desert, Ahl concludes that Cato's achievement in his *durum iter* shows that he is the only unconquerable or free man in the epic or anywhere else, for that matter—that he is, "in short, the greatest man of all time."[251]

In the search for a moral compass in an otherwise bleak and seemingly rudderless poem, the fixation on Cato as the best contender for 'hero of *Bellum Civile*' has, by and large, resulted in rather one-sided, fulsomely positive estimations of his actions. I present Schoaf's remarks as representative of this approach: [252]

> "There is general consensus that Cato is the character with whom Lucan has the most sympathies: he is the moral center of the poem. Hence, it was crucial to

[249] On the problem of who exactly is the hero of the *Bellum Civile*, I am sympathetic to Rutz, who ultimately argues that all three of the major figures are unsuitable for the title of hero (1987, 1470-73). For a similar approach, Johnson (1987) treats the shortcomings of all three of the major characters. See also Feeney (1986b,140). O'Hara's view is also relevant: "the choice to remain an adherent of Pompey or Cato despite how they are portrayed is one that the text allows, but it is not something that the text demands…it seems clear that different readers or even readers of different sections of the poem can feel drawn to Caesar, Pompey, Cato, or perhaps to none of them" (2007, 138-9).

[250] 1992a, 96; for similar estimations of Cato, see George (1991), Raschle (2001, 51-2), D'Allesandro Behr (2007, 113ff.).

[251] 1976, 274.

[252] 1978, 146. Ahl's view on the matter is similar: "By ennobling Cato, the cause for which he is fighting can be ennobled. Thus the development of Cato as a Stoic *sapiens* is rhetorically and politically necessary to Lucan's theme" (1976, 278).

> Lucan that he present Cato and Cato's heroism in the most flattering light possible."

Despite the best efforts of Schoaf and others, the idea that Lucan has presented Cato's endeavors in the "most flattering light possible" has recently (and I might add rightly) come under scrutiny. Particularly suspect is Cato's presumed status as a Stoic saint and *exemplar virtutis*. Johnson, for one, argues that Cato's behavior is too extreme for us to treat him as a serious example of the Stoic *sapiens* and suggests that Lucan intends for us to read him as a ridiculously severe caricature thereof.[253] Working from Johnson's approach, Sklenář has more recently attacked the very Stoic ground upon which Cato stands: he argues that Cato's doctrinaire conformity to an inherently illogical (and thereby anti-Stoic) 'Nature' undermines his credibility as a *sapiens* and actually makes him a vehicle for Lucan's criticism of Stoic principles.[254]

While I am certainly sympathetic to these criticisms, in what follows I am ultimately not interested in discussing whether Lucan's Cato is a 'good Stoic' or a 'bad Stoic,' a poor or fine example of a *sapiens*, or, finally, whether or not he is the 'hero' of the poem.[255] I will, however, strive to show that Cato's behavior is not unassailable when considered within the framework of the *Bellum Civile* as a whole. In fact, Lucan's depiction of Cato is purposefully ambivalent in ways that are in keeping with Lucan's portrayal of other figures in the poem, such as Pompey, or even Vulteius and Curio. The fact of the matter is that Cato's response to civil war is one among many, and although it may admittedly be among the most palatable that Lucan offers, it is in no way a hopeful one. One of the ways that Lucan achieves this effect is through his manipulation of myth in book nine, and it is the examination of this mythic *color* that will constitute the remainder of my remarks in this Chapter.

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[253] This is not just a modern view of Cato, either. Cf. Cic. *Pro Mur.* 61-2 on Cato's severe and extreme views, and Hor. *Epist*. 1.19.12-14 for a humorous treatment of an overly harsh *sapiens* in general. Though Cato's reputation as an admirable *sapiens* seemed intact in the Neronian period, it is perhaps worth noting that some Flavian authors had a less than stellar opinion of Cato: cf. Martial 1.78, Tacitus *Ann*. 16.22. For more on Cato's *nachleben*, see Goar (1989).

[254] 2003, 59-100.

[255] While examining the instances where Cato diverges from 'Stoic doctrine' is certainly a fruitful avenue for reading the poem (cf., e.g., Marti 1945, D'Allesandro Behr 2007), it should be noted that this strategy has its limitations. Despite the overwhelming Stoic coloring of the work as a whole, a poet like Lucan could, as Fantham reminds us, "grow up in a Stoic environment accepting the conceptual framework of the philosophy without endorsing all of its conclusions" (1992a, 12). Accordingly, it is dangerous to assume that a Stoic reading alone might provide a key to Cato or the poem itself.

Cato's Argonautic Quest

Up to book nine of the *Bellum Civile,* Cato has been relegated to the background of the struggle that plays out between Caesar and Pompey. Aside from Lucan's famous mention of him in book one (*victrix causa deis placuit sed victa Catoni*, 1.128) and Cato's debate with Brutus on whether to engage in the war (2.284-325), he remains largely absent from the narrative action of the poem until the ninth book.[256] After the battle of Pharsalus and the death of Pompey in books seven and eight respectively, Cato rises to the occasion as a new *dux* for the Republican cause, and Lucan describes at length how Cato leads his troops on an arduous march through the Libyan desert.[257]

Throughout the description of the march, Lucan's conscious efforts to pattern the narrative with mythological undertones suggests that he intends for us to read Cato's *durum iter* as a sort of allegory.[258] Even before Cato and his forces arrive on African shores, Lucan dilates for several lines on the sea voyage required to get there and implies that Cato is to be compared to various other heroes, Aeneas especially. For instance, we learn that directly after Pharsalus, Cato sailed to Crete (9.38), sacked the city of Phycus (9.40), and passed by an African *litus Palinuri* (9.42) before meeting with Cornelia and the remnants of Pompey's army. Lucan's mention of Palinurus is certainly meant to liken Cato's travels to the wanderings of Aeneas, as is his brief stop on Crete (cf. V. *A.* 3.171).

Apart from these initial pointed resonances of the journey of Aeneas, once Cato arrives in Africa, Lucan's account of his activities conforms closely to Apollonius' description of the Argonauts—who also stop at Crete (*Arg.* 4.1638ff.)—and their close brush with death in the

[256] Cato is also mentioned in passing at 6.311, a reference I briefly remarked upon, p. 122, above.

[257] For historical accounts of Cato's march, the periocha of Livy's lost book 112 provides some information: *praeterea laboriosum M. Catonis in Africa per deserta cum legionibus iter et bellum a Cn. Domitio contra Pharnacem parum prospere gestum continent.* Other accounts are similarly brief (cf. Plut. *Cato Min.* 56.1-4; Strabo *Geog*. 17.3.20).

[258] The approach adopted by many, e.g., Grimal (1949), Ahl (1976), Viarre (1977), Schoaf (1978), Fantham (1992b), and Moretti (1999).

Libyan desert (*Arg.* 4.1228-1460).[259] Before beginning the *durum iter* itself, Cato and his men are stranded by a storm and flounder in the Syrtes (9.300-47) much like the Argonauts themselves (*Arg.* 4.1228-44).[260] Furthermore, as with Apollonius' Argonauts, after Cato's men brave the storm, Lucan situates them at Lake Triton (9.346-47, cf. *Arg.*1340-92), nearby the Garden of the Hesperides (9.358-67, cf. *Arg.* 4.1393-1405). Cato does not allow his men to tarry long, but rather delivers a speech intended to inspire them to march with him through the desert and not to fear for their lives (9.386ff.). They proceed to endure an almost Herculean *series laborum* (9.295) on their march (*serpens, sitis, ardor harenae*…9.402), again much like the Argonauts who also encounter many tribulations as they march through the desert and are finally overcome with despair for their lives (*Arg.* 4.1289-1304). Luckily for the Argonauts, they encounter a spring which Herakles caused to flow at the site of the Hesperides' garden (*Arg.* 4.1450-57), and marvel that the hero has saved their lives even in his absence (*Arg.* 4.1458-59). In appropriating this Argonautic material as such, Lucan suggests connections between his own Cato and Herakles. Ever present throughout the desert march, Cato also models for his soldiers the *virtus* of endurance (*monstrat tolerare labores*, 9.588) and, according to one critic at least, "redeems their lives by teaching them heroism in death."[261]

Leaving aside for now the matter of whether Cato actually 'redeems' any lives in book nine, it is certainly clear, given the preponderance of parallels, that Lucan means for us to view his narrative through the lens of the Argonautic myth. Thus far I find efforts to connect the two journeys unproblematic, and most of these parallels have been duly noted and discussed.[262] What has been largely overlooked, however, is how Lucan contextualizes the Argonautic myth *as a*

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[259] Cf. especially Ahl (1976, 259-62, 269), Schoaf (1978), and Fantham (1992b) for discussions of the Apollonian material in Lucan. All three believe that Lucan's Cato is a heroic figure and that the allusions to Apollonius contribute in some way to Lucan's depiction of Cato as such. See Moretti (1999) on the Herculean imagery more generally.

[260] For more on the storm, which Leigh calls "a characteristically epic accretion" (2000, 97), see Morford (1967, 48-9).

[261] Schoaf (1978, 146).

[262] Oddly, what has been left out of many discussions of the parallels between the *Bellum Civile* and the *Argonautica* is Mopsus' death (as inspiration for Cato's encounter with the snakes) as well as the snake infested pool from which Cato's men drink (as an analogue for Herakles' spring). I discuss both of these below at p. 133-8.

whole within the African narrative(s).[263] While it does seem clear that Lucan intends for us to compare Cato and his men with Herakles and the Argonauts, what is *not* made entirely clear is whether Lucan intends for us to view Herakles and the mission of the Argonauts (and hence its bearings on Cato's own mission) in a wholly positive light.

By way of further illuminating this point, let me start with Lucan's Hercules as he is presented in *Bellum Civile* nine thus far. As with Apollonius' Argonauts, who arrive at the Garden of the Hesperides shortly after their erstwhile comrade Herakles has made his own way through the same area (*Arg*. 4.1432-38), Lucan alludes to the fact that Hercules has passed through his version of the garden of the Hesperides as well by mentioning that the Garden has been despoiled (*Hesperidum pauper spoliatis frondibus hortus*, 9.358). So we are not left with any doubt as to the identity of the *spoliator*, Lucan mentions the hero and his theft of the apples explicitly a few lines later:[264]

> abstulit arboribus pretium nemorique laborem
> Alcides, passusque inopes sine pondere ramos
> retulit Argolico fulgentia poma tyranno (9.365-67)
>
> Alcides robbed the trees of their prize and the grove of its labor, and leaving the destitute branches without their weight he brought back the gleaming apples to the king of Argos.

Lucan's own rendition of Hercules' theft of the golden apples is a nod to Aegle's lackluster account of the hero in Apollonius' poem.[265] She describes, in a less than laudatory tone, the violence that Herakles did to the garden and its guardian serpent, Ladon, all the while emphasizing the hero's brutish nature (*Arg*. 4.1432-8).

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[263] Narrative(s) because we have already seen Argonautic undertones in Curio's landing at Africa as well, see p. 104-5, above.

[264] It seems as though Lucan cannot abstain from his penchant for reversing our expectations even here: the grove itself is described in Herculean terms in that it is relieved of its "labor."

[265] Aegle, in keeping with Apollonius' depiction of Herakles elsewhere, refuses to describe Herakles in terms that evoke his allegorized role in philosophy. On Apollonius' representation of the hero as a brute throughout the *Argonautica*, see Hunter (1993, 25-36), Feeney (1986a), reworked in Feeney (1991, 94-8). Lucan, whose attitude toward the mythic tradition is even more overtly skeptical than Apollonius', seems also to resist the temptation to overtly allegorize Hercules in Stoic terms, both here and even earlier in his excursus in book four (on which see Martindale 1981, 71-2).

If Lucan intends for us to view Cato and his undertakings in light of the Argonautic legend, generally, or in light of Hercules, more specifically, it is important to recognize that Lucan's presentation of Hercules' behavior is decidedly ambivalent. In the first instance, it is telling that Lucan, like Apollonius' nymph Aegle, has decided to emphasize Hercules' act of plundering the grove and presents it as such in no uncertain terms. The grove was once an *aurea silva* (9.360); now it is a *pauper hortus* (9.358).[266] Lucan's descriptions of the African landscape elsewhere in book nine recall his depiction of the Garden of Hesperides (post-Hercules) and imply that the garden is meant to represent Africa itself.[267] In other words, Libya itself is a primitive though deadly (cf. *Natura nocens,* 9.629) land that, like the garden, is ripe for plundering by the Romans.[268] And plunder they have; Lucan editorializes elsewhere on the Romans' penchant for importing deadly asp venom to Rome (*Quis erit nobis lucri pudor?* 9.706),[269] and contrasts the noble primitivism of African natives with the Romans, who traverse unknown lands world-over in search of wealth:

> in nullas vitiatur opes; non aere neque auro
> excoquitur, nullo glaebarum crimine pura
> et penitus terra est. Tantum Maurusia genti
> robora divitiae, quarum non noverat usum,
> sed citri contenta comis vivebat et umbra.
> in nemus ignotum nostrae venere secures,
> extremoque epulas mensasque petimus ab orbe. (9.423-30)
>
> For no riches it is harmed; not for bronze and not for gold
> Is it melted. Pure and faultless in its soil,
> It is earth to the core. The people's only source of wealth
> Is Maurusian timber: its benefit they did not know
> But lived content with foliage and shade of the citrus-tree.
> Into the unfamiliar grove have gone our axes,

[266] Cf. Lucan's later description of Jupiter Hammon, *pauper adhuc deus est* (9.519), whose austerity is as of yet 'un-violated' (9.519) and contrasted thereby with the temples at Rome (9.520).

[267] And Italy too? Lucan is fond of using the nostalgic term *Hesperia* for *Italia*. When Pompey's 'Argo' leaves Italy, for instance, Lucan claims that he *tradidit Hesperiam* to Caesar. Cf. also his description of the ruined land in Italy at 1.28-9: *horrida quod dumis multosque inarata per annos / Hesperia est*.

[268] For more on the idea of Africa as a primitive utopia, see Thomas (1982, 109-117). Thomas concludes, in Cato's favor, that he is actually represented as being in harmony with this environment rather than a Roman interloper (116).

[269] Cf. Fantham (1992b, 108).

And from the world's extremity we sought feasts and tables.
(trans. Braund)

Lucan's presentation of Africa here suggests that it is a pre-lapsarian land, as yet unmarred and untouched by Roman greed—in other words, a land that has not until now experienced civil war, signified throughout the text by Lucan's use of the Iron Age itself as metaphor. Accordingly, Lucan's presentation of the despoliation of the Hesperides' *aurea silva* here finds its analogues in various other despoliation scenes also linked to greed and civil war itself, including Caesar's violation of the Roman treasury (3.154-68) and even his desecration of the Druid grove (3.399-425).[270] All of these intra-textual associations cast not only Lucan's Hercules, whose theft of the apples from the Hesperides' garden transforms it from an *aurea silva* to a *pauper hortus,* in a distinctly ambivalent if not problematic light, but also those who follow in his footsteps—Cato and his men.

Audax Cato

With these connections to Lucan's Iron Age leitmotif in mind, Lucan's emphasis on Cato's *audacia* within the narrative also takes on added significance. In his presentation of Cato and his 'Argonauts' in the Syrtes, Lucan exploits the *topos* that seafaring is the ultimate act of *audacia.*[271] On more than one occasion, Cato's attitude toward the deadly Syrtes is described in terms that highlight his daring:

> sed iter mediis natura vetebat
>
> Syrtibus: hanc audax sperat sibi cedere virtus (9.301-2)
>
> But Nature was denying him passage through the middle of the Syrtes: his bold courage hoped she would cede to him.

[270] 9.429 (*in nemus…secures)* is certainly meant to recall Caesar's siege-operations in books three and four, and especially the desecration of the druid grove at Massilia (3.399ff.). Is our Herculean Cato also strangely Caesarian?

[271] Again, another assimilation of Cato to Caesar: in civil war, winners and losers are the same. Caesar's similar *audacia* in the face of a storm is put on prominent display in book five. On the connections between Caesar and Hercules in this regard, see Hershkowitz (1998, 238-46). Cf. also my discussion of sea-faring in the Iron Age, Ch. 1, p. 24-5, above.

at inpatiens virtus haerere Catonis / audet (9.371-2)

But the unyielding courage of Cato does not dare stand still

The second of these two instances is particularly telling, as it immediately precedes the storm on the Syrtes endured by Cato and his men. Notably, while Cato's *impatiens virtus* marches headlong into danger, Pompey's son Gnaeus decides not to test his luck on the shoals.[272] The prudence of young Pompey's choice is demonstrated by the fact that Nature makes her 'veto' of Cato's onward march expressly apparent in the form of a great storm that recreates the boundary-less chaos evoked throughout the *Bellum Civile* (9.445-7). As throughout the epic, here too the moral chaos created by pursuing *bellum civile* finds its mirror image in the manifestation of cosmological chaos, a chaos for which the Syrtes themselves – in straddling the boundary between sea and land – are an apt symbol.[273] In hinting at the dubious moral baggage that is part of the Argonautic myth while simultaneously aligning Cato's heroism with it, Lucan has presented Cato in a very strange light indeed.[274] Cato's own *audax virtus* is reminiscent in many ways of *audax* Curio, who washes up, Argonaut-like, on Antaeus' coastline in the vain hope of replicating the success of Hercules or his historical counterpart, Scipio. Cato and his men will soon also find themselves caught in a struggle framed in similarly mythic terms—one that, like Curio's, quickly devolves into a metaphor for civil war itself. In their bold (Herculean) undertakings, Cato and his men will soon pit themselves in a struggle against an (Antaeus-like) Nature. Unfortunately for Cato's men, *Natura nocens* bites back.

[272] *impatiens virtus* is notably linked with Caesar at 3.452; at 1.192, thirst for *potestas* is also *inpatiens*.

[273] On the Syrtes straddling the boundaries of sea and land but not belonging to either: *Syrtes vel primam mundo natura figuram / cum daret, in dubio pelagi terraque reliquit* (9.303-4).

[274] I allude here to Fantham, who acknowledges, despite preserving Cato's status as a hero, that the narrative "leaves the heroic Cato in a strange light" (1992b, 109).

Lucan's Medusan *Fons*

Cato's 'battle' with the serpents continues many of the thematic concerns broached by Lucan's use of the Argonautic legend thus far.[275] Whereas Lucan patterns Cato's march after that of Apollonius' Argonauts and provides subtle hints at the transgressive nature of their journey, he abandons subtlety altogether in his handling of the snakes and their own mythic underpinnings. Lucan's source of inspiration for the Libyan serpents is, by and large, still Apollonian. As Cato and his men enter a region of extreme heat and are thirsty to the point of near death, they happen upon a spring. The scene as a whole is immediately evocative of the Argonauts' discovery of the life-saving spring created by Herakles nearby the Hesperides' garden (*Arg*. 4.1451-56). True to form, however, Lucan's *fons* is menacing and deadly, as it contains a *turba* of deadly serpents:

> inventus mediis fons unus harenis
> largus aquae, sed quem serpentum turba tenebat
> vix capiente loco (9.607-9)
>
> A single spring was found in the midst of the sands: it flowed abundantly with water, but a horde of serpents, so large that the place could hardly contain them, occupied it.

Lucan here uses the *topos* of the *fons* of poetry to great effect: what was his own source in Apollonius—a life-giving spring—has been transformed into a snake-infested, deadly pool.[276] Though Cato encourages his men to drink from the pool for now, explaining that the water itself is not deadly (9.610-18), little does he know that he and his men will soon find themselves in an

[275] The serpents have attracted much attention: notable treatments are Aumont (1968a and 1968b), Morford (1967), Kebric (1976), Batinski (1992a), Eldred (2000), and Bexley (2010). For the Hellenistic influence on Lucan's presentation of the snakes, see Cazzaniga (1957) on Nicander and Lausberg (1990) on Macer. I am passing over Cato's encounter with the oracle of Jupiter Ammon (for bibliography on which, see recently Stover 2008, 578 n. 28), though I might briefly draw attention to the fact that Lucan has sandwiched Cato's philosophical account of the world (9.576-84) between two very mythic explanations/metaphors for the workings of civil war. When we view Cato's account of an orderly universe governed by the Stoic Jupiter/Logos against the backdrop of book nine (or for that matter the poem as a whole), Cato's philosophical extemporizing seems a ludicrously inadequate explanation for what is happening and will happen to him and his men. This seems to suggest that, just as traditional myth is unable to adequately explain the horrors that unfold in the *Bellum Civile*, philosophy too may be similarly inadequate.

[276] Malamud's assertion that Lucan has poisoned the well of poetry is certainly well taken (2003, 42).

epic battle with the serpents themselves.[277] Before Lucan properly introduces us to Cato's reptilian opponents, however, he first launches an Alexandrian-style inquiry as to their origins. Explaining that the snakes were spawned from blood that dropped from Medusa's severed head, he provides the same *aition* found in Apollonius' account (*Arg.* 4.1513-17), but draws many of his details and descriptive language from Ovid's version of the snakes (*Met.* 4.614-20).

I am not as interested in discussing here the specific verbal parallels between Lucan and Ovid –this ground has already been covered thoroughly by Fantham[278] –as much as noting some elements of the excursus that tie into the themes of the narrative as we have seen thus far and point ahead to the encounter with the serpents. First, Lucan casts the meeting of Perseus and Medusa in terms of the clash of civilization with the wild and menacing elements of nature. In the excursus, Lucan describes how Perseus is aided in his task by Athena, but also emphasizes the role of Mercury (9.660-2), whom Lucan invokes in his capacity as a culture hero. Lucan specifically notes that Mercury is the *auctor* of both the cithara and wrestling oil (9.661). The wrestling oil suggests a subtle link between Perseus' act of Gorgon-slaying and the earlier Hercules/Antaeus excursus in book four, but as hinted in the Curio narrative, here too is an ambivalent attitude about the advancement of the aims of culture at the expense of the natural world. Medusa's mythic realm in Africa resembles Lucan's earlier depictions of the African landscape: it too is untilled and uncultivated (*squalebant late Phorcynidos arva Medusae*, 9.626; *non mollia sulco*, 9.627).

Even though Lucan's Perseus successfully beheads Medusa, the focus of the excursus is not so much his triumph as it is Lucan's description of the horrors of the monstrous Gorgon and her impact on the land of Africa. For instance, when Lucan mentions the various heroes and divinities who appropriate the gorgon for their own purposes, the emphasis lies entirely on Medusa's awful power. In a notable glossing over of Ovid's account of Perseus' use of the Gorgon head to transform Atlas to stone (*Met.* 4.621-662), in Lucan's telling it is Medusa alone

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[277] I accept Malamud's suggestion that it is not made clear whether it is the snakes in the pool that attack the men or not. If this is true, Cato's injunction for the men to drink the water, which he claims is not deadly, takes on a rather sinister subtext. Perhaps there is a bit of pointed irony in the fact that Cato encourages the men to drink from the snake infested pool (out of concern that they might die of thirst, *perituros fonte relicto* 9.611) but then proceeds to lead them onward into the midst of the serpent horde shortly thereafter? The irony is reinforced by the fact that the standard-bearer Aulus, the first to die in the battle with the snakes, literally dies from thirst after being bitten by the *dipsas* (9.737ff.). Even though Cato plays the Herculean role of 'savior' here at the spring, he is soon to abandon it.

[278] See Fantham (1992b, 112-113).

who turned Atlas into his mountain form (9.665). After her severed head was appropriated by Athena for her aegis, it is again Medusa alone who turns the giants to stone in the Gigantomachy (9.658).[279] In this, Lucan thus creates a thematic parallel to Ovid's treatment of the Gorgoneion in the *Metamorphoses*, where Perseus is presented as accomplishing hardly anything without resorting to its power; it even gets its own *aristeia* at the wedding feast of Perseus and Andromeda (*Met.* 5.177-236)![280] Lucan's insistence on the evil power of Medusa accordingly also looks forward to Lucan's presentation of the battle with the serpents, where, as it is often noted, the snakes receive their own sort of perverse *aristeia*.[281]

Apart from these thematic links to the African material as a whole, Lucan's presentation of Medusa seems, as well, to continue the meta-poetic resonances he first broached with his mention of the *unus fons* at 9.607. Along these lines, Lucan's emphasis on Mercury's role as the *auctor citharae* is more important than it seems at first glance. Not only does Lucan mention Mercury's connection to song, but he actually enhances the connection in likening his account of Medusa's death to Mercury's slaying of Argus, as Ovid presents it in *Metamorphoses* one.[282] Lucan does not strictly adhere to the account of the slaying that Ovid's Perseus reports (that he simply killed Medusa while she slept, *Met.* 4.782-785), but adds the detail that part of Medusa's snaky mane kept watch while Perseus beheaded her (*vigilat pars magna comarum* 9.672).[283] The detail evokes Ovid's own depiction of Mercury and Argus, wherein Mercury is finally able to lull all of Argus' eyes to sleep with a song, no less, about the origins of an instrument of song, the Syrinx (*Met.* 1.689-712).

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[279] The Gorgoneion is also mentioned in this capacity at 7.144-50, where Athena arranges the Gorgon's serpent-locks while preparing the aegis for use in the Gigantomachy.

[280] For more on Lucan's thematic links to Ovid's *Perseid*, see Papaioannou (2005, 224-5).

[281] Cf. Batinski (1992a, 71-2). Further connections between the Gorgoneion and her offspring have been delineated by Eldred (2000, 65-66) and Bexley (2010).

[282] I might add that the fact that both are beheaded (maybe even with the same sword—Ovid refers to Mercury's *falcato ense*, *Met.* 1.717), makes the comparison all the more fitting.

[283] Lucan's earlier mention of Medusa combing her hair is also a comic, and distinctly elegiac moment, and in this, it may hint at Ovid's *aetion* for Medusa's transformation to her Gorgon-form (4.793-803). Once a beautiful maiden, Medusa was known best for her beautiful hair before Athena transformed her into a monster (*Met.* 4.796-7). Lucan's *vigilat pars magna comarum, defenduntque caput protenti crinibus hydri* (9.672) recalls Ovid's *nec in tota conspectior ulla capillis / pars fuit…Gorgoneum crinem turpes mutavit in hydros* (*Met.* 5.796-7, 800).

In keeping with his magnification of the powers of Medusa, however, Lucan also attributes the power of song (or, at least, a sort of song) to his monster as well. Lucan emphasizes the sounds Medusa is capable of making in two pointed instances. The first is by way of a comparison to Cerberus, a monster whom she (of course) surpasses in horror. Lucan claims that Orpheus was able to soothe the *sibila* of Cerberus with his own song (9.643), the implication of which is that Orpheus, poet *par excellence*, could not conquer Medusa's sibilant hiss quite so easily. In another suggestive line, Lucan describes the hissing sound that Medusa's serpent progeny makes*: illis e faucibus angues stridula fuderunt vibratis / sibilia linguis* (9.630-1). Lucan here conceives of the sound of the snakes, mimicked in the sound of the line, as being born from Medusa's own throat. That is, in her death, Medusa's throat is quite literally the source of the blood that gave birth to the Libyan serpents, but both snakes themselves *and* their hissing sounds also poured forth from Medusa's open mouth.[284]

In casting Medusa and the protégé of the *auctor citharae* against one another in battle, Lucan suggests a battle also against two types of songs and singers. Conceptualized in this way, there is reason to believe as well that hints of Ovid's battle of the Muses—which also draws on the Medusa legend—may also underlie Lucan's presentation of Medusa here. Malamud has highlighted how Ovid uses the Medusa myth to elaborate different types of poetic inspiration: Ovid links two different instances of story-telling (and two different stories) to his accounts of the offspring born from Medusa's severed head: the serpents of Libya at *Met.* 4.614-20 and the birth of Pegasus and Chrysaor at *Met.* 4.784-86. Ovid further suggests that Medusa is a source for poetry in his Musomachia of *Met.* 5.250ff. Here, Ovid calls the Hippocrene spring at the center of the poetic battle Medusa's *fons*: *Medusaeo fonte,* 5.312. Lucan's *unus fons* (so argues Malamud), in recalling Ovid's *Medusaeo fonte,* suggests that his own verses have drawn from the poisoned, Medusa-sprung well of the Muses.[285]

[284] Lucan also devotes attention to her mouth throughout the excursus, cf. *quanto spirare veneno / ora rear* (9.679-80), *nam rictus oraque monstri / quis timuit* (9.637-8). The idea that the Gorgon herself is a source, inspiration even, of a type of song is not peculiar to Lucan. Pindar reports in *Pythian* 12 that Athena invented the flute and created a song for it inspired by the wailing of the Gorgon Euryale as she lamented the death of her sister Medusa. Athena named her tune the "many headed melody" (*Pyth*. 12.23) after the snaky hair of the Gorgons themselves. Similar to her appropriation of Medusa's head for the aegis, Athena here re-appropriates the evil of the Gorgons and adapts it for her own purposes. Lucan has adapted Medusa's power for song as well: he has taken Medusa's 'voice' and (characteristically) fractured it within his own text into the hissing of so many snakes as her offspring.

[285] Malamud (2003, 43) envisions it thus: "Drunk with inspiration from the well sprung from Medusa's posthumous offspring Pegasus, Lucan in his epic of *nefas* puts into words the Gorgon's silent scream of horror."

To this I would add that Lucan's conception of Medusa as a songstress calls for us, also, to conceptualize his own poetics in terms of the themes of Ovid's Musomachia. In pitting Medusa's sibilant 'song' against the *auctor citharae*, Lucan reads Medusa's defeat as a precursor to the outcome of Ovid's battle between the Mnemonides and the Pierides. In singing of the Giants' assault on Olympus and the flight of the gods in fear (*Met.* 5.314-31), the representative of the Pierides sings a song that challenges the Olympian *status quo*. The response of Ovid's Calliope, on the other hand, reaffirms Olympian power, pointedly beginning with an account of Typhoeus' punishment under Aetna (*Met.* 5.346-358). Medusa's two very different types of offspring are each represented in the two different types of song presented by the competing bands of Muses at the *Medusaeus fons*. Lucan, however, does not mention any of Medusa's progeny besides the snakes in his version of the *fons* of poetry and this is because Lucan's song *is* the song of the Pierides: in the *Bellum Civile* the gods *have* actually fled and the giants *are* assaulting Olympus. When we consider that Ovid's victorious Mnemonides claim as their prize the realm of their defeated competitors—the *Emathii campi* (*Met.* 5.313-4)—the connection between Ovid's Pierides and Lucan's song of *nefas* becomes even more clear. As Lucan notes in his opening line, the *Bellum Civile* is the song of Ovid's Emathides (as they are called at *Met.* 5.669): *bella per Emathios plus quam civilia campos…canimus* (1.1-2).

Coupled as it is with his manipulation of the *fons* of poetry, Lucan's treatment of Medusa in his mythological excursus thus amounts to a statement of poetics. A deadly and evil counterpart to the severed head of Orpheus, the severed head of Lucan's Medusa still sings on after death: her evil song lives within and is even replicated and amplified by her progeny. [286] As the *turba* of snakes spring forth from the land first polluted by Medusa's blood, they recall the imagery of the Theban Spartoi or even Antaeus himself rising from the earth after a fall.[287] Medusa's song is the song of universal destruction (cf. *hoc potuit caelo pelagoque minari / torporem insolitum mundoque obducere terram*, 9. 647-8), the song of civil war itself. Hers is a

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[286] A similar account of a character speaking after his beheading occurs at *Met.* 5.104-6, where a man named Emathion is killed and yet his tongue continues to speak. Lucan may also intend for us to connect this particular Ovidian severed head to his 'Emathian' poetics.

[287] Lucan describes the first snake born from Medusa's head as if it is popping its head up out of the dusty ground: *hic quae prima caput movit de pulvere tabes / aspida somniferam tumida cervice levavit* (9.700-1). Bexley (2010, 139) and Eldred (2002, 65) both point out Lucan's emphasis on *caput* and *cervix* even here. Severed-head, Emathian poetics strikes again?

song where the monsters take center stage, and like the song of the Pierides, hers is a song where the monsters win.

Enter the Snakes

Though Perseus defeats Medusa in Lucan's mythological excursus, when Cato and his men are attacked by Medusa's progeny nearby Lucan's Medusan *unus fons*, their defeat should perhaps come as no surprise. Lucan's technique here is much the same as it was with his Hercules and Antaeus digression within the Curio narrative of book four. While the excursus provides an overlay for interpreting the action to follow through the lens of Lucan's poetics of civil war, Lucan also casts the events that follow as his own, new myth – the myth of civil war.

As Lucan catalogues the snakes (fifteen in all), he revels in giving due attention to each snake's 'special power,' and describes in graphic detail the horrible death that each one inflicts. The catalogue itself suggests that the snakes are to be interpreted as a host of enemies, and Lucan soon confirms the suggestion by following it with a series of one-on-one outrageous 'combat' scenes between man and snake.[288] Lucan has thus transformed an episode common to mythological epic—the battle with the serpent—into a 'historicized' *Bellum Civile*-style version of it that is both more and less realistic.[289] The monolithic mythical dragon becomes a more manageable catalogue of reptilian enemies drawn up in battle formation.

Unlike the traditional mythic encounter of man and dragon (or Perseus and Medusa …or Hercules and Antaeus), in Lucan's new myth of *bellum civile*, it is the *turba serpentum* who are resoundingly victorious. Lucan even makes the connection between the battle with the serpents and civil war explicitly clear at one point in the battle narrative. In the midst of their death throes, he reports how Cato's men long to return to Pharsalus rather than continue to fight with the snakes:

> reddite di, clamant, miseris quae fugimus arma,
> reddite Thessaliam. Patimur cur segnia fata
> in gladios iurata manus? <u>Pro Caesare pugnant</u>

[288] On this, Johnson (1987, 48-55) is particularly good. Lucan has often been criticized for the snake episode (e.g., Ahl 1976, 74), but its artificiality is front and center, and Lucan emphasizes this by calling attention to the deaths as *spectacula* (9.805).

[289] Contrast Silius' rather serious description of Regulus' battle with the serpent, *Pun*. 6.140-260.

dipsades et peragunt civilia bella cerastae (9.848-51)

'Oh gods,' they cry out, 'give back to us wretches the battles we fled! Give us back Pharsalus! Why do we, sworn to live by the sword, suffer slow deaths? The vipers fight in Caesar's place and the adders are carrying on the civil war.'

Whether one chooses to interpret the soldiers' claim that the snakes fight *pro Caesare* as a statement that they are fighting for Caesar or in place of Caesar, the message is the same: the serpent 'battle' is itself another microcosm of civil war. In the Curio narrative, Lucan presented a portrait of defeat in civil war in which there were no clear winners or losers. Here in the struggle with the serpents, Lucan creates a similarly subversive and 'mythic' effect: the monsters win the battle because in civil war only monsters can win. And as the soldiers continue their lament, they draw the connection between the snakes and civil war yet again by invoking the Iron Age imagery associated earlier with their trek through the desert:

nil, Africa de te,
nec de te Natura, queror; tot monstra ferentem
gentibus ablatum dederas serpentibus orbem
impatiensque solum, Cereris cultore negato,
damnasti atque homines voluisti desse venenis.
in loca serpentum nos venimus; accipe poenas… (9.855-59)

I do not blame Africa or Nature. You, Nature, had taken from men and given to serpents a land bearing so many monsters: the soil bears no crops or tilling; you wanted to separate men and the poisonous snakes. We have come into this land of serpents: we must pay the penalty…

Lucan's depiction of Africa earlier in book nine comes full circle here as the men acknowledge that they have met with punishment for their audacity—they have transgressed boundaries and have broken the *claustra mundi* in the furtherance of civil war (9.865).[290] The Romans have brought civil war with its attendant crime and greed to Africa and their pursuance of that war is emblematized by the fight with Caesar's proxies, the serpents themselves.[291]

[290] Caesar has earlier in the epic broken through the *claustra Latii* (2.253), on which see Ch. 2, p. 51, n. 95, above.

[291] The internal echo of 1.37 (…*iam nihil, o superi, querimur*) helps to solidify the notion that the *durum iter* is indeed a pursuance of civil war into African territory. This lament, voiced by Lucan as narrator, is programmatic in casting the civil war as Gigantomachy in book one.

(Herculean) Apotheosis?

In closing, I want to examine one final facet of Lucan's presentation of the snake battle, one that will enable us to examine yet another Ovidian subtext within the scene. The blatant absurdies of the snake scene overall have led many to interpret it as a parody of a traditional hero *versus* chthonic monster narrative, and this must certainly be what Lucan intended in many respects. In this (as is often noted), Lucan is treading on Ovidian ground. As Johnson, whose reading of Cato and the snakes has been quite influential, reminds us: it is no one else but Ovid who "invented a precise stylistic repertoire for the parody of military splendor."[292] Lucan's catalogue of snakes-as-enemies certainly bears some resemblance to various Ovidian catalogues of a similar type: especially comparable are Actaeon's dogs at *Met.* 3.205ff.[293]

Alongside these features, however, Lucan also includes specific verbal reminiscences to bolster the "Ovidian tone" of the scene. The wounds of one of one man, Tullus, attacked by the snakes are described in terms that evoke Ovid's Marsyas: both Tullus and Marsyas are depicted as having no body, only a wound (*totum est pro vulnere corpus,* 9.814, cf. *nec quicquam nisi vulnus erat*, *Met.* 6.388). More extensive, though is the imitation of Ovidian material in Sabellus' death. Sabellus' killer is the *seps*—a snake whose venom is so potent that Lucan wryly awards it the *palma nocendi* or 'best in show.' Once bitten by the *seps*, Sabellus' body completely dissolves, bones and all:

> nam plagae proxima circum
> fugit rupta <u>cutis</u> pallentia <u>ossa retexit</u>;
> iamque sinu laxo nudum sine corpore vulnus.
> membra natant sanie, surae fluxere, sine ullo
> tegmine poples erat, femorum quoque musculus omnis
> <u>liquitur</u>, et nigra distillant inguina <u>tabe.</u>
> dissiluit stringens uterum membrana, fluuntque
> viscera; nec quantus toto de corpore debet
> effluit in terras, saevum sed <u>membra venenum</u>
> <u>decoquit</u>...
> ...sed quis rogus abstulit ossa?

[292] 1987, 60.

[293] Perhaps less comparable (given the context), but notable nonetheless are Orpheus' trees at *Met.* 10.86-103.

> quoque discedunt, putrique secuta medullas
> nulla manere sinunt rapidi vestigia fati (9.767-776, 784-6)
>
> For the skin nearest the wound
> Burst, shrank back, uncovered pale-colored wounds,
> And now as the cavity gapes, the wound is bare without a body;
> The limbs are drenched with pus, the calves have melted;
> The knee was bare of covering, and even every muscle of the thighs
> dissolves, and the groin drips with black decay.
> The membrane which binds the belly burst apart, and out melt
> The entrails; and not as much as there should be from an entire body
> Melts into the ground, but the savage poison boils
> The limbs down…
> But what funeral pyre ever removed the bones?
> They too disappear and with crumbling marrow
> Allow no trace of rapid death to remain. (trans. Braund)

On linguistic grounds, it is demonstrably the case that Lucan models Sabellus' suffering on Ovid's depiction of Hercules' suffering, pre-apotheosis, in *Metamorphoses* nine.[294] In each description, the effects of the poison—whether it be snake venom or centaur blood—are described at length. Sabellus' entire body melts away in the same fashion as Hercules' skin as he tries to pull off the poisoned cloak given to him by Deianeira:

> nec mora, letiferam conatur scindere vestem:
> qua trahitur, trahit illa <u>cutem</u>, foedumque relatu,
> aut haeret membris frustra temptata revelli
> aut laceros artus et grandia <u>detegit ossa</u>.
> Ipse cruor, gelido ceu quondam lammina candens
> tincta lacu, stridit <u>coquiturque</u> ardente <u>veneno</u>.
> Nec modus est, sorbent avidae praecordia flammae,
> caeruleusque fluit toto de corpore sudor,
> ambustique sonant nervi, caecaque <u>medullis</u>
> <u>tabe liquefactis</u> (*Met.* 9.166-75).
>
> No delay, he tried to tear away the death-bearing garment: where it is torn off it tears the skin with it, hideous to tell, it either sticks to his limbs as he tries to tear it away in vain, or it uncovers mangled limbs and massive bones. Like a piece of white-hot metal dipped in a pool, his blood itself sizzles and is boiled by the burning poison, nor is there any limit, the greedy flames drink down his vital organs and dark sweat flows over his entire body, his burned tendons hiss, and his marrow is liquefied by an unseen wasting...

[294] Cf. Phillips (1962, 57-8).

Even the most cursory glance through the two descriptions will reveal that Lucan has upped the ante on the grotesque in his death scene. But must this be Lucan's only point in invoking Hercules—and especially Ovid's Hercules—here?[295] My own answer to this is inspired, in part, by an observation that Martindale has made about Lucan's Hercules back in book four. He notes that Lucan's Hercules seems remarkably removed from the type of Stoic allegory we might have expected Lucan to give him. Ovid's Hercules, as he dies on his pyre, is also notably lacking the Stoic *patientia* one might expect. In fact, Ovid makes a point of how his Hercules, overcome by pain, actually abandons his *patientia* and he becomes a beast, raging and roaring his way through a rather undignified death. What is more, at the moment of his dying, he even denounces the universal order that has failed to justly reward him for the services he has done. In the face of such injustice, who could believe that the gods exist: *et sunt, qui credere possint / esse deos?* (9.203-4). Now, of course, in Ovid's hands, this is all part of a masterful joke: Hercules questions the very existence of the gods when he is just on the verge of becoming one himself. But, to my mind, Hercules' question also sums up what is in fact one of the major themes of Lucan's entire epic. Indeed, how can the gods exist in a world full of injustice – *and* more to the point of this discussion—a world full of cruel and unusual deaths and countless forms of torture, dismemberment, and incredible suffering wrought by civil bloodshed? The encounter with the snakes, standing in as it does as a metaphor for civil war itself, is a microcosm of the epic world the Lucan has built, a place where heroism, even at its most Herculean (and Catonian), is corrupted and ultimately defeated.

While Ovid's Hercules does get his reward (though not until after Ovid makes jokes at his expense), Lucan makes no mention as to whether Sabellus and his ilk are rewarded in any way for their Herculean sufferings. To be sure, Cato is present to guide them and to encourage them to accept their horrible deaths with fortitude, but what of the Herculean Cato's reward? Lucan describes Cato's journey through Libya early on as an *inredux via* (9.408)[296] – and we, of course, know that Cato never leaves Africa, though his suicide is not depicted within Lucan's text. Immediately before his introduction of the *unus fons,* wherein he begins to articulate his

[295] On other models for the scene, see Wick's discussion (2004, ad 9.762).

[296] Indeed the whole *durum iter* is effectively a journey to the underworld. Cf. Anchises' question to Aeneas: *vicit iter durum pietas*? (V. *A*. 6.688).

poetics and new mythic narrative of civil war, Lucan calls attention to the fact that Cato should be the *verus parens patriae* and should have been worshipped at Rome's altars:

> si <u>veris</u> magna paratur
> Fama bonis et si successu nuda remoto
> inspicitur virtus, quidquid laudamus in ullo
> maiorum, fortuna fuit. Quis Marte secundo
> quis tantum meruit populorum sanguine nomen?
> hunc ego per Syrtes Libyaeque extrema triumphum
> ducere maluerim, quam ter Capitolia curru
> scandere Pompei, quam frangere colla Iugurthae.
> Ecce parens <u>verus</u> patriae, dignissisimus aris,
> Roma, tuis, per quem numquam cervice soluta,
> nunc olim factura deum es. (9.593-604)
>
> If great reknown is gained by true goodness, and if virtue is considered by itself apart from success, then whatever qualities we praise in any one of our ancestors was the gift of fortune. Who ever gained so great a name through success in battle and in so much shedding of the blood of peoples? I would prefer this triumphal march through the Syrtes and the extremities of Libya rather than ascend the Capitol three times in Pompey's chariot or break the neck of Jugurtha. Behold the true father of his country, a man most deserving of your altars, Rome, on whom it would never be shameful to swear, and whom, if you ever stand, now or in time to come, with neck free from the yoke, you will make a god.

The force of Lucan's condition here is paramount: *if* Rome ever escapes tyranny, Cato can then achieve his reward and his apotheosis, and we are left to wonder if this will happen.[297] Just as the mythic Antaeus marked the land with his name and Medusa polluted the land with her blood, the traces left by Lucan's *Bellum Civile* are discernable in Africa as well. If Lucan's song must be the song of civil war, it must also be the song of defeat, and here, as with his eulogy of Curio, Lucan memorializes that very defeat and thus lends it an immortality that rivals its mythic predecessors.[298]

[297] See, in contrast, Moretti (1999, 248-52), who reads these lines as a virtual confirmation of Cato's Herculean apotheosis. Given the argument I have built here, I am not sure we can be certain Lucan intends for a Herculean-style apotheosis, though Cato is certainly immortalized by Lucan's poetry.

[298] Wick (ad 9.600) detects a possible Horation echo that bolsters Lucan's presentation here (*crescam laude recens dum Capitolium / scandet*, *Carm*. 3.30.8-9; cf. Lucan's *ter Capitolia curru / scandere*, of Pompey's triumphs). In any event, I should note that Lucan's remarks on both Curio and Cato (and soon enough, Caesar at 9.980-86) show that he is an equal opportunity eulogizer. If the *Bellum Civile* is the song of the losers, and even the winners are losers in civil war, Lucan must sing the song of both sides.

CONCLUSION

I want to conclude by reflecting on the place of my work within Lucanian scholarship more broadly and by suggesting some future avenues for exploration and study. Beginning in many ways (among Anglophone scholars at least) with Fred Ahl's 1976 *Lucan: An Introduction*, what began as a small but steady stream of work on Lucan has developed into a veritable torrent of new and exciting publications devoted to understanding and appreciating the poet and his work. This explosion of scholarly interest—and Lucan's subsequent re-inclusion into the canon of 'Classical authors worth studying'—owes much to the scholarship of those who have analyzed Lucan's interactions with Vergil's *Aeneid*. That Lucan adopts a rather merciless deconstructive stance toward the ideology of the *Aeneid* and the norms of Vergilian epic is a fairly standard view; and yet, although the study of Lucan's use (or if you prefer, abuse) of Vergil is a field that I think is still far from exhausted (Lucan's use of the *Georgics* comes to mind, especially), the extent to which Ovid has been overlooked in work on Lucan's poem is surprising.

While many would agree that Ovid has exerted heavy influence on his successors—especially in matters of style, diction, the rhetorical features of his poetry and the like—the study of Ovid and Lucan has not yet received the type of care and attention that has been given to other authors. The most important contribution of my work has been to remedy this gap in our understanding of Lucan's poem. Not only have I isolated numerous points of intersection between the *Bellum Civile* and the *Metamorphoses* (some of which are well-known and others not so well-known), but I have also provided a host of fresh and stimulating new readings to go alongside them.

As for my methods and approach, I have let the poetry lead the way, and I myself have followed where Lucan and Ovid have led. The enterprise of parallel-hunting between the two authors is a time-honored tradition, and especially useful to me have been scholarly commentaries on Lucan's poem as well as several studies that collect and enumerate the verbal correspondences between the *Bellum Civile* and the *Metamorphoses.* Though one may safely say that the business of finding and citing parallels between the two authors has, historically speaking, not been lacking, the task of explaining them has been. This has been key to my

approach: I have sought not just to cite and note various parallels, but to explain and contextualize them.

Although I cannot hope to explain definitively or account for every perceived correspondence between the two authors (for this is neither possible nor necessary), what I have done is select the reminiscences of Ovid that I find compelling and that I think can be accounted for in ways that illuminate Lucan's poetic goals. This is admittedly a highly subjective process—and one which has caused me to go through a great deal of intellectual hand-wringing at times. That said, the guiding principle of my approach throughout has been to demonstrate how the study of Lucan's adaptation of Ovidian material can enrich our understanding of the *Bellum Civile* and to suggest new and exciting ways of looking at the two authors and their relationship to one another. I have not, I should add, sought to pin the text down to one definitive 'meaning' or interpretive possibility—as if that level of confidence were even attainable—but rather to stimulate a dialogue about the multiplicity of ways through which we might gain insight into Lucan's poem. This is especially true in the case of my handling of several of what I might call the old-standbys, i.e., those well-known allusions that have long pedigrees in the secondary literature. Where I have dealt with these well-known moments within the text, I have aimed to give them a fresh spin, and I have integrated them in unique ways into larger readings of the poem as articulated in each of my Chapters.

As I explained in my Introduction, I have chosen to call my work "intertextual studies" so as to allow for a certain amount in leeway in the types of material I have chosen to examine and discuss. There are various "critical metaphors" one might use to talk about the interrelationship between Lucan and Ovid and their respective texts.[299] Among others, I myself speak of Lucan's 'allusions' to, 'gestures' and 'nods' toward, 'reminiscences', 'remembrances', and 'readings' of Ovid at various junctures within my study. I speak quite often, as well, of Ovid's 'influence' on Lucan, or a more general sense of thematic continuity that might be discerned between the two poets and their works. My study also contains several sustained analyses of the ways Lucan positions his work in relation to both standard topoi *and* specifically Ovidian versions thereof. In addition to these types of discussions, there are also cases where I have shown how Lucan's 'reading' of Ovid uncovers interesting revelations Ovid's text itself; and, in a similar vein, I have

[299] For more on which see Hinds (1998, xii)

also isolated many cases where Lucan's 'reading' of Ovid's 'reading' of Vergil reveals a set of concerns shared by all three authors in dialogue with one another.

The plurality inherent in my approach is, I think, one of its strengths. I cover a wide expanse of material and offer multiple strategies and avenues for understanding the workings and functions of Lucan's allusive gestures. Alongside its expansive scope, I have also arranged my study in such a way as to show how important Ovid and his poetry have been to Lucan as he formulates many of the key features of his epic. Each of my Chapters deals with a foundational concern of epic poetry itself – the cosmos, the city, the hero—and at each step along the way, I have shown how Ovid is instrumental in Lucan's construction of his own place within that tradition. Lucan's various re-appropriations of Ovidian material are neither haphazard nor need they be primarily understood along the lines of *aemulatio*. Rather, what Lucan has found in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is a text in which paradigms for expressing his ideas about Roman civil war are both compelling and plentiful.

Now that I am at the end of my work on this project, I have also had some time to contemplate the dissertation I could have (or maybe should have?) written. While I do not necessarily think that I would have approached things any differently—and this is because I doubt I would have arrived at this conclusion without all of the writing that led up to it—what has come as a surprise to me is simply how important myth is within the *Bellum Civile*. Although I say this has come as a surprise, it probably should not be: Ovid's *Metamorphoses* has been and is still often considered to be *the* quintessential 'handbook' of mythology. It is clear to me that Lucan, too, has found within it a plethora of mythic models that he has replicated, adapted, and 'historicized' to varying degrees and to varying effects within his own text.

In thinking about these issues, I keep returning to Garreth Williams' remarks on Lucan's method, which I quoted briefly in my first Chapter. Williams writes that Lucan revels in "reviving a chaotic history, moulding into fantasy in so many ways, and replaying past versions of dreams/texts/versions of the story through epic and literary memory."[300] I am convinced that this formulation is key to understanding Lucan's use of Ovid—and his use of previous poetic material more generally–throughout the poem. Just like the revivified corpse through whom the witch Erichtho speaks in *Bellum Civile* six, Lucan reanimates, replays, and recycles various mythic and literary figures and channels them all into his own all-encompassing narrative of

[300] Quoted in Walker (1996, 71).

universal ruin. I suggested in my Introduction that we might consider this move as one that is on par with Ovid's own pretensions within the *Metamorphoses*, where he consciously strives to subsume the work of Vergil (especially) within his own *magnum opus*. This is also Lucan's point: by including mythic paradigms (both Ovidian and Vergilian) within his own grand narrative of the 'real' horrors of civil war and the consequences of Caesarism, Lucan invites comparison between his text and the poems of his predecessors, while at the same time aiming to surpass them.

Though I have by no means fully examined these ideas in this study as it stands presently, much of what I have already done points in this direction and suggests many further avenues for exploration in the future. One of the unavoidable weaknesses of my study, overall, is the 'tunnel vision' that has resulted from my choice to limit my intertextual inquiry to Lucan's use of the *Metamorphoses*. In defining my topic as such, I have necessarily left un-examined other texts within the Ovidian corpus itself, despite the fact that I am increasingly convinced that the *Fasti* and Ovid's exile poetry have both also played a formative role in various aspects of Lucan's poem.

Vergil has, of course, loomed large in the background of nearly all of my discussions. Though I have largely tried to relegate him to the notes, some of the most interesting of my discoveries have nonetheless been those instances where we can see an on-going dialogue between Vergil, Ovid, *and* Lucan. All three authors use their poetry to reflect on the civil wars of the late Roman Republic and life under the emperor(s) whom these wars brought to power. Reading Vergil through Ovid and Lucan can not only suggest new ways of reading the *Aeneid*, the *Metamorphoses,* and the *Bellum Civile,* but can also enrich our understanding of how the tradition itself changed and developed as each author left his own mark upon it.

Finally, apart from Lucan's predecessors in the epic tradition, not to be left out (though I have left him out!) is also Seneca, whose tragedies have most certainly informed much of Lucan's worldview. Though it is arguably the case that the intertextual relationship between Lucan and Seneca has been studied more than that of Lucan and Ovid, there is still much fertile ground left unexamined—and especially when one considers all three of these authors together. My discussion of Lucan's Theban material in particular might profit from further investigation of the Senecan subtexts and intertexts therein, and I suspect that there will be many examples of

Lucan reading Ovid through Seneca (in the way that I have shown Lucan reading Vergil through Ovid).

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Sara Watkins was born in East Ridge, Tennessee in 1983. After graduating from Notre Dame High School in Chattanooga, Tennessee in 2001, she attended the University of Alabama where she earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Classics and English, *summa cum laude*, in 2005. Awarded the Lynette M. Thompson Graduate Fellowship by Florida State University's Department of Classics, she pursued her doctoral studies at Florida State from 2005 to 2012.