

## ABSTRACT

*Borrowed Flames: Intertextuality in Lucan's Bellum Civile*

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Intertextuality is far from a linear or one-directional relationship. Rather, it is a radiating and multi-faceted conversation between authors. This thesis explores Lucan's intertextual allusions by tracing how Lucan treats and mutates the works of his literary predecessors. Lucan's readers familiar with Virgil, Ovid, and elegy will see the foundation on which he builds his epic and the background by which his story is informed. However, his readers will also find his adaptation of these sources redirecting their reading of those same sources. More often than not the contexts in which Lucan puts his allusions problematize the sources themselves. The genius of his intertextual allusions lies in his rearrangement of echoed material, repurposing and recombining motifs, images, even verbatim echoes from Virgil, elegiac poets, and Ovid, to not only ironize his own passages and multiply layers of meaning but also to question, rebut, and problematize his sources.

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*BORROWED FLAMES*  
INTERTEXTUALITY IN LUCAN'S *BELLUM CIVILE*

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天 地 祖 親 師

## INTRODUCTION

One year ago I was writing a conference paper on Book 8 of the Aeneid, arguing for a pro-Augustan, propagandistic view of the Hercules and Cacus episode along with the depiction of Actium on Aeneas' shield. This year I found myself arguing to the contrary for the latter as I wrote the first chapter of this thesis. The interim event that changed how I read this passage of Virgil was my first encounter with Lucan's *Bellum Civile* and subsequent increasing interest which spurred the writing of this thesis. In particular, the presence of *Discordia* and *Bellona* became larger figures on Aeneas' shield after seeing Lucan's Caesar in the character of the latter in his book 7. The opposition of Augustus to Antony's foreignized troops took on a less propagandistic and more forced color in light of Lucan's proem. Finally, having mulled over Lucan's "that peace itself comes with a tyrant" (*cum domina pax ista venit*, 1.670), I found myself questioning Jove's prophecy of peace.

My changed perspective concerning Virgil's Actium bears witness to the power of intertextual dialogue. Modern readers have the privilege of seeing and experiencing not only a one-directional, linear progression of intertextuality, but a radiating bidirectionality of intertextual influence.<sup>1</sup> While Lucan drew material from his literary predecessors, his own work colors subsequent readings of those very authors. The genius of his intertextual allusions lies in his rearrangement of echoed material, repurposing and recombining motifs, images, even verbatim echoes from Virgil, elegiac poets, and Ovid,

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<sup>1</sup> See also Hinds 1998 for the dynamics of intertextuality.

not only to ironize his own passages and multiply layers of meaning but also to question, rebut, and problematize his sources.

Before laying out the argument of this thesis, a brief overview of Lucan's life and of his epic will be helpful. Born the nephew of Seneca in AD 39, only 2 years after the emperor Nero, to whom he ostensibly dedicates his epic and to whom his uncle was tutor and advisor, Lucan was brought into a life tied inextricably to politics and court.<sup>2</sup> At a young age – due likely to his prowess in oratory and writing – he achieved public offices. However, a rupture soon occurred and a ban was placed on his writing, generally dated after the publication of the first three books of the *Bellum Civile*. The historian Tacitus, writing on the conspiracy, notes the tension between the poet and Nero:

*Lucanus Annaeus Plautiusque Lateranus [consul designatus] vivida odia intulere. Lucanum propriae causae accendebant, quod famam carminum eius premebat Nero prohibueratque ostentare, vanu adsimulatione. (Ann. 15.49)*

Lucan Annaeus and Plautius Lateranus (consul elect) brought in vivid hatred. Lucan's own causes inflamed him, because Nero suppressed the fame of his poetry and, with vain deceit, prohibited him from publishing them.<sup>3</sup>

This was due to Nero's poetic jealousy, though the decidedly political content of Lucan's epic cannot be ignored. Some scholars have read the opening book(s) along with the invocation to Nero as neutral and even pro-Neronian.<sup>4</sup> However, these arguments have focused primarily on the superficial subject matter of book 1 and ignore the largely anti-imperial voice of books 4-10, especially book 7. The epic is cut off at book 10 very abruptly, much like the poet's life. He was implicated in the Pisonian conspiracy and

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<sup>2</sup> Accounts of Lucan's life drawn from Suetonius' biography and Tacitus' *Annales*, especially book 15.

<sup>3</sup> All translations my own unless otherwise noted.

<sup>4</sup> See for instance Lebek 1976.



driven to suicide in AD 65. While Suetonius' account is clinical and even pejorative, Tacitus depicts his death with more pathos:

Exim Annaei Lucani caedem imperat is profluente sanguine ubi frigescere pedes manusque et paulatim ab extremis cedere spiritum fervido adhuc et compote mentis pectore intellegit, recordatus carmen a se compositum, quo vulneratum militem per eius modi mortis imaginem obisse tradiderat, versus ipsos rettulit, eaque illi suprema vox fuit. (*Ann.* 15.70)

Next he ordered the death of Annaeus Lucan. He, with blood flowing forth, when he perceived his hands and feet becoming cold and his life leaving his extremities little by little, though still with fervid heart and in control of his mind, having remembered a poem he had written, in which he narrated a wounded soldier dying in the same manner of death, he recited those verses, and that was his final word.

The poet died with the same flair with which he had lived.

Only *Bellum Civile* has survived of Lucan's works, and in an incomplete state, for Lucan died before he could finish it. Much speculation has been given to how long the epic was intended to be, some postulating Cato's death to be the end point, others the death of Caesar, still others Philippi or Actium, and some even proposing that the epic is in fact complete as is.<sup>5</sup> However long the work was intended to be, the final two propositions seem the most unlikely. What the extant books depict are 20 months containing the civil war between Pompey the Great and Julius Caesar with a focus on the Battle of Pharsalus, where Caesar defeated Pompey, and which the entirety of book 7 details. It is from this battle that the epic derives the title of *Pharsalia*, for in book 9 the narrator says to Caesar, "Our Pharsalia will live" (*Pharsalia nostra / vivet*, 9.985-6). The style of the epic is dramatic, deeply ironic and pessimistic. His writing, politically charged and blatantly philippic, exhibits the influence of his oratory, which can be clearly

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<sup>5</sup> For overview see Braund 1992: xxii-xxxviii, who argues for Cato's death as the end point as does Stover 2008; see Masters 1992: 259 for argument that the work is complete as is.

seen, especially in the speeches within the epic. Behr provides helpful insight on apostrophe and its implications in the *Bellum Civile*, noting that his interjections underscore his didactic purpose and seek to guide his audience's moral interpretation.<sup>6</sup> One need only look at the apostrophe to guilty Thessaly at the close of book 7 (7. 847-872) to understand the force of Lucan's addresses. Throughout he punctuates his long, archaized, and tumbling descriptions with short, puissant *sententiae*.

Lucan enjoyed essentially uninterrupted popularity until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Dante listed him among the great poets in Limbo as part of "the beautiful school of that lord of highest song, who flies above the others like an eagle."<sup>7</sup> Chaucer, too, recognized the poet, mentioning in the company of Homer, Virgil, Ovid, and Statius in *The Hous of Fame*,<sup>8</sup> and praising him similarly in *Troilus and Criseyde*:

Thoo saugh I on a piler by,  
Of yren wroght ful sterneley,  
The grete poet, daun Lucan,  
And on hys shulders bar up than,  
As high as that y mighte see,  
The fame of Julius and Pompe. (V.179-1-2)

Lucan's work received an *editio princeps* in 1469, keeping up with Virgil, Cicero, and other canonical greats.<sup>9</sup> In his overview of Lucan and English literature, Dilke notes Lucan's legendary status in the Middle Ages, especially as inspiration for theatrical battle scenes.<sup>10</sup> During the English Civil War and in France at the end of the eighteenth century,

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<sup>6</sup> Behr 2007.

<sup>7</sup> *Inferno* 4.64-105, esp 94-96: *la bella scola / di quell signor de l'altissimo canto / che sovra li altri com' aquila vola*.

<sup>8</sup> 3.407-12

<sup>9</sup> Bolgar 1954: 276

his popularity surged with his recruitment to the Republican cause. Goethe featured Lucan's witch, Erichtho, in the *Classical Walpurgisnight* scene in his *Faust Part Two* in 1832.

Lucan began to fall out of fashion nearing the twentieth century in England. In 1896 he received an unfavorable translation by Sir Edward Ridley. In his Loeb edition, Duff claimed that "no reasonable judgment can rank Lucan among the world's great epic poets."<sup>11</sup> Even more critical is Graves's estimation in his 1956 Penguin Classic, in which he calls the poet "the father of yellow journalism, for his love of sensational detail, his unprincipled reportage, and his disregard for continuity between to-day's and yesterday's rhetoric."<sup>12</sup> Graves also railed against his "impatience with craftsmanship," "lack of religious conviction," and "turgid hyperbole."<sup>13</sup> Elsewhere, however, he continued to receive praise from German and French scholars.<sup>14</sup> His popularity rose again, and quickly amongst English-speaking scholars at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the final vestiges of aversion being Williams' 1978 monograph, *Change and Decline*.<sup>15</sup> Ahl's 1976 work on Lucan remains a beneficial and enthusiastic introduction. Lapidge's 1979 article on Lucan's interpretation of Stoic Cosmology provides more useful and sympathetic context. In 1993 Hardie and Quint published important works on the complexity of

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<sup>10</sup> Dilke 1972b: 108

<sup>11</sup> Duff 1928.

<sup>12</sup> Graves 1956: 13

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. 23-24.

<sup>14</sup> For example see Friedrich 1938 on Cato, Caesar, and Fortuna; Grimal 1960 on the eulogy for Nero, and Brisset 1964 on political ideas in Lucan.

<sup>15</sup> Williams 1978.

Lucan's work as part of the genre of Latin Epic.<sup>16</sup> Bartsch and Leigh, both in 1997, published monographs seeking to resolve Lucan's seemingly inconsistent elements of pro-Caesarianism and pro-Republicanism. O'Hara provides helpful commentary on this characteristic as well, arguing for a more fractured voice.<sup>17</sup> Narducci, though positing, contrary to most English scholarship, that Lucan had no coherent program, seems to prove the opposite with her in-depth readings and discussion of intertextuality.<sup>18</sup> Hardie aptly comments on the *Bellum Civile*, "In recent decades, it has undergone a thorough critical re-evaluation, to re-emerge as a major expression of Neronian politics and aesthetics, a poem whose studied artifice enacts a complex relationship between poetic fantasy and historical reality."<sup>19</sup>

Joining the ever-growing conversation on this exciting author, this thesis aims to contribute to the study of Lucan's intertextual allusions. Lucan adapts a significant amount of material from earlier Latin authors. The influence of Virgil has been well noted as well as that of Ovid. Less discussed, though still with sizeable attention, is the influence of Latin elegists on the *Bellum Civile*. The adapted material lends context, connotations, and historical significance to Lucan's epic. His readers familiar with Virgil, Ovid, and elegy will see the full background on which he builds his scene and by which his scene is informed, perceiving subtle and important layers of meaning. However, his readers will also find his writing and adaptation of his sources contaminating their

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<sup>16</sup> Hardie 1993 and Quint 1993.

<sup>17</sup> O'Hara 2007, esp. 131-142.

<sup>18</sup> Narducci 2002.

<sup>19</sup> Hardie 2013: 225

reading of those same sources. More often than not the contexts in which Lucan puts his allusions problematize the sources themselves. This thesis will trace how Lucan treats and mutates his literary predecessors.

In chapter 1 I will explore how Lucan reads Virgil, looking in detail at his adaptation of material from the *Aeneid* and *Georgics* 1. Lucan draws heavily from the conclusion of the latter, which features a tone generally accepted as deeply pessimistic, in his first book. Hitherto undiscussed, however, is the influence of *Georgics* 1's chariot simile on the eulogy for Nero, which, when unpacked in the context of both Virgil's entire poem and Lucan's book 1, reveals important implications for both works. From the *Aeneid* Lucan picks apart and sullies certain "positive" prophecies by appropriating their language and images in his own violent contexts of civil war. Jove's prophecy in book 1 of the *Aeneid*, the Parade of Heroes from *Aeneid* 6, and the shield of Aeneas from *Aeneid* 8 appear in and are problematized in Lucan's first book, his Underworld sequence in book 6, and book 7. Lucan's first book, especially in its catalogue of wars, pushes against the Virgilian effort to cast the civil wars of Caesar and Augustus as external wars. His sixth book, paralleling Virgil's sixth, calls into question the glorious Parade of Heroes and the controlled images of Tartarus and Actium depicted on Aeneas' shield. The presentation of Caesar in book 7 and the concluding apostrophe to Thessaly make explicitly condemnatory Virgil's *Georgics* 1 and forces it into conversation with Jove's prophecy in *Aeneid* 1. For Virgilian control Lucan substitutes a world spiraling into uncontrollable disaster. He borrows from Virgil, but in so doing questions his predecessor's narrative.

Chapter 2 will discuss Lucan's slightly more delicate allusions to Latin elegy throughout the epic, especially the elegization of the characters of Pompey and Caesar and to the disordering of love as the cause of civil war. Pompey's relationships with Cornelia and Julia draw inspiration from and directly allude to passages of Propertius' book 4. Paralleling his relationship with these women is his relationship with Rome, which casts Rome in the character of an elegiac mistress, a role she also plays with Caesar, though in a very different manner. The elegization of Caesar, in contrast to the slow and haunted depictions of Pompey, takes on a much more condemnatory tone. In book 1 he is a violent mutation of the *miles amoris*, soldier of love. Then in book 10, with Cleopatra, he is simultaneously the lover captivated and seduced by Cleopatra and the faithless lover having abandoned his mistress Rome. Rome herself seems to take on a vengeful life of her own, paralleling the angry Julia of book 3, as she threatens disaster in book 7. Lucan uses elegy to infuse his war with increased pathos and at the same time to demonstrate the mutilating effects epic – or rather the subject matter of epic, war – has on the world of elegy.

The final chapter will investigate Lucan's borrowings from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Beginning with the proem and invocation to Nero, I will discuss the parallels between Ovid's Phaethon and Nero, Pompey, and Caesar. Some new acrostics elucidate these parallels and strengthen especially the assimilation of Nero and Caesar to Phaethon, the latter of which has yet to be discussed in significant detail. This fiery motif, taken up in the first book with Phaethontic parallels and important acrostics, continues throughout the rest of the epic. The second half of the chapter will focus on Lucan's pessimistic reworking of Stoic cosmology as presented in the *Metamorphoses*. Where

Ovid and Stoic cosmology present a palingenesis bearing new life and a promise of a clean beginning, Lucan offers instead a political conflagration that will lead only to another flawed world and more inevitable destruction. He creates a doomed cosmology consisting of cyclical civil wars as *ekpyrosis* and apotheosis as the only way to rid the world of tyrants. Combining this new cosmology with the rulers assimilated to Phaethon, I argue that Lucan seeks to condemn the leaders of civil war and prophesy the death of Nero by superimposing the characters upon each other.

The focus of this thesis is an examination of how Lucan wields intertextual allusions to problematize events and persons within his own epic and in the works of those by whom he was influenced. His debt to Virgil he repays in subversive questions. His borrowings from elegy he mutates into violently disordered love. His use of Ovidian motif and cosmology produces a cynical cycle of war and tyrants which he wields to condemn. Borrowing flames from his predecessors, in return he casts his terrifying shadows on their texts.

## CHAPTER ONE

### Virgil and Lucan: Fractured Fairytales and Ambiguities Exposed

There is a grisly difference between Disney and the Grimm tales upon which the former's colorful films are based. In the animated story, everyone lives happily ever after when the credits roll, except for, of course, the bad guys. Conversely, the Grimm tales feature cursed princesses, physical mutilation, kidnappings, and an overwhelming undertone of death. The comparison is hyperbolic, perhaps, yet the relationship between Disney and Grimm parallels the relationship between Lucan and his predecessor, Virgil.<sup>1</sup> Where Virgil is ambiguously positive, Lucan is bombastically pessimistic. The one, at least superficially, presents an Augustan program with a rosy filter. The other retells reality tinged with red rage and madness. But it would be an oversimplification of both authors to read Lucan as entirely and only counter-Virgil. Neither author is one dimensional. Scholars have long noted Virgil's ambivalence and ambiguity,<sup>2</sup> and it certainly can be and has been argued that subliminal messages can be traced in Virgil's corpus. It is against these seams that Lucan leans in his epic.

In this chapter, I will discuss how Lucan responds to passages in the *Aeneid* that are foundational for Virgil's positive projection of Roman identity and Augustan success, namely the prophecy of Jove in *Aeneid* 1, the parade of heroes in *Aeneid* 6, and the shield

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<sup>1</sup> On Lucan and Virgil see Narducci 1979 [2002]; Horsfall 1995: 268-272; Ahl 1976: 64-67; Pichon 1912: 218-229; Thompson and Bruère 2010; Casali 2011; See also the commentaries of Asso 2010; Fantham 1992; Korenjack 1999; and Viansino 1995.

<sup>2</sup> On Virgil's ambivalence see Harrison 1990; Horsfall 1995: 192-216; Tarrant 1997b; Casali 2011: 82-83.



of Aeneas in *Aeneid* 8. By appropriating the language and images of these passages for his own deeply pessimistic and violent depictions of civil war, he both ironizes his own lines along with those of Virgil and questions the positivity of these Virgilian prophecies. His rearrangement of material from the *Aeneid* certainly colors Virgil's original passages, but even more cleverly, he combines these passages with other Virgilian passages from both the *Aeneid* and *Georgics* 1 that are less positive and more ambiguous, tracing ambiguities in Virgil's projections and effectively using Virgil's own words to support his dark adaptation of these positive projections in the *Aeneid*. Whether he does this to rebut Virgil's positivity or to expose latent pessimism in his predecessor depends greatly on one's own interpretation of Virgil. Lucan certainly had an interpretation of his own.

### *Aeneid 6 in Bellum Civile 1*

We begin with Lucan's proem, splitting at the seams with Virgilian allusions, though it does not draw from the most obvious source. His proem is not much like Virgil's or Homer's beyond the stock "I sing of x," though even here the "I sing" is changed to "we sing." It is repetitive and stationary, featuring no narrative or thematic road map, but instead detailing an image of civil war:

**Bella per Emathios plus quam ciuilia campos**  
**iusque datum sceleri canimus, populumque potentem**  
**in sua uictrici conuersum uiscera dextra**  
**cognatasque acies, et rupto foedere regni**  
**certatum totis concussi uiribus orbis**  
 in commune nefas, infestisque obuia signis  
 signa, **pares aquilas** et pila minantia pilis. (1.1-7)

**Wars worse than civil, we sing**, through the **Emanthian plains** and right given over to wrong, and **the power of a people turned against its own innards** with a victor's right hand and **kindred ranks**, and how, **with the pact of kings broken**, **it is fought** amongst the powers of **the whole** shaken **world** toward a common

crime, and standards against enemy standards, and **eagles matched** and spears threatening spears.

Lucan writes a very un-Virgilian proem cobbled together with many Virgilian allusions.

The most discussed parallel is between Lucan's proem and the prayer of Anchises in the parade of heroes in *Aeneid* 6:<sup>3</sup>

illae autem **paribus** quas fulgere cernis in **armis**,  
concordes animae nunc et dum nocte prementur,  
heu quantum inter se bellum, si lumina vitae  
attigerint, **quantas acies** stragemque ciebut,  
aggeribus **socer** Alpinis atque arce Monoeci  
descendens, **gener** adversis instructus Eois!  
ne, pueri, ne tanta animis adsuescite bella  
neu patriae validas **in viscera vertite** viris. (*Aen.* 6.826-833)

Those, however, whom you see shining in **matched arms**, concordant spirits now even while they are covered by night, oh what war between themselves, if they should touch the light of life, **what ranks** and massacre they will rouse, the **father-in-law** with troops descending from the Alps and the citadel of Monoecus, the **son-in-law** drawn up with eastern forces! Sons, do not accustom your spirits to such wars and do not **turn** your strong forces **against the innards** of the fatherland.

It has been noted that the opening *paribus* in Anchises' prophecy has a positive connotation given the *concordes animae* in the following line.<sup>4</sup> That immediately changes, however, as he foretells war between *socer* and *gener*, and it becomes abundantly clear to the reader that he is referring to Pompey and Caesar. Putnam notes aptly that after night (*dum nocte prementur*) and when day dawns (*lumina vitae attigerint*), "*par* takes on the more sinister meaning...that becomes a basis for Lucan's

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<sup>3</sup> Casali 2011: 86; Reed 2011: 24; Putnam 1995: 225-226; Thompson and Bruère 2010: 108-109.

<sup>4</sup> Casali 2011: 86; Putnam 199: 225.

poem.” Lucan picks up the *par* in the final lines of his proem, both nodding to Virgil and alluding to (without directly mentioning) the shared subject of his epic.

Lucan repeats also Anchises’ prayer that Romans not turn their weapons against themselves, *in viscera*. Thompson and Bruère have interpreted Lucan’s echo as a rebuke against Caesar and Pompey (though more against the former).<sup>5</sup> However, there seems to be something more sinister at play. Casali and Putnam have rightly noted the inherent vanity of Anchises’ prayer. Contemporary – as well as later – readers of Virgil would have known that his request would be unfulfilled: the civil war has already occurred in the future-past. By echoing this line, Lucan either “rebukes the Virgilian hypocrisy”<sup>6</sup> in emphasizing what would occur/has occurred over “the idealizing hope that Rome be spared of civil strife,”<sup>7</sup> or more likely he reveals Virgil’s pessimism, leaning on the poet’s almost-acknowledgement of the civil nature of this conflict.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, Lucan does not refer directly to Pompey and Caesar, though he certainly implies the pair, but instead he implicates the entirety of the Roman *populusque potens* in turning their weapons *in viscera*.<sup>9</sup> The impetus of self-destruction, for Lucan, does not lie solely with Pompey and Caesar, but rather with Rome as a whole for the city has turned to *commune nefas*, which he will address in line 8 following the proem.

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<sup>5</sup> Thompson and Bruère 2010: 109.

<sup>6</sup> Casali 2011: 86.

<sup>7</sup> Putnam 1995: 225.

<sup>8</sup> This is one of the few places in the *Aeneid* where civil war is referred to, though even here it is “oblique and expressed by negation” (Casali 2011: 86).

<sup>9</sup> See Casali 2011: 86.

The first seven lines are laced with a few more Virgilian passages that bolster Lucan's sinister adaptation of Anchises' words. The civil strife and chaos of *Georgics* 1.489-492 and 1.510-511 are echoed as well:

ergo inter sese **paribus** concurrere **telis**  
**Romanas acies iterum** uidere Philippi;  
nec fuit indignum superis bis sanguine nostro  
**Emathiam** et **latos** Haemi pinguescere **campos**. (*Geo.* 1.489-492)

So Philippi saw **again Roman ranks** rushing against themselves with **matched weapons**; nor was it unworthy to the gods to stain **Emanthia** and the **broad plains** of Haemus with our blood twice.

uicinae **ruptis** inter se **legibus** urbes  
arma ferunt; saeuit **toto** Mars impius **orbe**. (*Geo.* 1.510-511)

Nearby cities bear arms against each other **with laws broken**; impious Mars rages over **the whole world**.

In his description of portents surrounding Julius Caesar's death and his prayer for Octavian, Virgil echoes himself with *paribus telis*, which we saw above in Anchises' *paribus armis*. Lucan of course sees this internal echo, which he picks up in his own proem. He also re-echoes the *Romanas acies*, already echoed in Anchises' *quantas acies*, in his *cognatasque acies*.<sup>10</sup> Virgil concludes his passage with Haemus and Lucan picks up this ending for his beginning, putting his readers "again" (*iterum*) on the plains of Thessaly.<sup>11</sup> In his prayer for Octavian Virgil describes a world turned topsy-turvy, an image which Lucan expands in his proem through his invocation to Nero. One can see echoed the "whole world" (*totus orbis*) as well as the "broken laws" (*ruptae leges*) re-written as "broken pact" (*ruptum foedus*). It is interesting that Lucan chooses to echo first

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid. 85.

<sup>11</sup> See also Putnam 1995: 223

the fallout from Julius Caesar's death and a prayer for Octavian in his introduction to the civil war between the former and Pompey and to civil strife in general.

Continuing to tease out underlying currents of civil war in Virgil, Lucan's proem echoes the "second proem" of *Aeneid* 7: "I will sing of horrible wars, I will sing of ranks and kings driven to death by their spirits" (*dicam horrida bella, / dicam acies actosque animis in funera reges*, *Aen.* 7.41-42). In this book Virgil begins the struggle between Aeneas and Latinus, a struggle which he also implies is civil when Juno refers to Aeneas and Latinus as *gener* and *socer*: "*hac gener atque socer coeant mercede suorum*" (*Aen.* 7.317). Virgil again self-references and a keen reader will recall Anchises' description of Pompey and Caesar in book 6.<sup>12</sup> Lucan certainly picked up on this parallel with Pompey and Caesar, noting that the wars he describes are *plus quam civilia*.

If that wasn't enough, Lucan echoes also another passage in Virgil which underscores the civil nature of both his subject and the underlying civil strife in Virgil's. Book 11 of the *Aeneid* features Latinus' proposal to settle the war between the Italians and Trojans:

**toto certatum est corpore regni.**

...

et **foederis** aequas

dicamus **leges sociosque** in regna vocemus. (*Aen.* 11.313, 321-322)

It was fought with the entire body of our kingdom... and let us speak of just laws of a treaty and let us call them allies in our rule.

Echoing Latinus' proposal, the pacts of the first triumvirate are broken in Lucan's proem. Lucan reverses Virgil's order. The latter progresses from world at war to pacts, laws, and

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<sup>12</sup> Horsfall 2002 ad loc.: "the war between Aeneas and Latinus will over and again recall that between Pompey and Caesar;" cf. also Narducci 2002: 33.

allies. Lucan moves from broken pacts to a world at war. Lucan's civil strife "re-enact[s] the earlier one on an ecumenical scale."<sup>13</sup> Reed notes a connection to book 12 of the *Aeneid*, when the narrator describes Aeneas' Italian war as between "nations destined to be everlasting at peace (12.503-504)," arguing that Lucan "interrogat[es]...its optimistic premise."<sup>14</sup> However, it seems that Virgil is not entirely optimistic. The prophecy, though superficially positive, acknowledges the civil nature of the war and lays civil strife in the foundation of Roman identity. Again, Lucan both underscores his *bellum civile* and exposes the latent civil nature of the strife in the *Aeneid*. The parade of heroes in book 6 projects a glorious future for Rome. By pairing Anchises' prayer from it with other passages that hint at or acknowledge civil war, Lucan problematizes a passage that is key to Roman identity in the *Aeneid*.

Line 8 introduces a catalogue of destruction that proceeds for nearly 40 lines: "what madness, oh citizens, what great freedom of the sword? (*quis furor, o ciues, quae tanta licentia ferri?* 1.8)." *Quis furor* poses the question which Lucan endeavors to answer in the rest of his epic. The query is echoed from a number of places in Virgil's corpus. Well known and well discussed are the references to *Aeneid* 5, with Ascanius addressing the Trojan women for burning the ships: "What is this new madness? What now do you aim for? What, oh miserable citizens?" ("*quis furor iste novus? quo nunc, quo tenditis*" inquit / "*heu miserae ciues?*" *Aen.* 5.672-673), and to Laocoon's warning about the Trojan Horse: "Oh miserable citizens, why such insanity?" (*o miseri, quae*

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<sup>13</sup> Thompson and Bruère 2010: 109.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

*tanta insania, cives?* *Aen.* 2.42).<sup>15</sup> Both Virgilian passages describe moments when Trojan/Romans managed to harm themselves, the self-destructive theme of which Lucan is certainly echoing in his line. A lesser-known echo is from *Georgics* 4, when Orpheus looks back on Eurydice, breaking his pact with Prosperpina:

Ibi **omnis**  
**effusus labor** atque immitis **rupta tyranni**  
**foedera**, terque fragor stagnis auditus Avernis.  
 Illa, **Quis** et me, inquit, miseram et te perdidit, Orpheu,  
**quis tantus furor?** (*Geo.* 4.491-495)

There **the entire effort was wasted** and **the pact of the cruel tyrant broken**, and three times a clamor was heard in the waters of Avernus. “Orpheus, what madness,” she says, “**what great madness** has destroyed both you and me?”

This parallel seems first disconnected.<sup>16</sup> Rome after all has no immediate ties to Orpheus and his story. However, there are elements of repetition and loss. Orpheus has lost Eurydice to death twice. Perhaps Lucan is taking up these joined motifs to underscore the tragedy of the cycles of civil war that have plagued and will plague Rome. A katabasis to Hades, a major element which Virgil describes also in *Aeneid* 6, appears as well in this passage from *Georgics* 4, showing that in that moment all of Orpheus’ labor was undone, that everything he had gone through in the Underworld was in vain. Perhaps Lucan is darkly reading this katabasis together with that from the *Aeneid*, noting how a broken pact ruins former labor, that is for Lucan, the breaking of the triumvirate shattered also the glowing future predicted by Anchises in the Underworld. Caesar and Pompey may be Orpheus, breaking pacts and losing Rome. But Lucan takes a darker turn in addressing the question more broadly to the Roman *cives* in general. It is all of Rome that has broken

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<sup>15</sup> See for instance Thompson and Bruère 2010: 110 and Casali 2011: 87.

<sup>16</sup> The allusion is noted by Thompson and Bruère 2010: 110, though not discussed.

its pact and destroyed itself and its past behind it on account of its madness, a madness whose the seeds of which Lucan finds in Virgil.

*Jove's Prophecy in Bellum Civile 1*

Along with Virgilian *furor*, Lucan appropriates and adapts the Virgilian idea of love and country. Lucan's *quis furor* has its counterpart in *tantus amor*, which introduces his request in lines 21-23 that Rome not turn to civil war since there are still external wars to fight:

tum, **si tantus amor** belli tibi, Roma, nefandi,  
**totum sub** Latias **leges** cum **miseris orbem**,  
in te uerte manus. (1.21-23)

Then, **if such love** of unspeakable war, Rome, exists for you, when you have sent **the whole world under** Latin **laws**, turn your hand against yourself.

*Tantus amor* is certainly Virgilian, appearing in *Aeneid* 2, when Aeneas addresses Dido before recounting the troubles of the Trojans: "but if there is such love to understand our misfortunes" (*sed si tantus amor casus cognoscere nostros, Aen.* 2.10). It is interesting that Dido is described as desirous to hear about the history of the Trojan war. The phrase again appears in *Aeneid* 6 when the Sybil prepares Aeneas for his descent into the Underworld: "But if there is such love in your mind, if there is such desire" (*quod si tantus amor menti, si tanta cupido est, Aen.* 6.133). Again *amor* is paired with history, though in this case the future-history that will be shown in the Underworld. *Cupido* is used in Latinus' description of potential alliance with the Trojans in book 7: "Let only Aeneas himself come, if our desire is such" (*ipse modo Aeneas, nostri si tanta cupido est, /...adveniat, Aen.* 7.263-5). Desire here is paired with a quasi-prophetic passage concerning Roman identity. In close self-referencing, Virgil has Latinus repeat his



sentiment again in book 11: “Let them settle, if there is such desire, and let them found walls” (*considant, si tantus amor, et moenia condant* (*Aen.* 11.323). Once again, desire is paired with the foundations (literally, here, with the walls) of Rome. In Virgil, *tantus amor/cupido* is tied to the Roman history and identity. Lucan sarcastically echoes his predecessors sentiment in his request, “If you have such desire, Romans, expand your empire before you turn to civil war.” The explicitly Virgilian phrase heralds another Virgilian allusion that underscores the sarcasm and bitterness of Lucan’s passage. The *totum...miseris orbem* (22) refers to *Aeneid* 4, when Jupiter predicts the future success of Aeneas: “And he will send the entire world under [his] laws” (*ac totum sub leges mitteret orbem*, *Aen.* 4.231). This allusion has garnered significant attention,<sup>17</sup> with scholars debating whether Jupiter refers to Aeneas himself literally, or Augustus,<sup>18</sup> or all of Rome.<sup>19</sup> The same conclusion, however, is arrived at regardless of the nuances of Virgil’s passage. Lucan has set Virgil’s optimistic prophecy in the employment of his own pessimistic irony. The reader can easily infer that Lucan’s request assumes that one day, if his advice is even followed, after the successful expansion of the Roman empire, Rome will turn against itself. Lucan sets his epic as a morbid conclusion, a sort of “after ever-after” to Virgil’s prophetic projections.

The remainder of the opening of book 1 responds specifically to the prophecy of Jove from *Aeneid* 1. The response begins in the famous invocation to Nero.<sup>20</sup> The opening of the invocation foretells Nero’s apotheosis and situation in the heavens:

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<sup>17</sup> See Casali 2011: 88-19; Reed 2011: 25; Fratantuono 2012: 6-7.

<sup>18</sup> Thompson and Bruère 2010: 109.

<sup>19</sup> See Casali 2011: 88.

te, cum statione peracta  
 astra petes serus, praelati regia caeli  
 excipiet gaudente polo: seu sceptrum tenere  
 seu te flammigeros Phoebi conscendere currus  
 telluremque nihil mutato sole timentem  
 igne uago lustrare iuuat, tibi numine ab omni  
 cedetur, iurisque tui natura relinquet  
 quis deus esse uelis, ubi regnum ponere mundi. (1.45-52)

When, with your watch on earth completed, you at last seek the stars, the palace of the heaven you prefer will accept you with rejoicing poles: whether it pleases you to hold the scepter or to mount the flaming chariot of Phoebus and survey with fiery path the earth that fears nothing from the change of sun, every god will yield to you, and nature will relinquish to your right what kind of god you wish to be and where you wish to place your reign over the world.

This echoes Virgil's opening of *Georgics* 1, where he likewise foretells Augustus choosing his place among the gods (*Geo.* 1.24-31). Lucan imitates the options Virgil presents Augustus in his options for where in the sky Nero will be set. Especially of note are the references to the *Aeneid* in his declaration of peace after Nero's apotheosis. By simultaneously referring to three passages of Virgil, including Jove's prophecy from book 1, Lucan questions the internal consistency of the *Aeneid* and thereby its prophecy of peace. Lucan foretells a Neronian peace marked by closed doors of war:

tum genus humanum positis sibi consulat armis  
 inque uicem gens omnis amet; **pax missa per orbem**  
**ferrea** belligeri conpescat **limina Iani.** (1.60-62)

Then let the race of men, with arms laid down, take thought for itself and let every race love in turn; let **peace, sent throughout the world**, shut the **iron gates of** war-bearing **Janus**.

Lines 60-62 recall the iron doors of war, which appear in Jove's prophecy of peace in *Aeneid* 1:

dirae **ferro** et compagibus artis  
 claudentur **Belli portae; Furor impius intus,**

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<sup>20</sup> On Virgil and the invocation to Nero see Casali 2011: 91-92; Fratantuono 2012: 9-11; Thompson and Bruère 2010: 114-117; Tarrant 1997: 67.

saeva sedens super arma, et centum vinctus aenis  
post tergum nodis, fremet horridus ore cruento.' (*Aen.* 1.293-296)

The dire **gates of War** will be closed with **iron** and close-set bars; **impious Fury within**, sitting upon savage arms, tied behind his back with a hundred bronze knots, will roar horribly from a bloody jaw.

However, Virgil links this closing of the gates of war with their opening in Book 7 by Juno:

tum regina deum caelo delapsa morantis  
impulit ipsa manu portas, et cardine verso  
**Belli ferratos rumpit** Saturnia **postis**. (*Aen.* 7.620-622)

Then the queen of the gods, having descended from the heavens, struck the delaying doors with her own hand, and on turned hinges, Saturnia **broke open the iron gates of War**.

In the first Virgilian passage the gates of war are barred with iron, in the second the doors themselves are iron, which Lucan picks up. Lucan also picks up on the subversion of the first passage of Virgil by the second, for he concludes with *limina Iani*, which refers to *limine Ianus* at *Aen.* 7.610 when the doors are still shut with iron and bronze:<sup>21</sup>

sunt geminae **Belli portae** (sic nomine dicunt)  
religione sacrae et saevi formidine Martis;  
centum aerei **claudunt** vectes aeternaque **ferri**  
robora, nec custos absistit **limine Ianus**. (*Aen.* 7.608-611)

There are the twin **doors of War** (thus they are called by name) sacred by religion and by terror of savage Mars; a hundred bronze bolts **close** them and the eternal strength of **iron**, nor is the guardian **Janus** absent from the **gate**.

In combining the three passages, Lucan puts pressure on fissures in Virgil's positivity.

Are the doors open or shut? Is *Furor Impius* still chained within, or is it running free on the plains of war?

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<sup>21</sup> Casali, 2011: 91.

Lucan puts further pressure on these questionably-shut gates of war in Jove's prophecy with his allusions to *Georgics* 1. The invocation, as noted above, has also been compared to Virgil's treatment of Octavian in *Georgics* 1. The ironic ambivalence with which Virgil treats Octavian, especially in light of his bleak description of civil war prior to Actium with which he closes the book, has been discussed in relation to the subversive irony of Lucan's invocation.<sup>22</sup> Scholars have concluded that in imitating the conclusion of *Georgics* 1 in his invocation, Lucan is expanding and/or perverting any possible ambivalence, ambiguity, or irony in Virgil. Discussions, however, have noted less the chariot simile in the final lines of the first book of the *Georgics*:

saeuit toto **Mars impius** orbe,  
ut cum carceribus sese effudere quadrigae,  
addunt in spatia, et frustra retinacula tendens  
fertur equis auriga neque audit **currus** habenas. (*Geo.* 1.511-514)

**Impious Mars** rages over the whole world, as when chariots burst forth from the gates, they increase [their speed] in their course, and pulling on the bridles in vain the charioteer is dragged along by the horses and the **chariot** does not listen to the reigns.

Careful reading of this simile will reveal that Lucan clearly saw pessimism in Virgil.

There seems already to be a certain pessimism or at least irony in the poem, given the morbidity of the portrait of civil war up to Actium that precedes Virgil's prayer for Octavian.

The significance of the chariot simile proves, however, to be rather complicated. Throughout the *Georgics* the plough and the chariot are closely linked, both being referred to as *currus*, and both being a symbol of skill and governance, the one agricultural and the other martial.<sup>23</sup> The final simile, however, indicates an absence of

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<sup>22</sup> See Casali 2011: 91-92 and Tarrant 1997: 67.

skill and loss of guidance. This is in line with the chaos of war that results from the fallout from Julius Caesar's death. The world is turned upside down and the plough and chariot merge in war in uncontrolled madness. The death of Julius Caesar adds another dimension to the simile. It is first important to note that Julius Caesar is often associated with the sun, being depicted as riding in a chariot drawn by the white horses of the sun in his triumphs and having his death heralded by an eclipse. In *Georgics* 1, the sun plays a large role in maintaining and directing agricultural order, which parallels civic order.<sup>24</sup> Caesar's death, a sort of eclipse in itself given his solar characteristics, results in martial disorder. This dissolution of order is manifested in civil wars waged by the addressee of Virgil's poem, Octavian. Is then the praise of and prayer for Octavian rendered sarcastic?

Certainly if the simile is meant to refer to the heir Caesar. Of course, the sun imagery paired with the wild chariot simile will lead many readers to think immediately of Ovid's Phaethon myth. Obviously, one ought not to read anachronistically; though Virgil would have known the Phaethon myth, he most certainly was not reading Ovid. He was, however, familiar with Aeschylus.<sup>25</sup> And the chariot simile draws heavily from Orestes' madness which is also likened to an out-of-control chariot:

ὥσπερ ξὺν ἵπποις ἡνιοστροφῶ δρόμου  
 ἐξωτέρῳ: φέρουσι γὰρ νικώμενον  
 φρένες δύσαρκτοι: πρὸς δὲ καρδίᾳ φόβος  
 ἄδειν ἔτοιμος ἢ δ' ὑπορχεῖσθαι κότῳ. (*Cho.* 1022-1025)

[I am] like a charioteer with horses outside the race: for my hard-to-govern wits bear me, conquered: and at my heart fear is ready to sing and dance with wrath.

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<sup>23</sup> See Wilhelm 1982 for positive analysis of chariot and plough in the *Georgics*.

<sup>24</sup> Wilhelm 1982: 217-220.

<sup>25</sup> See Dewar 1988 for Virgil and Aeschylus.

The negative implications are easily inferred. Like Orestes, Octavian has blood on his hands in avenging his father. Will he also be mad like Orestes, though? But many scholars have cited the simile as a didactic element used by Virgil to caution Octavian against rashness rather than as part of a problematized characterization.<sup>26</sup> Varying interpretations aside, there is an undeniable ambiguity. What Virgil means by this vague simile depends largely upon individual readings of Virgil.

The reader in question here, however, is Lucan, who has demonstrably read Virgil pessimistically. How exactly Lucan is interacting with *Georgics* 1 must be viewed through the lens of the fact that Lucan was not just reading Virgil and Aeschylus, but with them also Ovid.<sup>27</sup> Via Ovid, the Phaethon parallel – and accompanying subversive aspect – becomes explicit in Lucan’s own invocation and, by relation, in his reading of Virgil. He emphasizes the chariot simile and the sun and heir in Virgil, making their connotations unambiguous, and extracts and arranges them in his extravagantly ironic invocation:

seu te **flammigeros Phoebi** conscendere **currus**  
 telluremque nihil **mutato sole** timentem  
 igne uago lustrare iuuat (1.48-50)

Or [if it pleases you] to mount the **flaming chariot of Phoebus** and survey with fiery path the earth that fears nothing from **the change of sun**.

For Lucan, Virgil sets Octavian up as a possibly catastrophic heir. Nero, then, is a decidedly catastrophic heir in a line of heirs that have inherited the chariot of the state.

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<sup>26</sup> Nappa 2010: 63-67.

<sup>27</sup> For expanded discussion of Lucan and Ovid see chapter 3.

Lucan also takes up and expands Virgil's reception of Aeschylus, specifically the idea of madness in war, especially civil war, which is evident throughout the Virgilian corpus. Lucan extends this madness explicitly into principate as well, applying Aeschylean madness via Virgil and Ovid to Nero – and the entirety of civil war – and consequently stains Virgil's first book of the *Georgics* with the same pessimism and irony with which he treats his subject. *Georgics* 1 concludes with Mars Impius reigning, directly counter to Virgil's projection in *Aeneid* 1, and it is the future of *Georgics* 1 that Lucan takes up rather than Jove's prophecy. Lucan begins *Bellum Civile* with *Furor Impius* reigning and presents madness and war as one and the same, as the concluding passages of book 1 indicate.

Lucan continues to press on the pessimism in the *Georgics* in contradiction to the *Aeneid* at the close of his first book. The catastrophic portents at the end of book 1, embodied most notably in Nigidius Figulus and the Roman matron, have received significant attention for their borrowings from the *Georgics*. The portents in Rome preceding Julius Caesar's arrival (1.521-583) echo almost exactly the portents in *Georgics* 1 around the death of the same person (*Geo.* 1.462-488).<sup>28</sup> Worth expanding upon is Nigidius Figulus' concluding prophecy, which completes Lucan's response to the projection of *Aeneid* 1:<sup>29</sup>

**multosque exhibit in annos**  
**hic furor.** et superos quid prodest poscere **finem?**  
 cum domino **pax ista** uenit. duc, Roma, malorum  
 continuam seriem clademque **in tempora multa**  
 extrahe **ciui**li tantum **iam libera bello.**' (1.668-672)

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<sup>28</sup> Interesting unnoted acrostic at *George.* 476-479, **VIVI**, in a passage describing the voices of ghosts as of living men.

<sup>29</sup> For extensive discussion see Casali 2011: 92-94.

**This fury will go forth for many years.** And what does it benefit to ask the gods for **an end? Peace itself** comes with a tyrant. Lead forth, Rome, a continual series of evils and draw out such disaster **for many ages, free now in civil war.**

The *furor* lasting for many years contradicts Jove's prophecy at *Aen.* 1.294 that *Furor Impius* will be chained up. Nigidius Figulus' question concerning the usefulness of asking the gods for a *finem* sarcastically repeats the question asked by Venus which prompts Jove's prophecy: "Great king, what end of labors do you grant?" (*quem das finem, rex magne, labrorum? Aen.* 1.241). The answer is that there will never be an end. Lucan overturns any positivity in Virgil's projection of Augustan peace. Even if there is a ruler, a Caesar or Augustus or Nero, *furor* will still roam free. The princeps is not the check on *furor*, as Virgil may suggest, but part of it,<sup>30</sup> for *pax ista*, namely the Augustan peace that Jove foretells in *Aen.* 1.291-296, comes with a tyrant and slavery. This slavery and destruction will continue *in tempora multa*, not just for a single reign or under a single emperor, but for ages.<sup>31</sup> This is contrasted with Nigidius' exhortation to Rome to remain free for now, *iam*, a short time, though she be caught in civil war.

Next comes the mad Roman matron, whose ravings brings the book full circle.

She asks the question posed at the opening of the book, *quis furor*:<sup>32</sup>

uideo Pangaea niuosis  
cana iugis latosque **Haemi** sub rupe **Philippos**.  
**quis furor** hic, o Phoebe, doce, quo tela manusque  
**Romanae** miscent **acies** bellumque sine hoste est. (1.679-682)

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<sup>30</sup> See Fratantuono 2012: 44-46 for *furor* in relation to the principate.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Narducci 2002: 110.

<sup>32</sup> See again Casali 2011: 96-98 for full discussion.



I see Pangaeus white with snowy ridges and broad **Philippi** under the crag of **Haemus**. Tell **what** this **fury** is, o Phoebus, whereby **Roman ranks** mix weapons and hands and war is without and enemy.

She sees Haemus and Philippi and the Roman *acies*, re-echoing *Geo.* 1.489-492, with reference to which Lucan opened book 1. Her ravings end where they begun, seeing Philippi again:

consurgunt partes **iterum**, **totumque per orbem**  
rursus eo. noua da mihi cernere litora ponti  
telluremque nouam: uidi **iam**, Phoebe, **Philippos**. (1.692-694)

Again the sides converge, and **again** I go **through the whole world**. Grant me to see new shores of the sea and new land: Phoebus, I **now** see **Philippi**.

The repetition of Philippi and the echo of *iterum* from *Geo.* 1.490 emphasizes that she has seen Philippi in her vision already and, as the mouthpiece of the poet, reminds the reader that Lucan has already seen Philippi in Virgil.<sup>33</sup> These mad prophecies continue the motif of *furor* and close the book with the question still open: what is this madness in the Roman people? Lucan continues to provide answers in later books. Perhaps pell-mell at first glance, the Virgilian echoes and their treatment in book 1 set the tone for how Lucan will continue to engage his predecessor throughout the rest of his epic.

*Aeneid 6 in Bellum Civile 6*

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid. 98.

Book 6 of Lucan<sup>34</sup> neatly parallels *Aeneid* 6, a mirroring which has been at the center of discussions concerning the intended length of the *Bellum Civile*.<sup>35</sup> Though it has received relatively less attention in terms of intertextuality, the parallel between Lucan and Virgil's sixth books has nonetheless been discussed in much detail, the former's zombie messenger contrasted with the latter's prophetic katabasis. The parade of heroes is a natural source of inspiration for Lucan as it features prominently the two "heroes" of his epic. Generally, it has been acknowledged that Lucan reads Virgil provocatively and leans on and reveals ambiguities and makes them explicit.<sup>36</sup> *Aeneid* 6 presents a positive view of the after/pre-life, narrated by Anchises:

Nunc age, Dardanium prolem quae deinde sequatur  
**gloria**, qui maneant Itala de gente nepotes,  
**inlustris animas** nostrumque in nomen ituras. (*Aen.* 6. 756-758)

Come now, [I will tell you] the **glory**, which will follow then the Dardanian race, what offspring will remain from the Italian race, **illustrious spirits** and ready to go forth in our name.

Primarily Virgil puts on display the "good guys" of Roman history, even Pompey and Caesar are presented as *concordes animae* (*Aen.* 6.827). However, Lucan injects *Discordia* into Hades, interrupting the concord that reigned in Virgil's Underworld:

**effera Romanos agitat discordia manes**  
**inipiaque** infernam ruperunt **arma** quietem; (6.780-781)

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<sup>34</sup> Another interesting and unnoted acrostic. At *BC* 6.766-269 one can see **TUSA**, beaten, or in reverse and overlapping at 6.765-268 **SUTA**, sown. This is significant given that Erictho has revived a corpse, or figuratively sown together something that had been beaten and bruised.

Also at 6.775-778 one can see, **ASTA**, the imperative of "stand up," which is possibly significant since Erictho is bidding the corpse to stand and speak on its own.

<sup>35</sup> See Ahl 1976: 306-332.

<sup>36</sup> Feeney 1986: 17; See also Feeney 1986b; Thomas 1988; Masters 1992: 144; Casali 1999: 228-236; Thomas 2001: 83-92.

**Wild discord** disturbs **the Roman spirits and impious arms** break the infernal silence.

Also counter to the parade of heroes, Lucan's Hades features both the good leaders and internal enemies of Rome, that is the ghosts of the damned and the blessed, the former rejoicing at upcoming civil war and the latter lamenting: "Diverse Latin leaders leave the Elysian seats and sad Tartarus" (*Elysias Latii sedes ac Tartara maesta / diuersi liquere duces*, 6.782-783). Lucan does not counter Virgil simply for the sake of being different. Why he writes Hades the way he does becomes clearer if we further unpack 6.780-781.<sup>37</sup> These two lines are stitched together from two separate places in Virgil. Firstly, it draws from *Aen.* 6.12-14, when the Sibyl, preparing Aeneas for his journey, describes those who inspired and took joy in civil war waiting for their punishment:

quique **arma** secuti  
**impia** nec veriti dominorum fallere dextras,  
inclusi poenam exspectant. (*Aen.* 6.612-614)

And those who followed **impious arms** nor feared to deceive their leaders' right hands, shut inside they await their punishment.

The second place is from the second book of the *Georgics*, wherein the farmer is described as unmoved by triumphs or the temptations of civil war:

illum non populi fascēs, non purpura regum  
flexit et **infidos agitans discordia fratres** (*Geo.* 2.495-496)

Neither the fasces of the people nor the purple of kings sways him, nor **discord rousing faithless brothers**.

Lucan's references in 6.780-781 (above) to these passages are clear with impious arms (*impia arma*) and agitating discord (*agitat discordia*). It is noteworthy that he chooses to draw from passages clearly condemning civil war for his portrait of Hades, which in

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<sup>37</sup> See Casali 2011: 106-108.

many ways echoes Virgil's neutral and even glorious Underworld. Perhaps he is trying to rebut Virgil with his own lines, turning them against him. More likely, however, Lucan is pointing out where Virgil himself exposes the reality of civil war and putting pressure on extant fissures in Virgil's narrative. Civil war, though direct references to it are avoided, underlies the second half of the *Aeneid*.<sup>38</sup>

### *Aeneid 8 in Bellum Civile 6*

Some more fissures exist in the parallels, tension, and misalignments between *Aeneid* 6 and *Aeneid* 8, both of which are crucial to Virgil's foundations for Roman identity, one book detailing Rome's future via prophecy and the other detailing the foundational location of Rome as well as its future depicted on Aeneas' shield. The second of these books is easily problematized by a strong undercurrent of civil war. Very little has been said about the references in Lucan's 6<sup>th</sup> book to *Aeneid* 8 beyond textual parallels.<sup>39</sup> The passage of importance is of course the shield of Aeneas, which, much like the parade of heroes, foretells the future history of Rome. Unlike *Aeneid* 6, the shield displays a distinct Tartarus complete with Furies and inhabitants:

hinc procul addit  
**Tartareas** etiam sedes, alta ostia **Ditis**,  
 et scelerum poenas, et te, **Catilina**, **minaci**  
 pendentem scopulo **Furiarumque** ora trementem (*Aen.* 8.666-669)

Nearby are the seats of **Tartarus**, the tall gates of **Dis**, and the punishments of evil, and you, **Cataline**, hanging from a **threatening** rock, trembling at the countenance of the **Furies**.

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<sup>38</sup> See Ahl 1976: 66.

<sup>39</sup> See Casali 2011: 105-107.

Lucan's Hades is much more like that of *Aeneid* 8 and less like the idyllic vision of *Aeneid* 6. Again, he does not just counter Virgil, but underscores the tension within Virgil. Tartarus is not the only thing Lucan injects into his version of the Underworld. He also depicts Catiline from the shield: "Threatening Catiline rejoices with his broken and shattered chains" (*abruptis **Catilina minax** fractisque catenis / exultat*, 6.793-794). *Minax* accompanies the descriptions of Catiline in both epics. However, as Tarrant points out,<sup>40</sup> the Catiline in Lucan is freed from his chains, unlike Virgil's. Additionally, Lucan's Catiline is threatening, while Virgil's is being threatened. Where in Virgil there is control, in Lucan the scene is uncontrolled. Another aspect in which Lucan favors *Aeneid* 8 is the presence of *Discordia*, noted earlier. This *Discordia* he takes also from the shield, where it appears at Actium: "and torn and pale Discord wanders rejoicing" (*et scissa gaudens vadit **Discordia** palla*, *Aen.* 8.702).

The depiction of Actium also brings variegated connotations to Lucan's epic, and vice versa. Virgil takes great care to portray the war as Rome versus the East. Antony is described as eastern and Egyptian even, along with Cleopatra:

hinc ope **barbarica** variisque Antonius armis,  
victor ab **Aurorae** populis et litore rubro,  
**Aegyptum** virisque **Orientis** et ultima secum  
Bactra vehit, sequiturque (nefas) **Aegyptia coniunx**. (*Aen.* 8.685-688)

Here Antony, with his **barbaric** force and various arms, victor from the **eastern** people and red shore, drags with him **Egypt** with **eastern** strengths and the farthest Bactra, and follows (unspeakable!) **the Egyptian mistress**.

The implication is that it can be argued that Actium is not entirely a civil war by playing up the monstrosity of the foreign power and quashing the civil aspects of the war. Antony

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<sup>40</sup> Tarrant 1997: 67.

was Roman but had chosen to team up with Cleopatra and thus Egypt. Antony's portrayal on the shield is therefore fully foreign. Augustan rhetoric following Actium focused on the foreignness of Cleopatra and downplayed the aspects of civil war, shifting the civil war to a war against a foreign power, against the possibility of splitting Roman rule between two nations by having the Antony-Cleopatra power couple as rulers. The war then would become Rome vs. Egypt, or Octavian vs. Antony and Cleopatra, rather than Rome vs. Rome. Civil war, after all, tends to be a lose-lose situation, but defeating an Eastern power is a win.

In book 6, however, Virgil does vaguely acknowledge the civil nature of the war between Pompey and Caesar, setting them up as *socer* and *gener*, as noted earlier. Nevertheless, there does seem to be an emphasis on the external nature of the war rather than the civil in the locations of the combatants: *Alpinis atque arce Monoeci* for the *socer* and *adversis instructus Eois* for the *gener* (*Aen.* 6.830-831).<sup>41</sup> It has been argued that Catiline is the only real discord in the future history of Rome presented by Virgil.<sup>42</sup> However, as noted above, *Discordia* is very present at Actium on the shield.<sup>43</sup> Lucan emphasizes the presence of *Discordia* and in his 6<sup>th</sup> book combines books 6 and 8 of the *Aeneid*. He develops the hint that Actium is in fact civil war. The designation is not his own invention but arises from hints within Virgil that question the concord presented in *Aeneid* 6. For Lucan Actium is definitely civil war and not a foreign one. He designates it as such in book 1:

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<sup>41</sup> Reed 2011: 24.

<sup>42</sup> Ahl 1976: 66.

<sup>43</sup> See also Casali 2011: 105.

his, Caesar, Perusina fames Mutinaeque labores  
accedant fati et **quas premit aspera classes**  
**Leucas** et ardenti seruilis bella sub Aetna,  
multum Roma tamen debet **ciuilibus armis**  
quod tibi res acta est. (1.41-45)<sup>44</sup>

Add to these calamities, Caesar, the Perusian famine, the labors of Mutina and **ships which stormy Actium** sunk and the slave wars under burning Etna, Rome nevertheless owes much to **civil wars**, because the matter was done for you.

This is not the only place where Lucan seems to refer to *Aeneid* 8. In the beginning of the catalogue Lucan asks why, when the Roman empire could still be expanded, the Roman people waged civil wars that would bring no triumphs (*bella geri placuit nullos habitura triumphos?* 1.12). This does not refer only to the civil wars leading up to Octavian, but also to the wars waged by him to avenge Julius Caesar (as noted above, all the wars through the slave wars were “civil wars”). Readers familiar with Virgil will recall Augustus’ triple triumph on the shield in *Aeneid* 8: “but Caesar, having entered the walls of Rome in triple triumph (*at Caesar, triplici inuictus Romana triumpho / moenia, Aen.* 8.714-715),” or of his triumphs in *Georgics* 1: “now already the regions of the heavens begrudge you to us and complain that you care about the triumphs of men (*iam pridem nobis caeli te regia, Caesar, / inuidet atque hominum queritur curare triumphos, Geo.* 1.503-504).” Lucan contradicts Virgil’s depictions of a victorious Augustus. The Augustan wars, he maintains, are triumph-less because they are civil. Virgil’s shield presents a false image of external war.

Returning to Lucan’s 6<sup>th</sup> book, we find further condemnations. The corpse’s prophecy concludes with a harrowing image of Hades preparing chains for the victor:

abruptaque saxa  
asperat et durum uinclis adamanta, paratque

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<sup>44</sup> See also 5.478-479; 7.872; 10.65-66; Casali 2011: 86n20; Thompson and Bruère 2010: 110.

poenam uictori. (6.800-802)

And he sharpens broken rock and harsh steel for chains, and prepares punishment for the victor.

This is – in addition to darkly condemnatory – directly contrary to what Virgil has Jove predict in *Aeneid* 1. There *Furor Impius* is chained up, thanks to Aeneas (and by extension Caesar and then Augustus). Here, the chains are empty (even Catiline is free) and awaiting a new owner, namely the victor of the civil war, Caesar.<sup>45</sup> But as we have seen (and will see in book 7), Lucan superimposes all civil wars onto Pharsalia. Thus, he implicates Augustus as *victor* as well. Lucan's interaction with these two books of Virgil before the opening of Pharsalia lays out an interesting view of civil war, the principate, and Roman identity.

#### *Aeneid 8 in Bellum Civile 7*

Virgil's 8<sup>th</sup> book extends also into Lucan's 7<sup>th</sup>. Expanding the suggestion in the previous book that Caesar himself is *furor* incarnate, Lucan describes him as Bellona and Mars:<sup>46</sup>

quacumque uagatur,  
**sanguineum ueluti quatiens Bellona flagellum**  
Bistonas aut Mauors agitans si uerbere saeuo  
Palladia stimulet **turbatos** aegide **currus**. (7.567-570)

Everywhere he wanders, **as if Bellona shaking a bloody whip**, or Mars rousing the Bistones if he urges on with savage blow his chariot frightened by the aegis of Pallas.

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<sup>45</sup> See Fratantuono 2012: 158 and 258.

<sup>46</sup> See Casali 2011: 105-106n82; Fratantuono 2012: 292.



This description of Bellona matches that on Aeneas shield: “Bellona follows with bloody whip” (*cum sanguineo sequitur **Bellona** flagella*, *Aen.* 8.703). Lucan here develops a hint in an ultra-Augustan passage of Virgil. Perhaps Virgil’s passage has deeper fractures than one might see at first glance. *Discordia* is definitely present, as are Bellona and Mavors and the Dirae, all manifestations of *furor*. Lucan also adds in a disturbed chariot, one more nod to the simile for savage Mars in *Georgics* 1. Lucan moves this war-madness into Caesar, and by association, perhaps into Augustus as well. *Quis furor?* In Lucan’s 7<sup>th</sup> book it is Caesar, and later it may also be his heirs. We come full circle, returning again to the question of *furor* as the war comes to a close.

The apostrophe concluding the book recalls the opening and closing of *Georgics* 1. War has taken the place of agriculture and pollutes the land so that it is never the same. In the first book of the *Georgics*, Octavian will presumably allow the future farmer to plough in peace (*Geo.* 1.493-497). In Lucan, Octavian is the reason the land will never truly be at peace:<sup>47</sup>

quae seges infecta surget non decolor herba?  
 quo non Romanos uiolabis uomere manes?  
 ante nouae uenient acies, scelerique secundo  
 praestabis nondum siccos hoc sanguine campos.  
 omnia maiorum uertamus busta licebit,  
 et stantis tumulos et qui radice uetusta  
 effudere suas uictis compagibus urnas,  
 plus cinerum Haemoniae sulcis telluris aratur  
 pluraque ruricolis feriuntur dentibus ossa. (7.851-859)

What infected crops will raise up plants not discolored? With what plough will you not violate the Roman dead? Before new ranks come, to a second crime you will offer the plains not yet dry from this blood. Though it is allowed to overturn all the tombs of the ancestors, even the graves standing and those which pour out their victims with urns broken by an ancient root, more ashes will be turned up in

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<sup>47</sup> Casali 2011: 99-101. See also Viansino 1995: 689 on 7.850-859: “Ma in Virgilio i resti umani sono il simbolo della *pax* garantita da Augusto per il futuro; in Lucano valgono come maledizione eterna.”

the furrows of the land of Thessaly and more bones will be struck by the rakes of farmers.

By equating Pharsalia with Augustan wars via this allusion, he condemns Augustan wars as civil wars and calls Augustus an *auctor* of civil war as well. Under the fields of Thessaly, the remnants and scars of civil war are still there and fresh. After all the other wars, Actium has still perpetuated the guilt of the land:

Hesperiae clades et flebilis unda Pachyni  
et Mutina et **Leucas** puros fecere Philippos. (7.871-872)

Hesperian destructions and the waters of teary Pachynus and Mutina and **Actium** have made Philippi pure.

Augustus is implicated in Caesar's civil war. How then do the rest of the heirs, including Nero, stand? Roman civil war has permeated space and time.

Part of Lucan's answer to *quis furor* lies in his examination and interpretation of Virgil's story of Roman identity. His conclusion seems to be that civil war was present at the founding, is deep-seated in the identity, and will continue to haunt the end of Rome. To Lucan, the Virgilian fairytale veils the inherency of civil strife, of *Discordia*, in Roman identity with narrative fabric. Virgil at times casts civil war as external, but at other times vaguely acknowledges the fact that civil war has been part of Roman identity since the beginning.<sup>48</sup> Virgil emphasized the "otherness" of projected Roman conflict, but the undercurrent of civil war flows through the second half of his epic. Perhaps Lucan sensed latent pessimism in his predecessor and pulls on Virgil's narrative fabric to reveal the disturbing fact that self-destruction is unavoidable for Rome. Whether or not Virgil left visible seams in his epic to be unraveled depends rather heavily on each reader's

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<sup>48</sup> See Breed et al. 2010.

interpretation of Virgil, but it is undeniable that Lucan picked at certain “positive” prophecies and wrote in response a very fractured fairytale, tracing what he found to be seams in Virgil’s narrative and its ambiguous projections and further exposing an underlying reality in his predecessor’s prophetic epic.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Elegy and Lucan: Star-crossed Lovers and Escalated Parallels

The proximity of love and war has received extensive treatment from the Roman elegists' tropes, such as *militia amoris* (army of love) and *odi et amo* (I hate you and I love you), to the modern day "All's fair." Though scholars have commented on military language in elegy, recent scholarship has discussed less how the close relationship between the two seemingly opposed spheres is treated in a genre dominated by war. In this chapter I will first discuss the influence of elegy on Lucan's portrayals of Pompey, Caesar, and key female characters, focusing on verbal and thematic parallels between Propertius and the *Bellum Civile*. Then I will discuss the effects of the simultaneous melding of woman with state and epic with elegy, and finally I will conclude that elegiac relationships superimposed on the epic framework, in addition to coloring Lucan's main characters, bring to the forefront of readers' minds the thematic tension between and motivic proximity of love and war.

#### *Pompey and Elegy*

##### *Pompey and Julia*

Of the two leaders in the epic, Pompey is the more immediately and explicitly elegiac. His relationships with Julia and Cornelia, along with the elegization of pertinent scenes, have garnered much scholarly attention. Many scholars have commented on the thematic and verbal parallels between the appearance of Julia's ghost in book 3 (9-34) threatening to haunt Pompey and Propertius 4.7, in which in which Cynthia's ghost

haunts the poet.<sup>1</sup> Julia appears to him in the image of a bristling Fury on a burnt pyre, bearing news of the underworld's preparations for the casualties of the upcoming battle. After this ominous message, she moves quickly to a polemic against Pompey's new wife and her rival in death, Cornelia. Scholars have compared the similarities between the openings of both passages, which emphasize the recent death of their subjects with heat and burning. Cynthia is recently buried (*nuper humata*, 4), her clothing is burnt (*adusta*, 8), and fire has consumed part of her ring (*solitum digito beryllon adederat ignis*, 9). Similarly, Julia stands on a burnt pyre (*accenso sepulchro*, 11) and later calls her grave warm (*tepedo busto*, 23). The two women also complain about their rivals in an analogous manner with the threat of possession after death despite these living rivals. Cynthia says, "Now let others have you, soon I alone will possess you: you will be with me and I will grind bone with mingled bones" (*nunc te possideant aliae, mox sola tenebo: / mecum eris, et mixtis ossibus ossa teram*, Prop. 4.7.93-94); likewise, Julia threatens, "I will go amongst the ranks as you wage war" (*veniam te bella gerente / in medias acies*, 3.30-31). Julia and Cynthia's ghosts leave in the same way as well, the former fleeing through her husband's embrace (*refugit / umbra per amplexus trepidi dilapsa mariti*, 3.34-5) and the latter slipping from her lover's embrace (*inter complexus excidit umbra meos*, Prop. 4.7.96).<sup>2</sup> There are two parallels less commented on.<sup>3</sup> Firstly, both women claim to be coming from Elysium: "driven from the Elysian seats and field of the pious" (*sedibus*

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<sup>1</sup> See Hübner 1984, especially 236-9, for the influence of 4.7 on this passage. He emphasizes rivalry, jealousy, anger, and the long arm of love beyond the grave. See also Battinski 1993: 272; Finiello 2005: 170-2; Caston 2011; Fratantuono 2012: 94-5; McCune 2014: 173-87. On mental occupation and other Propertian echoes see Hunink 1992: 44.

<sup>2</sup> See Hübner 1984: 237 and McCune 2014.

<sup>3</sup> See also Hunink 1992 on 3.21 and Prop. 4.8.28; Cf. "rumpere somnos" (3.25) and Prop. 1.5.11, 4.11.

*Elysiis campoque expulse piorum*, 3.12) and “where the blessed breeze strokes the Elysian roses” (*mulcet ubi Elysias aura beata rosas*, Prop. 4.7.60). Secondly, both women have been allowed to wander free at night from the underworld. Cynthia says, “At night wandering we suffer, night frees the enclosed shades” (*nocte uagae ferimur, nox clausas liberat umbras* 4.7.89); and Julia says, “the rulers of the dead have allowed me to follow [Pompey]” (*regesque silentum / permisere sequi* 3.29-30). The influence of Propertius 4.7 on Pompey’s dream of Julia likens Julia to Cynthia and casts Pompey in the figure of a haunted elegiac lover.

### *Pompey and Cornelia*

It is not only Pompey’s relationship with Julia, however, that Lucan colors with elegy. Pompey’s interactions with Cornelia in books 5 and 8 are also imbued with Propertian echoes.<sup>4</sup> The end of book 5, with the danger of Caesar drawing near, sees Pompey sending Cornelia off to Lesbos for safekeeping. Their farewell scene is markedly erotic, featuring a pair of elegiac speeches exchanged before Cornelia’s departure. Many scholars have commented on the elegiac *mora* in book 5. *Mora*, delay, as an important aspect of elegy postpones the separation of lovers, or, in a more negative variation, keeps lovers apart.<sup>5</sup> It can also take on a more teasing color in drawing out lovemaking.<sup>6</sup> The presence of *mora* in Pompey’s scenes is also significant given the slowness in his

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<sup>4</sup> Generally scholars have viewed their relationship in a neutral, if not positive, light: Ahl 1976: 173-89; Thompson 1984; Fantham 1992: 149; Narducci 2002: 293-4. A few have been more critical: Burns 2016; Marti 1945: 369-70; George 1992: 386. Hübner 1984: 235n29 provides an extensive list of parallels between Cornelia and love elegists.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Prop. 1.3.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Prop. 2.15.1-10.

characterization and his obsession with the past in contrast to Caesar's speed and fierceness. While Caesar rushes to war, Pompey moves languidly and dreams about his former glory. Here, in book 5, Pompey characteristically employs *mora* to delay their separation. Though this separation is imminent, he prefers to indulge in "sweet delay" (*blandae morae*, 5.732-4) and "the fruit of long love" (*longi fructus amoris*, 5.744), which certainly have "a markedly elegiac color" (*un mercato colore elegiaco*).<sup>7</sup> Blanche McCune refers to this *mora* as "a key tactic of elegiac lovers" and notes allusions to Prop. 1.10.6, "to converse with long delay" (*longa ducere verba mora*) and 1.12.2 "which Cynthia makes our delay" (*quod faciat nobis Cynthia ... moram?*).<sup>8</sup> Likewise, *longi fructus amoris* alludes to Propertius 3.20.30 "always needing the fruit of love" (*fructu semper amoris egens*).<sup>9</sup>

Pompey and Cornelia's reunion in book 8 also holds many elegiac allusions. Ruth Caston comments specifically on the influence of Arethusa in Propertius 4.3 on Lucan's portrayal of Cornelia.<sup>10</sup> Cornelia's fear as she awaits Pompey's arrival (8.43-9) echoes the attitude of Arethusa throughout Prop. 4.3, who concludes with a prayer for her husband's safety (Prop. 4.3.72). Similarly, the appearance of Pompey when he does arrive echoes the imagined pallor of Arethusa's husband. Pompey arrives whitened by dust and exhaustion:

deformem pallore ducem uoltusque prementem  
canitiem atque atro squalentis puluere uestes. (8.56-7)

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<sup>7</sup> Sannicandro 2010: 44. See also Pucci 1978; Kennedy 1993: 69-76; Connolly 2000: 75-9; Gardner 2013: 9-10, Burns 2016. Cf. Tibullus 1.3.15-6 for delay to stop military campaigns.

<sup>8</sup> McCune 2014: 185. She also notes the lack of delay when Cornelia does finally leave (5.790-8).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. also Catullus 55.19.

<sup>10</sup> Caston 2011: 142-6. Fantham 1992 also notes the allusion in her note on line 2.348.

The leader disfigured with pallor, white hair pressed around his face and clothing dirty with dark dust.

Arethusa pictures a similar lovelorn paleness on her husband's face:

diceris et macie uultum tenuasse: sed opto  
e desiderio sit color iste meo. (Prop. 4.3.27-8)

And you are said to be worn-out in the face with leanness: but I hope that the color is from desire of me.

At the sight of Pompey, Cornelia faints and hopes for death, "and for a long time she lies deceived by hope of death" (*diuque / spe mortis decepta iacet*, 8.60-61), a hope shared by Arethusa: "there will be signs of my right hand now dying" (*signa meae dextrae iam morientis erunt*, Prop. 4.3.6). Caston notes: "For Arethusa as well as Cornelia, then, death and love are intertwined. But the wish for death is not only about devotion, but also a way to escape from the circumstances at hand and to invoke sympathy."<sup>11</sup> Both women also fear a rival. However, Cornelia's is dead and Arethusa's imaginary. Arethusa imagines wounds caused by armor and her mind moves to a rival's love-bites:

dic mihi, num teneros urit lorica lacertos?  
num grauis imbellis atterit hasta manus?  
haec noceant potius, quam dentibus ulla puella  
det mihi plorandas per tua colla notas! (4.3.23-26)

Tell me, does the breastplate cut your soft shoulders? Does the heavy spear rub your unwarlike hands? Let these rather be harmful than any girl give your neck markings with her teeth for me to cry over.

Cornelia apostrophizes Julia, echoing the threat made by the latter in book 3, calling upon her elegiac rival:

ubicumque iaces ciuilibus armis  
nostros ultra toros, ades huc atque exige poenas,  
Iulia crudelis, placataque paelice caesa

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<sup>11</sup> Caston 2011: 144



Magno parce tuo. (8.102-5)

And cruel Julia, wherever you are, avenger of our marriage beds with civil arms, come here and exact penalties, and placated by the death of the mistress, spare your Magnus.

By incorporating elegiac features Lucan heightens Cornelia's despair. She is losing Pompey to death and to Julia, as foretold by Julia herself in book 3. As in his dream of Julia, Pompey's character is cast in elegiac terms via his relationship to Cornelia. With Julia he is the haunted lover. With Cornelia he is the delaying and absent lover.

In addition to his relationships with women, Pompey has elegiac moments on his own, especially in his death, which is focused on love. His dying words end with *amare*: "If my wife and son admire me dead, they love me" (*gnatus coniunxque peremptum, / si mirantur, amant* 8.634-5).<sup>12</sup> Narducci aptly notes the elegiac pathos of this final statement: "Thus Pompey's psychological state is stained again with the color of sad elegiac pathos" (*Così la psicologia di Pompeo si tinge nuovamente dei colori di un dolente pathos elegiaco*).<sup>13</sup>

### *Pompey and Rome*

The elegization of Pompey extends as well to his relationship with Rome. Many scholars have paralleled Julia and Cornelia with Rome.<sup>14</sup> The expansion of the women's private, or elegiac, roles into epic spheres brings martial meaning to the metaphor. The

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<sup>12</sup> For the significance of *amare* here see Ahl 1976: 182-3 and 1984: 49; Coffee 2009: 157.

<sup>13</sup> Narducci 2002: 315, and see 293-4 for Pompey's other elegiac characteristics.

<sup>14</sup> Morford 1967; Dilke 1960; Littlewood 2016.

conflation of Cornelia and Rome in Pompey's mind is apparent in the parallels between his goodbye with the former in book 5 and his dream of the latter in book 7:

o felix, si te uel sic tua Roma uideret!  
donassent utinam superi patriaeque tibi  
unum, Magne, diem, quo fati certus uterque  
**extremum tanti fructum** raperetis **amoris**. (7.29-32.)

Oh happy Rome, if only she had seen you thus! If only the gods had given you one day, Magnus, when sure of fate you both could have seized the **final fruit of such love**.

The prayer for one day more, the deprivation of farewells, and the final line, with *extremum tanti fructum amoris*, recall in nearly identical words Cornelia's departure in book 5:

sustinet amplexu dulci, non colla tenere,  
**extremusque** perit tam **longi fructus amoris** (5.793-794)

She could not bear the sweet embrace, nor to hold his neck, and the **final fruit of such long love** perished.

Morford aptly notes that "here Pompey and Rome are presented in a romantic light: their relationship can only be described by the vocabulary of love."<sup>15</sup> Littlewood points out that the elegizing of Rome and Pompey lends an "emotional charge" and "profound sense of helplessness" to the relationship, which is fitting before the battle of Pharsalia.<sup>16</sup>

Cornelia and Rome are inextricably bound in Pompey's head, making him Rome's lover as much as he is Cornelia's, clinging to *blanda mora*.<sup>17</sup> The elegiac lover is replaced with Rome and, upon waking, Pompey turns to war. McCune points out that the meaning of

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<sup>15</sup> Morford 1967: 82; see also Dilke 1960: 87.

<sup>16</sup> Littlewood 2016: 176.

<sup>17</sup> Ahl 1976: 180

*fructus amoris* must change when the subject of love is no longer a woman, but a city. “In this new kind of *amor*, not only is the woman replaced with a city, but also the act of love is replaced by war.”<sup>18</sup>

Like Rome in book 7, Julia appears in book 3 to Pompey before battle, her image rousing him, as it were, to fight for her. But Julia does not only share in providing impetus. If Cornelia parallels Rome in Pompey’s love and his desire to avoid the inevitable, Julia parallels Pompey’s memory of Rome. The dreams in book 3 and book 7 both display Pompey’s successes in the past. Julia says, “When I was your wife, Magnus, you led happy triumphs” (*coniuge me laetos duxisti, Magne, triumphos*, 3.20). In his dream of Rome in book 7 Pompey sees a theater full of admirers as in his victorious youth:

qualis erat populi facies clamorque fauentis  
olim, **cum iuuenis primique aetate triumphi**,  
post domitas gentes quas torrens ambit Hiberus  
et quaecumque fugax Sertorius inpulit arma,  
Vespere pacato, pura uenerabilis aequae  
quam currus ornante toga, plaudente senatu  
sedit adhuc Romanus eques (7.13-19)

The appearance and clamor of the fawning people was such as once, when in the time of his youth and first triumph, after the tribes were conquered, which the rushing Hiberus encircled, and the arms which fierce Sertorius wielded, with the West pacified, more revered in a white toga than in the ornament of parade, with the senate applauding, he, still a Roman knight, sat here.

The happy image, however, closes with a despairing note: “Or Fortune thus granted Rome to you, forbidden to see for the last time the seats of the fatherland” (*seu uetito patrias ultra tibi cernere sedes / sic Romam Fortuna dedit*, 7.23-24). Julia, then, is a

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<sup>18</sup> McCune 2014: 192; she also notes the influence of Prop. 3.20.

metaphor for the old Rome with which and for which Pompey celebrated many victories but which is now lost and dead.

Pompey is subject also to an elegiac reversal of roles. In his dream of Rome as he reminisces over his past victories, he takes on the role of an elegiac mistress cursed to long for her former youth. As the worlds of epic and elegy are conflated, the youth and beauty of a woman become analogous to the youth and virility of Pompey. The elegiac world escalates into the epic to the detriment of Pompey.

### *Caesar and Elegy*

#### *Caesar and Rome*

Although less discussed than his rival's elegiac characterization, the elegizing of Caesar, who seemingly has no erotic emotion, certainly not explicitly, yields interesting color to his character. Caesar is markedly anti-elegiac, a force of nature and violence in stark contrast to Pompey's effusively elegiac episodes, and has, until book 10, no romantic connections in the epic, whether to a woman or to Rome. Yet there is one passage that demonstrates quite vividly an escalation and mutation of elegiac *amor* in Caesar.<sup>19</sup> In book 1 the ghost of Rome appears to Caesar before he crosses the Rubicon. Appearing in disarray, she foretells and seeks to fend off upcoming disaster. Rome's appearance is mirrored two books later in book 3 by Julia's ghost.<sup>20</sup> While some have seen this scene as a contrast between Pompey and Caesar – the one attempting to embrace Rome and the other without that elegiac reaction – it can be argued that this

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<sup>19</sup> Cf. Battinski 1993 for Caesar as not elegiac in this episode; for the opposite, see Burns 2016.

<sup>20</sup> See Battinski 1993: 274.

scene presents Caesar as a violent variation of the *exclusus amator* and *miles amoris*. As the former, he makes use of the elegiac *topos* of the lover employing violence to overcome boundaries – in this case the Rubicon – between him and his object of desire.<sup>21</sup> Caesar becomes a violent variation of the latter<sup>22</sup> in his address to Rome: “Behold! I, Caesar, victor over land and sea, am here and everywhere – only let it be permitted! even now! – your soldier” (*en, adsum uictor terraque marique / Caesar, ubique tuus (liceat modo, nunc quoque miles*, 1.200-201). He calls himself Rome’s soldier, and in doing so morphs his military identity into twisted sort of *miles amoris*,<sup>23</sup> and thus casts Rome as his mistress and elegizes his relationship with her. However, his role deviates from the elegiac model as his militant character and actions are in no way benignly, playfully, and metaphorically in the service of *amor*. Fear dispelled, Caesar’s reaction is not to embrace, like the terrified Pompey of book 3 (*trepidi mariti*, 3.35), but to turn to a much more violent and troubling action, penetrating Rome by crossing the river. His military might is used literally and forcefully in his pursuit of Rome. Unlike the elegiac soldier, Caesar the general here harms his Rome. Even in this elegiac episode – albeit with martial coloring – Caesar maintains the ferocious speed by which he is characterized. He breaks delay (*moras solvit*, 1.204), contrary to Pompey, who is characterized by such elegiac delay. Thus, the two leaders are contrasted, not because one is elegiac and the other is not, but rather because they take up vastly different *topoi* of elegy.

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<sup>21</sup> See Burns 2016: 163n99.

<sup>22</sup> See Dinter 2005: 301: “violent actualization of the *militia amoris* of Roman love elegy.” On Caesar crossing the Rubicon see Roche 2009: 203-22; Fratantuono 2012: 25-6; Masters 1992: 1-20; Cf. also Plutarch *Caes.* 32.9.

<sup>23</sup> See Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 1.9 and Prop. 4.8.

## *Caesar and Cleopatra*

With the exception of this dream sequence, Caesar's character is devoid of elegiac emotion. Book 10, however, presents an entirely new Caesar. While Lucan employs elegy to haunting and pathetic effect with Pompey, Julia, and Cornelia, his use of elegy in book 10 for the relationship between Caesar and Cleopatra is decidedly condemnatory. Caston points out that "Lucan's emphasis on Cleopatra's physical allure, her love of money, and her multiple lovers recalls the same features of the elegiac mistress, whose polish, interest in wealthy men, and rampant infidelity are a standard part of her characterization."<sup>24</sup> While the entirety of Lucan's portrayal of Cleopatra is reminiscent of an elegiac mistress in general,<sup>25</sup> it recalls more specifically Propertius 3.11. Patrick Burns notes, "The polemic against Cleopatra in book 10 is the product of someone familiar with Augustan depictions of the queen and in particular the elegiac, and less than flattering, depiction of the queen at Propertius 3.11."<sup>26</sup> The influence of 3.11 is quite pervasive. The opening of book 10 contains a short but philippic introduction to Cleopatra, including, amongst other things, how "she terrifies – if mentionable – the Capitoline with her rattle" (*terrui illa suo, si fas, Capitolia sistro*, 10.63), which recalls Propertius 3.11.43 "to drive out the Roman trumpet by shaking her rattle" (*Romanamque tubam crepitanti pellere sistro*). Likewise, the closing of the passage, "lest a woman, not even ours, hold the world" (*mundum ne nostra quidem matrona teneret*, 10.67), echoes the anti-Cleopatra and anti-foreign-woman-leader message of Propertius 3.11.47-49, "what help is it now

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<sup>24</sup> Caston 2011: 149.

<sup>25</sup> See Sannicandro 2010: 118. Cf. also Cleopatra 10.82-4 and Ovid's advice in *Ars Amatoria*. McCune 2014: 182-4 notes this Ovidian influence: "Cleopatra is...the prostitute of the world of civil war."

<sup>26</sup> Burns 2016: 154.

that Tarquin's axes are broken...if [this] woman must be suffered?" (*quid nunc Tarquinii fractas iuvat esse secures... si mulier patienda fuit*). The most direct and condemnatory allusion, however, is in 10.359, in which Cleopatra is described as "whoring for Rome" (*Romamque meretur*), derived from the Propertian description: "indeed the whore-queen of incestuous Canopus" (*scilicet incesti meretrix regina Canopi* Prop. 3.11.39).<sup>27</sup> Lucan demonstrates a clear familiarity with the elegiac trope of condemning Cleopatra in his patchwork allusions to Propertius 3.11.

The foreignness of Cleopatra is a much-emphasized trait, from Virgil to the elegists and beyond. She is the manifestation of "the east" and of "foreign allure," and as such her identity as a metaphor for Not-Rome is quite blatant in book 10. The fear lest a woman, who is not ours, hold the world can be seen in 10.76 (above). Caesar's affair with Cleopatra, then, is not only elegiac or erotic infidelity, but civil betrayal as well. Lucan conflates the two most clearly in 10.77-81 (below), when he deplores Caesar's faithlessness to his daughter and leniency towards Egypt. Caesar is Rome's elegiac faithless lover and Egypt is his mistress.

Caesar's relationship with Cleopatra displays the elegiac motif of role and/or power reversal. Caston points out the subtler influence of Propertius 4.4 on Lucan's book 10. Though Caston's discussion focuses more on Cleopatra's elegization and less on Caesar's, nevertheless, the parallel between Propertius' and Lucan's passages seems stronger in the characters of Caesar and Tarpeia rather than Cleopatra and Tarpeia. Firstly, both passages are marked with shame. Tarpeia's attraction to Tatiush is peppered

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<sup>27</sup> Cf. also Prop. 1.5.12 and 1.8.

with words such as *turpe* (4.4.1), *prodita* (41), and *improba* (44). Likewise, Lucan's address to Caesar is full of the same shame:

sanguine Thessalicae cladis perfusus **adulter**  
admisit Venerem curis, et miscuit armis  
**illicitosque** toros et non ex coniuge partus.  
pro **pudor**, oblitus Magni tibi, Iulia, fratres  
**obscena** de matre dedit, partesque fugatas  
passus in extremis Libyae coalescere regnis  
tempora Niliaco **turpis** dependit amori,  
dum donare Pharon, dum non sibi uincere mauolt. (10.74-81)

Drowned in the blood of the Thessalian slaughter the **adulterer** urged on Venus with cares, and mixed arms with **illicit** beds and offspring not from his wife. For **shame!** Forgetful of Magnus he gave you, Julia, brothers from an **obscene** mother, and having allowed fleeing troops to gather in the far regions of Libya he hung to a time of **shameful** love by the Nile, while he prefers to gift Egypt rather than conquer it for himself.

And later, when Cleopatra is first introduced to Caesar, she is characterized by extreme lavishness, wealth, and physical attractiveness, which Caesar cannot resist. She approaches him with tear-less grief (*sine ullis / tristis lacrimis*, 10.82-3) and disheveled hair (*ueluti laceros dispersa capillos*, 10.84) to give her speech, a perfect picture of what Ovid advises in *Ars Amatoria* book 3.<sup>28</sup> Lucan notes that this speech does not tempt Caesar's "stubborn ears" (*nequiquam duras temptasset Caesaris aures*, 10.104), but rather "her face assists her prayers and her unchaste countenance begs" (*uoltus adest precibus faciesque incesta perorat*, 10.105). Further she persuades him with "luxuries not yet in the ages brought to Rome" (*nondum translatos Romana in saecula luxus*, 10.110), a dining room covered in gold, marble, and purple silks (10.111-126). The ekphrasis of this scene returns to Cleopatra herself, who is as decorated as her palace:

nec sceptris contenta suis nec fratre marito,  
plena maris rubri spoliis, colloque comisque

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<sup>28</sup> See McCune 2014: 181.



diuitias Cleopatra gerit cultuque laborat. (10.138-140)

Not content with her scepter nor brother-husband, full of spoils from the red sea,  
Cleopatra bore on her neck and in her hair riches and labored under the  
ornamentation.

In similar manner, Tarpeia in Prop. 4.4 is unable to resist the appearance and armor of  
Tatius:

uidit harenosis Tatium proludere campis  
pictaque per flauas arma leuare iubas:  
obstipuit regis facie et regalibus armis,  
interque oblitus excidit urna manus. (Prop. 4.4.19-22)

She saw Tatius playing on the sandy fields and lifting his painted arms through  
the tawny crests: she was stunned by the king's face and his regal arms, and an  
urn dropped between her forgetful hands.

Though Cleopatra certainly plays the part of the elegiac mistress, it is Caesar who plays  
Tarpeia's role, being seduced by the allure of wealth and beauty. Caston notes, "Caesar,  
too, gets painted as a greedy mistress: as deceptive as Cleopatra, he rejects what he has at  
home in favor of the allure of faraway lands and the promise of gain."<sup>29</sup>

Throughout book 10, Caesar and Cleopatra are described analogously in terms of  
the elegiac mistress: in love with luxury and unfaithful.<sup>30</sup> This role of seduced lover  
reverses Caesar and Cleopatra's power roles and relocates the formerly violent and  
victorious leader in the place of the captivated elegiac lover. The idea of captivity is  
extended as Lucan's elegiac depiction of Caesar in book 10 also includes the motif of a  
captured woman: first "with Caesar captured [by Cleopatra]" (*Caesare captiuo*, 10.65),

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<sup>29</sup> Caston 2011: 150.

<sup>30</sup> Stahl 1985: 240-4 reads Prop. 3.11 as directed against Julius Caesar as well, likewise Heyworth and Morwood 2011: 211. If this reading is correct, then its influence on book 10 certainly has interesting implications for Lucan's Caesar.

and then “[like a] woman in captured walls” (*captis femina muris*, 10.458), and finally “he places hope of life behind a closed door” (*spem uitae in limine clauso / ponit*, 10.459-460).<sup>31</sup> Additionally, Lucan likens Caesar to Medea, *sic barbara Colchis* (10.464), a simile usually reserved for Cleopatra herself in elegy, though she herself is not likened to Medea in this book.<sup>32</sup> Rather, Caesar is the one paralleled with the epitome of “evil foreign woman.”

### *Rome Elegized*

Along with the escalation of the elegiac world, the epic world takes on elegiac coloring which intensifies epic *topoi*. In book 7, the narrator addresses Caesar, who refuses to grant burial to the dead at the end of the battle. The plea for pyres, foreshadowed by Julia’s own burning pyre,<sup>33</sup> contains a threat on a cosmic level, namely that the whole world will burn and mix the stars with the bones. The line, “about to mix stars with bones” (*ossibus astra / mixturus*, 7.814-815), recalls the Propertian “I will grind bones with mixed bones” (*mixtis ossibus ossa teram*, Prop. 4.7.94).” This passage, made even more macabre than the original, colors the prophecy with elegiac revenge, casting Rome in the character of Cynthia, a vengeful ghost after Caesar’s destruction. Like a jealous lover from the grave, Rome promises to bring down the stars. But this is not only a threat for the cosmos. There is a latent threat against Caesar. The next line is, “wherever Fortune will call your spirit, these spirits are also there” (*quocumque tuam*

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<sup>31</sup> For captured women in elegy see prop 2.8.37, 2.9.11, 2.20.2, 4.4.33-4, Ov. *Am.* 1.7.39, 1.14.45, *Her.* 3.69 and 101, 9.123, 10.89.

<sup>32</sup> See Prop. 2.1.53, 2.21.11, 2.34.8, 3.11.9.

<sup>33</sup> See 3.11 and 23.

*fortuna uocabit / hae quoque sunt animae*, 7.815-6). Even though Caesar has proven victorious at Pharsalia, even if he becomes an emperor, and even if he is deified and placed in the heavens Jupiter-like, he will nevertheless still die and she will still mix his stars with her bones. Thus Rome becomes finally the dead but haunting mistress of elegy. Throughout the *Bellum Civile* Rome herself has been elegized, appearing as a ghost or in parallel with the women of the epic. Here, her identity as mistress of both Caesar and Pompey and her identity as motherland of both leaders collide and all is mixed in love and war.

The elegiac coloring of these two leaders and their relationships with Julia, Cornelia, and Cleopatra intensifies the pathos of the epic, sharpening Pompey's loss and hyperbolizing Caesar's infidelity, but the effect is not simply emotional or aesthetic. Lucan blends elegy and epic, or, in his own words on Caesar, "he mixed arms with impure beds" (*miscuit armis / inlicitosque toros*, 10.75-6). Via the elegizing of Rome, Lucan frames the leaders of civil war in a sort of love triangle, with Pompey as the doomed lover and Caesar as the faithless lover fighting over Rome the mistress. The tension between the two leaders then takes on another layer of meaning as they become, in a sense, romantic rivals and the civil war and role of Rome are imbued with an additional and different pathos. Though Lucan sets up a binary framework – or ternary, since it is a love triangle – based on *fides*, with one leader clearly on one side and the other on the other side, elegy serves also a further function beyond polarizing the two leaders and increasing the pathos of the epic. Terminology of love in the *Bellum Civile* also demonstrates the escalation and mutation of the elegiac world when it comes into

contact with epic, as well as the increased intensity of epic when it takes on elegiac coloring.

This mutation and escalation of love becomes explicit before Pharsalia. Clinging to his dream of past-Rome, Pompey delays to enjoy the “final fruit of such love” (*extremum tanti fructum amoris*, 7.32). As noted above, this echoes the “final fruit of long love” (*extremusque longi fructus amoris*, 5.794) he prefers to enjoy while postponing his separation from Cornelia in book 5. However, the love changes from *longus* in book 5 to *tantus* in book 7, a change that, though small, is significant. The quantitative “long love”, denoting elegiac extension of love, is replaced by the qualitative “such love,” denoting something more sinister. Indeed love of a woman is different from love of a city, and the act of love for a woman is different from the act of love for a city.<sup>34</sup> The act of love is replaced with the act of war and the new *tantus amor* brings to mind the terrible “such love of unspeakable war” (*tantus amor belli nefandi*, 1.21) of book 1.<sup>35</sup> The mutation of love reaches its height in book 10 where *amor* appears only four times, scant for a book so dominated by elegiac material, and nearly every time is modified by a negative adjective: mad (*vaesanus*, 70), shameful (*turpis*, 80), obscene (*obscaenus*, 363), and *tantus* (189). The final one, spoken by Caesar himself, ironically espousing love of truth, *tantus amor veri* (10.189), is not negative per se, yet the *tantus amor* here in book 10 still echoes the *tantus amor belli nefandi* of book 1, which Lucan lays forth as the driving force behind Rome’s downfall into civil war.

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid. 192

<sup>35</sup> For the connection see also Burns 2016: 139.

The pervasive presence of love oddly enough heightens the pungency of war in the epic. Lucan would scoff at “Make Love Not War”; for him they are not mutually exclusive. Not only is the struggle and horror of civil war highlighted by elegiac metaphor, but the distortion of love and relationships into terms of war brings to the forefront the mutilating effects of civil strife. Lucan abstracted motifs and conceits of elegy – and even direct quotations – to rearrange into his own depiction of a city fought over by two leaders. If Rome is the ultimate mistress of the epic, and Pompey and Caesar her warring lovers, then Lucan’s accusation leveled against Rome herself at the beginning of book 1 holds true: “You, Rome, became the cause of evils, shared by three lords” (*tu causa malorum / facta tribus dominis communis, Roma*, 1.84-85). Politically Rome is governed by the triumvirate, but latent is the conceit of being shared amongst three masters. Civil war begins when *Amor* is turned on its head. Love and war, arms and beds, collide and mix together in the unspeakable disaster of *Bellum Civile*.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Ovid and Lucan: Acrostic Conflagrations and Cryptic Apotheoses

Lucan holds with those who favor fire. Apocalyptic flames of Stoic cosmology, taken up and kindled throughout the *Bellum Civile*, are first ignited in the beginning of the epic using a hidden yet, once noticed, overt manner. Lucan borrows this method of wielding his flames from Ovid's technique of subversion veiled thinly by apparent flattery. In the *Metamorphoses*, a façade of praise allows Ovid to comment deniably on the rise of the Roman Principate, casting, for instance, irreverent depictions of Jupiter, who is bound intermittently by allusion to Augustus, in the early books, and presenting at the end of book 15 an ironically hyperbolic deification of Julius Caesar and excessive praise of Augustus. To this subversive rhetorical device, Lucan adds layers of allusions and a proliferation of Ovidian themes, creating a simultaneously condemnatory and sycophantic effect. In this chapter, I will discuss Lucan's use of allusions to the *Metamorphoses* in undermining apparently neutral or even laudatory passages, and more specifically, his appropriation of the Ovidian Phaethon to trigger the fiery motif that pervades his theme of civil wars.

One such instance is the controversial invocation to Nero. While some scholars have argued that the passage is a straightforward panegyric – Gordon Williams describes it as “a seriously intended, but highly stereotyped, tribute” (1968: 164)<sup>1</sup> – many other

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<sup>1</sup> For a sincere reading of the invocation, see Nock 1926; Grimal 1960; Thompson 1964; Dewar 1994; and Holmes 1999.

scholars have read it as subversive.<sup>2</sup> Most of the arguments in favor of an ironic reading find support in the opening lines of the invocation:

te, cum statione peracta  
Astra petes serus, praelati regia caeli  
Excipiet gaudente polo: seu sceptrum tenere  
Seu te **flammigeros Phoebi** conscendere **currus**  
Telluremque nihil mutato sole timentem  
**Igne uago** lustrare iuuat, tibi numine ab omni  
cedetur, iurisque tui natura relinquet  
quis deus esse uelis, ubi regnum ponere mundi. (1.45-52)

When, with your watch on earth completed, you at last seek the stars, the palace of the heaven you prefer will accept you with rejoicing poles: whether it pleases you to hold the scepter or to mount the flaming chariot of Phoebus and survey with fiery path the earth that fears nothing from the change of sun, every god will yield to you, and nature will relinquish to your right what kind of god you wish to be and where you wish to place your reign over the world.

Besides the obvious reference in lines 48-50 to the myth of Phaethon, an incendiary association, such a subversive interpretation of the passage is further supported by the presence of a hitherto unobserved acrostic in lines 45-50.<sup>3</sup> The passage, describing Nero's ascent to the heavens on Apollo's chariot and the joyous reception that awaits him, undercuts the superficial panegyric by means of an acrostic, **AESTI**, "burnings." This is, I argue, the first meaningful and thematically significant acrostic of the work, a hidden burn in the emperor's eulogy.

The acrostic is very likely intentional. Thematically it is immediately relevant to the lines since burning is a major characteristic of the Phaethon myth. Ending with the

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<sup>2</sup> For such a reading of the invocation see Ahl 1976: 25-61; Johnson 1987: 121; and Hinds 1987: 23-9. Building on the author of *Adnotationes super Lucan*, Hinds reads the invocation to Nero as subversive, commenting on the weight and nearsightedness of the emperor. However, Hinds recognizes that the criticism is subtle: "The anti-Neronian poet, if he exists, is an ironist" (1987: 27).

<sup>3</sup> For a more detailed comparison of various parallels between the invocation to Nero and Ovid's Phaethon tale see Kessler 2011: 130-136.

long -ī, the word is an archaic form of *aestūs* that appears only once before Lucan.<sup>4</sup>

**AESTI** appears nowhere else as an acrostic in Latin epic. However, other forms of the word *aestūs* appear three times in Ovid's Phaethon episode (*Met.* 2.228, 237, 250), further linking the two passages as well as supporting the intentionality of the acrostic. While this form could be either genitive singular or nominative plural, the acrostic alludes to multiple "burnings" throughout the work. Additionally, when considered together with Stoic ekpyrosis and the parallels between Lucan's characters and Phaethon, the plurality of the acrostic contributes to the thematic sense of the epic as well as to the pervasive motif of sequential burnings. In the following, I will discuss the subversive nature of the invocation in light of this newly discovered acrostic, which ignites an Ovidian Phaethon theme coloring the characters of the epic; the permeating language of the Stoic Conflagration; and finally the anachronistic implications of this burning acrostic for the overarching theme of civil wars.

### *Phaethontic Parallels*

#### *Nero and Phaethon*

The presence of **AESTI** confirms the ironic nature of the invocation. The word strengthens the link between Nero and Phaethon, both figures who subjected the world to burning, as many scholars have discussed.<sup>5</sup> The author of *Adnotationes Super Lucanum* notes at line 49, "an allusion to Phaethon, who rode his father's chariot to ill effect"

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<sup>4</sup> In fragments of tragedies: *aesti forte ex arido* (*Pac.* 97. X. 16), cited in Nonius Marcellus *De Compendiosa Doctrina* 8.484M.12 under "*aestī pro aestūs.*"

<sup>5</sup> See Mayer 1978; Hinds 1987; Kessler 2011; McRoberts 2015; and Rebeggiani 2013.



(*propter Phaethonem dictum, qui patris currus male rexit*).<sup>6</sup> Statius doubtless read the invocation as subversive, attributing the Great Fire of Rome to Nero and, as Stefano Rebeggiani argues (2013: 193-194), confirming Lucan's prophecy of Nero as Phaethon by echoing Lucan's *igne vago* (1.50) in his *vagantes...ignes* (*Silv.* 2.7.60-1).

It is well known that Nero enjoyed cultivating an Apollonian aesthetic. The emperor was fond of chariot races and playing the lyre, with coinage indicating that he maintained a solar image.<sup>7</sup> Suetonius says of the emperor, "he was acclaimed as the equal of Apollo in singing, and of the Sun in driving a chariot" (*quia Apollinem cantu, Solem aurigando aequiperare existimaretur*, Nero 53). Nero's Apollonian aspirations shine a problematic light on the invocation, since the reference to the chariot of the Sun links the emperor to the disastrous son of Apollo. Lucan's advice to Nero, to "stay in the middle orb" (*orbe tene medio*, 1.58) when he establishes his place in the heavens, echoes the advice of Apollo to Phaethon before he mounts the chariot: "you will go safest in the middle" (*medio tutissimus ibis*, *Met.* 2.137).<sup>8</sup> The allusion to the failed chariot ride darkens the apotheosis of the emperor.

It could be argued, however, that this negative association with Phaethon may seem dispersed in line 49, which describes a world at peace under Nero's reign. The earth that fears nothing (*nihil timentem*) effectively corrects the previous lines of association with Phaethon, suggesting a more positive message in the invocation. There is no need

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<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of the "passive panegyric" in the proem see Hinds 1987: 27-29.

<sup>7</sup> For Nero's affinity for Apollo see Grimal 2010 and Kessler 2011.

<sup>8</sup> For discussion of the passage in relation to the flight of Icarus and Daedalus see Kessler 2011: 133.

for the earth to fear fiery wandering from Nero. Though Lucan compares the emperor to Phaethon, he maintains that Nero will be a different kind of Phaethon, bringing peace rather than destruction to the world.

But this praise of the emperor is a case of protesting too much, for the acrostic message directly contradicts the lines themselves. Burnings will also accompany this Phaethon. Upon closer inspection, the lines themselves also undercut the presented panegyric as an undercurrent of emptiness haunts the passage. Jeremy Kessler notes that the apotheosis is marked by the absence of stars and constellations, which usually accompany an apotheosis, and by the lack of a catalogue of deeds (2011: 133-140).<sup>9</sup> This eerie emptiness paired with the protesting acrostic creates a subversive message, but a message concealed – however thinly – by a panegyric cover, granting Lucan deniability in this Phaethontic assimilation. The narrator proclaims peace, but a peace that arrives only with Nero’s ascension, and implicitly his death, creating a panegyric of the emperor’s death rather than his life.

Lucan’s readers familiar with the *Metamorphoses* will see further Ovidian references in the description of the destruction of Rome in civil war following the invocation. The collapse sequence opens with the line, “The mind turns to explicate the causes of such matters” (*fert animus causas tantarum expromere rerum*, 1.67), a direct echo of the opening line of the *Metamorphoses*, “The mind turns to speak of new [bodies] and changed forms” (*In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas*, 1.1).<sup>10</sup> Lucan next

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<sup>9</sup> “Nero will occupy a blank space in the sky (1.58-9) ... No such deeds are mentioned. Nero’s great accomplishment, eternal peace, is achieved by his death. It is only the total absence of any earthly master that ensures the peace ... The absences in his apotheosis and the violence of the collapse that colors his ascendance offer two conclusions: Nero is complicit in a history of tyranny and political violence without end, and things would be better if her were dead” (Kessler 2011: 139, 142).

<sup>10</sup> For Ovid in Lucan, see Kessler 2011; Hinds 1987; Wheeler 2002; Tarrant 2002.

describes Rome in civil war as a world “returning again to ancient chaos” (*antiquum repetens iterum*, 1.74), echoing Ovid’s Tellus, “we are confused in ancient chaos” (*in chaos antiquum confundimur*, *Met.* 2.299). The allusions imply – anachronistically, since the collapse described is the civil conflict between Caesar and Pompey – Nero’s potential for causing the collapse of Rome just as the destruction of the earth was due to Phaethon’s astral ascent and descent.<sup>11</sup> As Hinds notes, the invocation predicts an age of peace after Nero’s apotheosis, yet the passage immediately precedes the description of the collapse of Rome into civil war (1987: 28), which, paired with the Phaethontic associations, aligns Nero with destruction rather than with peace, an alignment demanding of the reader “a small hermeneutic leap – but perhaps that is what constitutes Lucan’s hermeneutic alibi” (Hinds 1987: 29). This hermeneutic alibi is supported as well by the acrostic, allowing Lucan to split the authorial and narratorial voice, and insert a message that is simultaneously plausibly deniable and thematically meaningful.

### *Pompey and Phaethon*

Both the horizontal and the vertical text of the invocation link Nero to his predecessors, Caesar and Pompey, who share his Phaethontic characterization. Although less discussed than that between Nero and Phaethon, the parallel between Lucan’s Pompey and Ovid’s Phaethon is equally important. As Stephen McRoberts notes (2015: 54, 68), Lucan emphasizes Pompey’s assumption of power and triumph in his youth, especially with chariot imagery (1.316; 7.14-19, 279-290; 8.810), a characteristic shared with the young and daring Phaethon. Likewise, the language of fire surrounds Pompey.

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<sup>11</sup> For a more detailed discussion of Ovidian parallels in Lucan’s proem, see Wheeler 2002: 370.

His corpse is *semusta*, half burnt (8.786-789), recalling the still-smoking corpse of Phaethon (*Met.* 2.325-326). McRoberts points out the *magnus* in both epitaphs (2015: 67), the one modifying Phaethon's daring (*Met.* 2.327), the other the name of Pompey (8.793). Lee Frantantuono (2011: 74-75) notes the locational echoes in Lucan's descriptions of Pompey's encampments in the Appennines (2.392-398), a mountain range which, in Ovid's tale, is one of the first to feel the effects of Phaethon's burning path (*Met.* 2.226). Describing the nearby river Po, Lucan includes its connection to Phaethon: "Phaethon set the aether on fire with burning reins" (*succendit Phaethon flagrantibus aethera loris*, 2.413). This placement of Pompey's forces in book 2 foreshadows his upcoming defeat by bringing to the reader's mind the burning mountains of Ovid. Similarly, at the opening of book 7, the Sun is reluctant to rise as the day of Pharsalia dawns: "he wished to suffer eclipses and the labors of snatched light" (*defectusque pati uoluit raptaeque labores / lucis*. 7.4-5). This recalls the eclipse following Phaethon's death as the Sun hides himself in grief and the world suffers a day without the sun (*Met.* 2.329-332). Additionally, *raptae lucis*, while here meaning eclipse, suggests also the stolen light, or rather chariot, of the sun. The passage alludes to the failed ride as well as the terrestrial and celestial effects. This echo of the Ovidian eclipse is perhaps prophetic of the destruction about to occur and the fate of Pompey, who has already been, and will continue to be, closely tied to Phaethon.

So far discussions of the parallel between Pompey and Phaethon focus on the downfall and pitifulness of the leader rather than associating him with the cause of destruction. However, I would argue that Lucan attributes guilt and complicity to Pompey as well. Although Pompey's proximity to Phaethon generally paints a pathetic rather than

perilous picture, an early passage in book 2 heralds the approach of civil war with the complaints of the Roman men, providing a more invective link:

uel, perdere nomen  
si placet Hesperium, superi, conlatus in ignes  
plurimus ad terram per fulmina decidat aether.  
saeue parens, utrasque simul partesque ducesque,  
dum nondum meruere, feri. (2.56-60)

Or, if it is pleasing to destroy the Hesperian name, gods, let the mighty aether, gathered in fires, fall to the earth through lightning bolts. Savage father, strike both parties and leaders at the same time, while they have not yet deserved it.

The request to Jove to strike both guilty parties before destruction descends mirrors the lines of the burning Tellus beseeching Jove to end her suffering:

si placet hoc meruique, quid o tua fulmina cessant,  
summe deum? liceat periturae viribus ignis  
igne perire tuo clademque auctore levare! (*Met.* 2.279-281)

If it pleases you and I have deserved it, why, o highest of the gods, do your thunderbolts halt? Let it be allowed to the one about to perish with strong fires to perish with your fire and to lighten the disaster because of the one who brings it about!

Opening with *si placet*, both passages beg for Jove's intervention in the face of disaster, equating Phaethon with *utrasque...partesque ducesque*, both Caesar and Pompey. The lamentations of the Roman men foreshadow Pompey's defeat, perhaps an answer to the Roman prayers. The echoed *meruere*, even though in Lucan's passage the merit has not yet been obtained, also implicates both Pompey and Caesar in Phaethon's destruction.

### *Caesar and Phaethon*

Unlike the parallel between Pompey and Phaethon, the assimilation of Caesar to Phaethon has yet to be discussed despite the evident likeness between them. The first link

between the two figures appears in the supernatural signs that, prompted by Caesar's coming, plague Rome. His arrival is heralded by an eclipse:

ipse caput medio Titan cum ferret Olympo  
**condidit ardentis** atra caligine **currus** (1.540-541)

The Sun himself, when he lifted his head from the middle of Olympus, **hid his burning chariot** in a dark cloud.

Like the Sun in the *Metamorphoses*, the sun here hides his light with the verb *condere* (*Met.* 3.330). Unlike that of the *Metamorphoses*, the eclipse here precedes rather than follows fiery destruction. Interpreting this sign along with the changes of the constellations, Nigidius Figulus questions whether the looming disaster will bring “Deucalionesque floods” (*Deucalioneos imbres*, 1.653), or if “the aether set on fire by your chariots should burne” (*succensusque tuis flagrasset curribus aether*, 1.657). Again Lucan nods to the *Metamorphoses*, first with the floods described as Deucalion-esque, alluding to the flood that only Deucalion and Pyrrha survived, and then with the destructive fire from Phoebus' chariot that recalls the burning of the world by Phaethon. Figulus, foretelling various apocalyptic scenes, also asks if the seething air will disrupt the climate (1.646), and what Mars is planning as he inflames Scorpion and scorches his pincers, a clear reference to the same pincers threatening Phaethon's ride (*Met.* 2.195-197). The reluctant sun of book 7, discussed above in relation to Pompey, also heralds the arrival of Caesar. With upcoming civil war likened to the fiery destruction of Phaethon, Lucan links both *auctores* of civil war to the rash youth.

The burning spreads to book 7, wherein Caesar is likened to Phaethon several times. First, as he prepares his troops for battle, Caesar exclaims that he has never seen the gods so near to him:

Uocibus his teneo. ueniam date bella trahenti:  
Spe trepido; haud umquam uidi tam magna daturos  
Tam **prope** me superos; camporum **limite** paruo  
Absumus a uotis. ego sum cui Marte peracto  
quae populi regesque tenent donare licebit. (7.296-300)

I hold you back with these words. Pardon the one delaying wars: I tremble with hope; hardly ever have I seen the gods about to grant such great things or so close to me; by the small boundary of the fields we are separated from our hopes. I am he to whom, when war is done, it will be allowed to give that which the peoples and kings hold.

This proximity to the *superi* firstly implies a dangerous closeness to the gods, not unlike Phaethon. Secondly, the closeness of the divine to earth can be read as a reference to the proximity of the Sun's chariot to the earth. The phrase *tam magna daturos* also recalls the great things which Phaethon sought and his *magnum ausum*. A hitherto undiscussed acrostic strengthens this association. Along lines 7.296-299 is **USTA**, the perfect passive participle of *uror*, meaning "burned things." The soon-to-be-victor burns as he too closely approaches the divine, with **USTA** predicting the disastrous nature of the upcoming victory.

The impending destruction is foreshadowed by yet another set of Phaethontic lines. Caesar's troops are described as rushing with no order into battle:

Calcatisque **ruunt** castris; stant **ordine nullo**,  
Arte ducis nulla, permittuntque omnia fati.  
Si totidem Magni soceros totidemque petentis  
Urbis regna suae funesto in Marte locasses,  
non tam **praecipiti** ruerent in proelia cursu. (7.332-336)

They rush upon the camps with trampling; they stand in no order, with no skill of the leader, and they entrust everything to the fates. If you had placed so many fathers-in-law of Magnus and so many people seeking the reign of his own city through deadly Mars, they would not have rushed with such a headlong course into battle.

The words *ruunt* and *ordine* (plus negation) appear also in the *Metamorphoses* to describe the uncontrolled flight of the solar horses under Phaethon's lack of guidance:

quod simulac sensere, **ruunt** tritumque relinquunt  
quadriugi spatium **nec** quo prius **ordine** currunt. (*Met.* 2.167-168)

As soon as they sensed it, the horses rush and leave behind the well-trodden chariot path and they run with none of the former order.

The line "with no skill of the leader" (*arte ducis nulla*, 7.333) easily recalls Phaethon's lack of skill as the Sun's horses run off with the chariot. Similarly, *praecipiti* echoes the fall of Phaethon:

at Phaethon rutilos flamma populante capillos  
volvitur in **praeceps** longoque per aera tractu  
fertur (*Met.* 2.319-321)

But Phaethon, with flame taking over the ruddy hairs, is rolled headlong and is borne on a long path through the air.

The idea of falling is conveyed also by the acrostic, **CASU** (332-335), "with a fall." The fall that hangs in the wings of the lines foretells the fall of Caesar, yet to be explicitly mentioned in the epic, that looms in the background of the contemporary reader's awareness.<sup>12</sup>

After the narratorial interlude, the description of battle commences, including the mountains groaning with the effects of the war. The mountains Haemus, Pindus, and Oeta, mentioned here at Pharsalia (7.480, 482, 483), are among the first listed in the *Metamorphoses* to feel the effects of Phaethon's fire (*Met.* 2.216-226). The assimilation of Caesar to Phaethon concludes with the mountains leading the response to the clamor and strife of civil war, the final catalyst for which was provided by Caesar's troops. Even

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<sup>12</sup> See Hejduk forthcoming for a discussion of this acrostic.



the landscape seems to protest again another round of destruction caused by another Phaethon.

### *Cataclysmic Conflagration*

Beyond the association of Phaethon with Nero, Pompey, and Caesar, **AESTI** holds further thematic implications. Much of Lucan's language in *Pharsalia* involves the world ending in fire, a concept in Stoic cosmology called *ekpyrosis* or conflagration. The Stoic idea that the cosmos undergoes periodic cataclysm strongly influenced Lucan, as evidenced by the recurring use of burning language.<sup>13</sup> Chrysippus taught that the *ekpyrosis* happens with the release of tension. Seneca, Lucan's uncle and a Stoic himself, gives an account of Chrysippus' teaching:

subita confusione rerum sidera sideribus incurrant ... contextusque velocitatis citatissimae in tot saecula promissas vices in medio itinere destituant, et, quae nunc alternis eunt redeuntque opportunis libramentis mundum ex aequo temperantia, repentino concrementur incendio, ... ignis cuncta possideat, quem deinde pigra nox occupet, et profunda vorago tot deos sorbeat. (*Q.N.* 6.22.1)

Let sudden confusion rush in, so that stars may collide with stars ... let the whole frame of the rapidly moving bodies abandon in mid-path those turns which were promised for so many ages, and let those which now go and return in turn with suitable weights and keep the world at a favorable temperature be consumed by sudden fire ... let fire seize all, which then a dark night will occupy, and let the deep abyss swallow up all the gods.

This *ekpyrosis* consists of a burning of the world so complete that everything is consumed and destroyed, followed by a renewal of the world, a cosmos perfectly clean and ready to begin the same cycle again. And then the cataclysm recurs and the world re-

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<sup>13</sup> On cosmology, particularly the Stoic aspects, see Pichon 1912: 165-216; Due 1970; Lapidge 1979; Billerbeck 1986.

recurs and the cycle goes on, as A.A. Long says, “world and conflagration without end” (1985: 13).<sup>14</sup>

Many scholars have commented on Lucan’s interest in the cosmology of the *Metamorphoses*.<sup>15</sup> As we have seen in the collapse sequence following the invocation to Nero and in the prophecies of Nigidius Figulus, Lucan often describes primordial chaos, namely world-ending and simultaneously world-renewing flood and fire. Eric Dodds has noted that, in the myths of Deucalion and Phaethon, Ovid recalls the Myth of Eternal Recurrence (1973: 2-3). Jove, remembering a prophecy that the world will be consumed by fire at a later point, chooses instead to cause the first destruction through water (*Met.* 1.253-261). Ovid’s witty acknowledgement of the Stoic *ekpyrosis* before the destruction of the world by water refers both to the conflagration itself and to the cyclical nature of the world’s end. Though it does not subscribe to the strict recurring burnings of Stoic cosmology, Ovid’s cosmology nevertheless displays the idea of destruction and consequent renewal, as when Deucalion and Pyrrha repopulate the earth after the flood in book 1.

Because all that exists of the world during the conflagration is pure fire, Stoic cosmology contains the idea that this *ekpyrosis* is purifying, a *katharsis* of the cosmos. Zeno’s and Cleanthes’ theory of *ekpyrosis* is that the universe is consumed and becomes pure creative fire, from which a new and identical world is created.<sup>16</sup> Rather than being

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<sup>14</sup> For further discussion of Stoic influence on Lucan see Lapidge 1978 and 2010.

<sup>15</sup> For discussion of Lucan’s reception of Ovid’s cosmology, particularly concerning Deucalion, Pythagoras, and Phaethon see Wheeler 2002: 368.

<sup>16</sup> For further discussion of Chrysippus and Seneca, see Lapidge 1978.

purely or primarily destruction, the conflagration is rather palingenesis of the world.<sup>17</sup>

Paul Roche states it elegantly: “It is not the universe’s death, it has been argued, but its most perfect expression of life” (1995: 62).<sup>18</sup>

But lest the reader get carried away by the positivity of Stoic cosmology, Lucan never fails to remind us that eternal renewal implies the eternal renewal of inherently flawed worlds doomed to burn. In the *Metamorphoses* the Ovidian Tellus calls to Jupiter, saying that the fires from Phaethon’s ride threaten to plunge the world into primordial chaos:

si freta, si terrae pereunt, si regia caeli,  
in **chaos antiquum** confundimur! (*Met.* 2.297-298)

If the waves, if the lands, if the palaces of the sky perish, we are confused in ancient chaos!

This primordial chaos is echoed in Lucan’s proem, where the world engulfed in civil war is collapsing again into chaos:

sic, cum conpage soluta  
saecula tot mundi suprema coegerit hora  
**antiquum repetens iterum chaos**, [omnia mixtis  
sidera sideribus concurrent,] ignea pontum  
astra petent (1.72-76)

Thus, when the framework of the world is dissolved and the final hour of the world gathers so many ages and re-seeks again the ancient chaos, [all the stars collide with the mixed stars], the fiery stars will seek the sea.

The chaos it returns to burns from the earth to the heavens, recalling the *ekpyrosis* that Jove predicts and avoids in *Metamorphoses* book 1.<sup>19</sup> Here the descent of a country into

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<sup>17</sup> See also Nemesis of Emesa (SVF 2.625) and Aristocles (SVF 1.98).

<sup>18</sup> See also Furley 1999 and Mansfield 1981.

<sup>19</sup> For further discussion on fear and the end of the world, see McRoberts 2015: 64.

civil war is described in terms of a universal collapse into conflagration. Especially of note is the word *iterum* in line 72, which hints at Lucan's re-use to Ovidian chaos. Ovid wrote the beginning of the world (*Met.* 1.7) and the end of the world as ancient chaos (*Met.* 2.298), which he described as conflict:

Nulli sua forma manebat.  
**obstabatque** aliis aliud quia corpore in uno  
frigida **pugnabant** calidis, umentia siccis,  
mollia cum duris sine pondere habentia pondus (*Met.* 1.17-20)

Nothing kept its own form and all things obstructed each other because in one body cold things were fighting with hot, wet with dry, soft with hard, and weight with weightless.

Ovid's creation myth is not only a story of conflict, but specifically of potential civil war. He describes the necessity of separating the winds lest their warring tear apart the world like the strife between brothers:

His quoque non passim mundi fabricator habendum  
aera permisit; vix nunc obsistitur illis,  
cum sua quisque regat diverso flamina tractu,  
quin lanient mundum; tanta est **discordia fratrum**. (*Met.* 1.57-60)

And the creator of the world did not allow these to hold the air everywhere; hardly are they now restrained from splitting the world, since each guides its own blasts with varied direction; such is the discord of brothers.

Taking up Ovid's cosmology, Lucan rewrites the end and beginning of the world – and of Rome itself – as civil war. The parallel between *ekpyrosis* and civil war is further strengthened in the second book as Cato describes civil war as conflagration: “a falling world” (*mundumque...cadentem*, 2.289), “burning aether” (*arduus aether*, 2.290), and “the mixed weight of the imploding world” (*mixto coeuntis pondere mundi*, 2.291) prepare for a fiery end. For Lucan, Roman civil war is the ancient chaos that the world is *repetens iterum*.

This equation of civil war and world's end is presented most compellingly at the ending of the seventh book, where Lucan the narrator begs Caesar not for individual pyres nor separate tombs but one fire for the Roman people (*petimus non singula busta / discretosque rogos; unum da gentibus ignem*, 7.803-4). In denying burial Caesar claims even the deaths of his fellow Romans. The passage is foreshadowed in book 2 by Sulla's reign of terror. In the long lamentation of the elders, one recalls the frantic suicides of the Roman citizens by various means, including fire:

**mortesque cruento**  
**uictori rapuere suas; hic robora busti**  
exstruit ipse sui necdum omni sanguine fuso  
desilit in flammis et, dum licet, occupat ignes. (2.156-9)

And from bloody victor they snatched their own deaths; here one gathered wood for his own pyre and, with not yet all the blood drained, leapt into the flames and, while it was allowed, claimed the fires.

The *dum licet* in Sulla's era implies a future *non licet*, a time when pyres are no longer allowed nor the ability to claim one's own death; namely Pharsalia, where not even a single common pyre is granted to the defeated. Lucan warns Caesar that despite his refusal of pyres, the earth will still burn in one communal pyre, a final *ekpyrosis* for the universe:

hos, Caesar, populos si nunc non **usserit** ignis,  
**uret cum terris, uret cum gurgite ponti.**  
**communis** mundo superest **rogus ossibus astra**  
mixturus. (7. 812-815)

If fire, Caesar, will not burn these people now, it will burn them with the lands, it will burn them with the swollen sea. A common pyre remains for the world, ready to mix stars with bones.

Though the world's pyre is called a calm lap (7.810-11), hardly a calm reception awaits the universe in the *communis rogos*, the magnitude of which will bring the stars to the ashes of the bones.

The successive burnings, which culminate in the prophesied world conflagration at the end of the seventh book, are ignited by the first acrostic of the entire work, AESTI. This first hidden message signals a series of fires in the image of *ekpyrosis*. Michael Lapidge points out that the image of cosmic dissolution in *Pharsalia* "has been carefully anticipated in various ways in all the preceding books, and ... been announced already in Book 1" (2010: 323). Lapidge refers to the apocalyptic collapse following the apotheosis of Nero, but the parallel between civil war and conflagration begins even in the invocation itself. Roche notes that the general interpretive response to this parallel between civil conflict and *ekpyrosis* is to "declare that it escalates the catastrophic destruction of political strife to a cosmic scale" (1995: 60).<sup>20</sup> If *ekpyrosis* is naturally cyclical, then *Pharsalia* as political *ekpyrosis* is just one instance of conflagration in a pattern of destruction.<sup>21</sup>

Though Lucan's descriptions of the combustive civil war are punctuated repeatedly with fiery descriptions of terrestrial and heavenly disaster, the assimilation to the Stoic conflagration also necessitates an association with the regenerative element of Stoic cosmology. In his discussion of the cosmology of *Pharsalia*, Roche points out that palingenesis is an inherent part of Stoic cosmology and therefore is at least evoked by

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<sup>20</sup> For the downfall of Rome as *ekpyrosis*, see Hardie 1986: 381; Feeney 1991: 278 n. 127; Leigh 1997: 45; Hershkowitz 1998: 202.

<sup>21</sup> See Wheeler 2002: 380.

Lucan in his ekpyrotic descriptions: “the mind necessarily moves from one to the other” (1995: 68). Regeneration is inherent in Lucan’s tale, for the reader knows that the Empire is set to rise from the ashes of the Republic.

However, Lucan’s readers may not regard this regeneration and “new order of the world” as positive. After all, Lucan promises no clean re-ordering of the universe; rather the anachronistic insertions of the narrator constantly remind the reader of future disasters to come after Pharsalia and the unrecoverable loss of freedom to occur. The acrostic in the invocation predicts the subsequent dissolution and the future burning of the empire. Thus Lucan expresses a pessimistic view of both aspects of the conflagration, recognizing that if regeneration follows destruction, then destruction must precede regeneration, and the regeneration itself must be inherently problematic in order to result in yet another holocaust of the world.

### *Cyclical Civil Conflict*

Lucan presents this cycle by folding the timeline of Roman history in on itself in multiple layers, prompting the reader to consider consecutive events simultaneously. In the invocation, **AESTI** collapses the future empire with distant myth in the assimilation of Nero to Phaethon, but Lucan also collapses the historic past with the present of the epic by likening the cyclical aspect of the conflagration to the cyclical nature of civil war. While providing flashforwards to future conflicts, Lucan also inserts flashbacks to the very beginnings of Rome, setting the civil conflict between Romulus and Remus as the archetype of Roman strife: “the first walls dripped with brotherly blood” (*fraterno primi maduerunt sanguine muri*, 1.95). As Kessler says, “the resurgence of civil war is therefore not surprising” (2013: 137). The epic may be about one war, but Lucan

demonstrates through various anachronisms that the civil conflict between Pompey and Caesar is one in a series of familial conflicts which began at the founding of Rome with Romulus and Remus. While Lucan references the first triumvirate in book 1 (*feralia foedera regni*, 1.86) and its dissolution, the reader will recall the second triumvirate as well and subsequent civil wars. Lucan again anachronizes events at the end of book 7, in which Pharsalia is collapsed into the future civil conflict of Philippi:

o superi, liceat terras odisse docentis  
 quid totum permittis, totum absolvitis orbem?  
 Hesperiae clades et flebilis unda Pachyni  
 et Mutina et Leucas puros fecere Philippos. (7.871-872)

Oh gods, let it be allowed to hate guilty lands. Why do you oppress the whole world? Why do you forgive the whole world? Hesperian destructions and the waters of teary Pachynus and Mutina and Leucas have made Philippi pure.

The reader expects “made Pharsalia pure,” but instead Lucan writes “Philippi,” explicitly likening the recent battle to one that will happen in the future as a consequence of the fate of the victor of Pharsalia. At the beginning of the epic Lucan stated that the subject of his song was *bella*, wars plural, and later wrote on the side of Nero’s invocation **AESTI**, burnings plural. Lucan’s constant narratorial intrusions remind us that he is writing under the Empire which rose from the Republic and that the events he details in the poem effected the events he lived and is living through. He erases distinctions between the past and present, and in condemning the past he judges the present and future.

The epic describes the assassination of Pompey and predicts the assassination of Caesar,<sup>22</sup> and I would argue that it also implies or predicts the assassination of Nero. With the cyclical conflagration and the burning Phaethon underlying the entire epic,

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<sup>22</sup> Hardie 1986: 56 calls the tale an “epic of revenge,” setting Caesar as the final victim, who will be killed by the “swords of the fatherland,” as predicted in 10. 528-529. But perhaps Lucan projects further.



Lucan at least hints at the (future) assassination of Nero. If civil war is cyclical conflagration and rulers are Phaethons destined to be burned, then there must be a sequel to Lucan's epic. The empire itself is set to fall again, for after Pharsalia there must be another regeneration and then another descent must recur and another ruler must burn with the world. Pompey is a new Phaethon who gets assassinated (8.711-725) and whose apotheosis is described (9.1-4). Likewise, Caesar is a new Phaethon who will get assassinated in the historic future and whose apotheosis is foretold (7.457-459). Finally, Nero's assimilation to Phaethon and apotheosis are established in the very beginning of the epic, and at the end one need only step slightly further to arrive at his assassination. Lucan sets up Nero as another instance in a doomed cycle.

The presence of **AESTI** introduces the conflagration, the cycles of which weave together multiple themes and timelines, thus making the collapse of time and the synthesis of the three rulers possible.<sup>23</sup> **AESTI** ties Nero to the Stoic future of the burning of the world, the mythical past of the burning of Phaethon, the recent past of the burning of Rome, and the historic past and future in the Phaethontic figures of Pompey and Caesar – doomed characters united by burning. But it is not only the characters who are doomed. The universe, like Nero, is trapped in the cycle of palingenesis-bearing conflagration. The “new order” established after civil war will only generate other tyrants who will have to be burned and disposed of “one apotheosis at a time” (Kessler 2011: 144). Pharsalia is replaced with Philippi, Philippi is replaced with other wars, and the fields are cleansed only to be soaked with blood once more.

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<sup>23</sup> Richard Tarrant, discussing the implications of an ironic reading of the invocation to Nero, rightly points out, “One resulting implication of the Neronian passages is that threats to cosmic order are not limited to any period in the past, and that the order of things is perpetually vulnerable” (2002: 359).

## CONCLUSION

The conversation between Lucan and his literary predecessors has many layers and countless facets. On the one hand, the allusions to earlier literature imbue his writing with the connotations and historical and cultural backgrounds that are tied to those texts. On the other hand, the way in which he utilizes these texts both reveals his understanding of their authors' intents and directs and redirects his readers' interpretations of his predecessors. This thesis focuses on Lucan's debt to Virgil, elegy, and Ovid, not only because they demonstrate the most influence on his writing, but because they demonstrate most clearly the bidirectionality of intertextual conversation.

With Virgil we have seen how Lucan problematizes the positive. His adaptation of Jove's prophecy, the parade of heroes, and the shield of Achilles highlights his usage of key prophecies in the *Aeneid* for his pessimistic ends. In book 1 he questions the fulfillment of Jove's promise of peace and *Furor Impius* chained by depicting a world ruled by the madness of war. His opening lines argue with Virgil's parade of heroes, emphasizing what the *Aeneid* only hinted at, the inherency and prominence of civil war in Rome's history. Book 6 continues his response to Virgil's prophetic underworld scene with a hell that contradicts the glorious future of *Aeneid* 6 and instead portrays a scene of discord drawn in part from the shield of Aeneas in *Aeneid* 8. In particular, his adaptation of Actium and its imagery to indict both Caesar and Augustus is striking. Book 7 wraps up Lucan's response to the shield of Aeneas with the condemnation of Actium in his apostrophe to Thessaly. And throughout all his allusions to the *Aeneid* he weaves echoes of *Georgics* 1 to use Virgil's own words to support his interpretation. Taking passages

that lie at the foundation of not only the *Pax Augusta* but also Roman identity itself, he creates a sinister and subversive portrait from pieces of hopeful prophecy.

Lucan's interaction with elegy demonstrates the poet's understanding of the mutating effects of war and love. While he employs elegiac motifs and images to deepen his characterizations of Pompey and Caesar, emphasizing the former's delay and obsession with the past and highlighting the latter's violent force and fascination with the foreign and luxurious, he adapts and modifies his allusions to show the twisted nature of civil war. In particular, his depiction of civil war as a love triangle between Rome and the two rulers adds a new facet to their relationship. Already Caesar and Pompey are more than compatriots since Julia, Pompey's first wife, is Caesar's daughter, making their conflict "worse than civil" (*plus quam civilia*, 1.1) because it is familial. Setting them up as rival lovers only intensifies the perverseness of the civil war and the miserable role of Rome in the war. Likewise, his identification of Rome as the cause of war in her identity of elegiac mistress and quasi-erotic interest twists both elegy and epic. Especially noteworthy is his modification of the Propertian *ossibus ossa* (4.7.94) into *ossibus astra* (7.814), to cast Rome in elegiac terms and to escalate elegiac revenge to an epic and cosmological level.

Finally, his appropriation of fiery themes and motifs from Ovid casts civil war as cyclical conflagration and underhandedly condemns the leaders of the epic. The presence of the acrostic **AESTI** in the invocation to Nero connects the emperor to the Ovidian Phaethon. In addition to inherent problematic connotations, the parallel also connects Nero to Pompey and Caesar, assimilating all three to the disastrous heir of Apollo. The condemnatory and fiery motif, taken up and developed in book 1, burns through to book

7, where fire and pyres take on a cosmological significance. **AESTI** also ignites the language of the Stoic conflagration that will pervade the rest of the epic. Lucan, however, is not content to simply echo the *ekpyrosis* of Ovid and the Stoics. Like all his other allusions, he problematizes the idea and makes it deeply pessimistic. Rather than presenting conflagration as rebirth of the world, he presents it as cyclical civil war that perpetually destroys the world. Pharsalia is only one revolution of the cycle. **AESTI** collapses timelines and in doing so condemns future wars and rulers, including Nero.

Not only does Lucan engage his predecessors himself, but he creates conversation between the authors by blending the themes he derives from one with the questions he poses for another. The idea of love and the melding of state and woman is combined with the founding of Rome in the mirrored movements of the *Aeneid* and *Bellum Civile*. While Aeneas moved from Dido to Lavinia, analogous to Carthage and Italy, Caesar moves from Rome to Cleopatra, namely from Rome to Egypt. Lavinia parallels Rome and the end point of the *Aeneid* is the point of departure for Lucan's epic. Love is central to the founding of Rome for Virgil and tied closely to city's history and mythology; Aeneas' mother is Venus, after all. But Lucan changes this love and, moving it into the world of war, makes it violent, and combining it with elegy introduces betrayal and revenge.

Elegy and conflagration combine in the person of Julia, who foreshadows the disaster that will befall Rome at Pharsalia. Her ghost appears on a burnt tomb, *accenso sepulchro* (3.11), which foreshadows the pyres of book 7 (7.803-815). The death and burning of Julia, Pompey's old love, foretells the death and burning of Rome, the mistress of Pompey, Caesar, and future emperors to come. Love, fire, and cycles combine.

Lucan combines Roman identity with Stoic cosmology in echoing the Sack of Troy from *Aeneid* 2 in the collapse of Rome in his opening book. The falls of both cities involve destruction by fire. The parallel between the two collapses is presented as two rotations in a cyclical series of conflagration. In one way, the *Bellum Civile* begins where the *Aeneid* does, though it comes to a very different conclusion concerning Roman identity. For Virgil the sack of Troy signals the birth of Rome. For Lucan, the fall of Rome is a recurring event because her foundation was marked by civil war and civil war runs in her veins, dooming her to self-destruction.

We return to Lucan's question posed at the beginning of the epic: "What madness, citizens, what so-great license of the sword?" (*quis furor, o ciues, quae tanta licentia ferri?* 1.8). Though the query is not explicitly answered in the epic, he points to the answer in his allusions. This *furor* is unchained, unlike that in Jove's prophecy in the *Aeneid*. It is like the *amor* of elegy, but disordered and mutated and escalated. It lurks in the cyclical nature of civil war. *Quis furor?* Perhaps it is an out-of-control *princeps* in the chariot of the state. Perhaps it is *tantus amor* that drives rulers to battle over a city. Perhaps this madness that turns to civil war is the spirit of Rome and her people and leaders. Borrowing flames from Virgil, elegy, and Ovid, Lucan feeds his epic conflagrations with their pages and illuminates a world consumed by the fires of civil war.

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