

*ARMA NEFASQUE CANO: A COMMENTARY ON LUCAN'S BELLUM  
CIVILE 8.560-711*

by

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate and observe the complexity of Lucan's *Bellum Civile* 8.560-711, the scene of Pompey's death, which is treated as a centerpiece of the epic. The author includes the Latin text with detailed notes and appendices that encompass literary and linguistic material, situate the passage in the epic as a whole and show its importance in our understanding of texture and rhythm of the *Bellum Civile*.

Lucan gives Pompey's death a dimension of a 'true Pharsalus' as he zooms in on the individual, most important death of the war. It marks the highest point in the changing rhythm of the epic and serves as its climax following the anticlimactic battle of Pharsalus. As Lucan winds up the narrative toward the end of Book 6, the battle of Pharsalus compromises the expectations and dramatic charge until it renews again in Book 8 to culminate in Pompey's death.

The commentary closely examines linguistic issues such as Lucan's style and expression as well as literary parallels that concentrate on the passage's rich texture and its place in the Roman epic. Close attention is also given to examination of thematic trends in the passage and their relation to the rest of the epic.

A set of appendices at the end comprises a series of essays that deal with larger issues that transcend the commentary format and provide a holistic treatment of topics such as placement of the passage in Book 8 and the entire epic, Pompey's character and structure of the passage.

The present study engages with the most recent commentary on Book 8 in English by R. Mayer and brings still more recent scholarship to illustrate the richness and complexity of Lucan's thematic design and language all of which lead to a clearer understanding of the *Bellum Civile*.

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*To my parents, Anna Lee, Olga and Kedrick  
with love.*

## Introduction

My choice of a commentary on Lucan's *Bellum Civile* 8.560-711, the scene of Pompey's murder, was dictated by a desire to deeply engage with one of the most carefully crafted and thematically loaded passages in Lucan. Although Lucan prefers episodic structure and the *Bellum Civile* contains many passages that can be picked to impart a sense of Lucan's expression and meaning, the scene of Pompey's murder combines the poet's unique linguistic style with his equally unique handling of theme and pathos - as can be gleaned from a short excerpt. Lucan's thematic range in the passage mimics the thematic design of the epic which features a combination of pathos, anger and Lucan's view of heroism and destiny, all of which are contained within a narrative of decapitation, or a final beheading of the Roman republic.

Lucan examines Pompey's pivotal and controversial figure during the last, most significant test of his career as a Roman general and a statesman. Pompey's figure attained a heroic status in Roman literature predominantly due to the irony and tragedy of his death. Lucan took up the subject and recast Pompey as a wavering and insecure individual against the background of universal ruin of the civil wars dominated by the titanic figures of Caesar and Cato. He imbues the passage with a significant dose of linguistic mastery and careful narrative arrangement, which mimics the dismemberment of an individual and echo the overall dismemberment and dissolution of the Roman state. Furthermore, Lucan

does not hold back his own emotional reaction to the events he is describing and infuses the passage with a high degree of tragic pathos that features prominently in authorial interjections and is aided by the presence of Pompey's wife, Cornelia.

Thus from a single excerpt a view of the entire poem can allow the reader to collect and examine a variety of interrelated themes. I chose a commentary format specifically to illustrate this structural and linguistic complexity of the passage and open a view to the poem's unique design.

An atomized view of the passage, however, can open only a partial view of the poem, as greater thematic currents, which pertain to the characters in the murder passage, emerge and require a holistic treatment beyond the scope of a commentary note. General context essays, such as the place of Pompey's murder in Book 8, Lucan's treatment of Pompey, his relationship with Cornelia and the overall structure of the murder passage, have been arranged in a series of appendices after the commentary.

The Latin text is A. E. Housman's (1927, *M. Annaei Lucani Belli Civilis Libri Decem*) and the translation by S. Braund 1992.

## Text and Translation

iam uento uela negarat	560
Magnus et auxilio remorum infanda petebat litora; quem contra non longa uecta biremi appulerat scelerata manus, Magnoque patere fingens regna Phari celsae de puppe carinae	
in paruam iubet ire ratem, litusque malignum incusat bimaremque uadis frangentibus aestum, qui uetet externas terris adpellere classes. quod nisi fatorum leges intentaque iussu ordinis aeterni miserae uicinia mortis	565
damnatum leto traherent ad litora Magnum, non ulli comitum sceleris praesagia derant: quippe, fides si pura foret, si regia Magno sceptrorum auctori uera pietate pateret, uenturum tota Pharium cum classe tyrannum.	570
sed cedit fati classemque relinquere iussus obsequitur, letumque iuuat praeferre timori. ibat in hostilem praeceps Cornelia puppem, hoc magis inpatiens egresso desse marito quod metuit clades. 'remane, temeraria coniunx, et tu, nate, precor, longeque a litore casus	575
expectate meos et in hac ceruice tyranni explorate fidem' dixit. sed surda uetanti tendebat geminas amens Cornelia palmas. 'quo sine me crudelis abis? iterumne relinquer, Thessalicis summota malis? numquam omine laeto	580
distrahimur miseri. poteras non flectere puppem, cum fugeres alto, latebrisque relinquere Lesbi, omnibus a terris si nos arcere parabas. an tantum in fluctus placeo comes?' haec ubi frustra effudit, prima pendet tamen anxia puppe,	585
attonitoque metu nec quoquam auertere uisus nec Magnum spectare potest. stetit anxia classis ad ducis euentum, metuens non arma nefasque sed ne summissis precibus Pompeius adoret sceptra sua donata manu. transire parantem	590
Romanus Pharia miles de puppe salutat Septimius, qui, pro superum pudor, arma satelles regia gestabat posito deformia pilo, inmanis uiolentus atrox nullaque ferarum	595



mitior in caedes. quis non, Fortuna, putasset 600  
 parcere te populis, quod bello haec dextra uacaret  
 Thessaliaque procul tam noxia tela fugasses?  
 disponis gladios, nequo non fiat in orbe,  
 heu, facinus ciuile tibi. uictoribus ipsis  
 dedecus et numquam superum caritura pudore 605  
 fabula, Romanus regi sic paruit ensis,  
 Pellaeusque puer gladio tibi colla recidit,  
 Magne, tuo. qua posteritas in saecula mittet  
 Septimium fama? scelus hoc quo nomine dicent  
 qui Bruti dixere nefas?

iam uenerat horae 610

terminus extremae, Phariamque ablati in alnum  
 perdiderat iam iura sui. tum stringere ferrum  
 regia monstra parant. ut uidit comminus ensis,  
 inuoluit uultus atque, indignatus apertum  
 fortunae praebere, caput; tum lumina pressit 615  
 continuitque animam, nequas effundere uoces  
 uellet et aeternam fletu corrumpere famam.  
 sed, postquam mucrone latus funestus Achilles  
 perfodit, nullo gemitu consensit ad ictum  
 respexitque nefas, seruatque immobile corpus, 620  
 seque probat moriens atque haec in pectore uoluit:  
 'saecula Romanos numquam tacitura labores  
 attendunt, aeuumque sequens speculatur ab omni  
 orbe ratem Phariamque fidem: nunc consule famae.  
 fata tibi longae fluxerunt prospera uitae: 625  
 ignorant populi, si non in morte probaris,  
 an scieris aduersa pati. ne cede pudori  
 auctoremque dole fati: quacumque feriris,  
 crede manum soceri. spargant lacerentque licebit,  
 sum tamen, o superi, felix, nullique potestas 630  
 hoc auferre deo. mutantur prospera uita,  
 non fit morte miser. uidet hanc Cornelia caedem  
 Pompeiusque meus: tanto patientius, oro,  
 claude, dolor, gemitus: gnatus coniunxque peremptum,  
 si mirantur, amant.' talis custodia Magno 635  
 mentis erat, ius hoc animi morientis habebat.

at non tam patiens Cornelia cernere saeuum,  
 quam perferre, nefas miserandis aethera complet  
 uocibus. 'o coniunx, ego te scelerata peremi:  
 letiferae tibi causa morae fuit auia Lesbos, 640  
 et prior in Nili peruenit litora Caesar.

nam cui ius alii sceleris? sed, quisquis, in istud  
 a superis inmisit caput, uel Caesaris irae  
 uel tibi prospiciens, nescis, crudelis, ubi ipsa  
 uiscera sint Magni: properas atque ingeris ictus 645  
 qua uotum est uicto. poenas non morte minores  
 pendat et ante meum uideat caput. haud ego culpa  
 libera bellorum, quae matrum sola per undas  
 et per castra comes nullis absterrita fatis  
 uictum, quod reges etiam timere, recepi. 650  
 hoc merui, coniunx, in tuta puppe relinqui?  
 perfide, parcebas? te fata extrema petente  
 uita digna fui? moriar, nec munere regis.  
 aut mihi praecipitem, nautae, permittite saltum,  
 aut laqueum collo tortosque aptare rudentes, 655  
 aut aliquis Magno dignus comes exigat ensem.  
 Pompeio praestare potest quod Caesaris armis  
 inputet. o saeui, properantem in fata tenetis?  
 uiuis adhuc, coniunx, et iam Cornelia non est  
 iuris, Magne, sui: prohibent accersere mortem; 660  
 seruor uictori.' sic fata interque suorum  
 lapsa manus rapitur trepida fugiente carina.  
 at, Magni cum terga sonent et pectora ferro,  
 permansisse decus sacrae uenerabile formae  
 iratamque deis faciem, nil ultima mortis 665  
 ex habitu uoltuque uiri mutasse fatentur  
 qui lacerum uidere caput. nam saeuus in ipso  
 Septimius sceleris maius scelus inuenit actu,  
 ac reteggit sacros scisso uelamine uoltus  
 semianimis Magni spirantiaque occupat ora 670  
 collaque in obliquo ponit languentia transtro.  
 tunc neruos uenasque secat nodosaque frangit  
 ossa diu: nondum artis erat caput ense rotare.  
 at, postquam trunco ceruix abscisa recessit,  
 uindicat hoc Pharius, dextra gestare, satellites. 675  
 degener atque operae miles Romane secundae,  
 Pompei diro sacrum caput ense recidis,  
 ut non ipse feras? o summi fata pudoris!  
 inpius ut Magnum nosset puer, illa uerenda  
 regibus hirta coma et generosa fronte decora 680  
 caesaries comprehensa manu est, Pharioque ueruto,  
 dum uiuunt uoltus atque os in murmura pulsant  
 singultus animae, dum lumina nuda rigescunt,  
 suffixum caput est, quo numquam bella iubente  
 pax fuit; hoc leges Campumque et rostra mouebat, 685

hac facie, Fortuna, tibi, Romana, placebas.  
 nec satis infando fuit hoc uidisse tyranno:  
 uolt sceleris superesse fidem. tunc arte nefanda  
 summota est capiti tabes, raptoque cerebro  
 adsiccata cutis, putrisque effluxit ab alto 690  
 umor, et infuso facies solidata ueneno est.  
 ultima Lageae stirpis perituraque proles,  
 degener incestae sceptris cessure sorori,  
 cum tibi sacrato Macedon seruetur in antro  
 et regum cineres extracto monte quiescant, 695  
 cum Ptolemaeorum manes seriemque pudendam  
 pyramides claudant indignaque Mausolea,  
 litora Pompeium feriunt, truncusque uadosis  
 huc illuc iactatur aquis. adeone molesta  
 totum cura fuit socero seruare cadauer? 700  
 hac Fortuna fide Magni tam prospera fata  
 pertulit, hac illum summo de culmine rerum  
 morte petit cladesque omnis exegit in uno  
 saeua die quibus immunes tot praestitit annos,  
 Pompeiusque fuit qui numquam mixta uideret 705  
 laeta malis, felix nullo turbante deorum  
 et nullo parcente miser; semel inpulit illum  
 dilata Fortuna manu. pulsatur harenis,  
 carpitur in scopulis hausto per uolnera fluctu,  
 ludibrium pelagi, nullaque manente figura 710  
 una nota est Magno capitis iactura reuolsi.

Now had Magnus denied his sails 560  
 the wind and with the help of oars was making for accursed  
 shores; conveyed not far to meet him in a two-oared ship,  
 the wicked band hail him and, pretending that the realm  
 of Pharos was open to Magnus, they bid hi, come fro the lofty  
 vessel's stern into their small boat, complaining of  
 the hostile shore and tides of two seas broken in the shallows  
 which stops the foreign fleets from touching land.  
 But if the laws of Fate and the approach of miserable  
 death, directed by decree of the eternal Order,  
 were not dragging Magnus, doomed to death, towards the shore, 570  
 not one of his companions lacked forebodings of the crime,  
 because had loyalty been pure, had the palace with devotion  
 true been opened up to Magnus, the bestower of the scepter,  
 then Pharos' tyrant would have come with all his fleet.  
 But he yields to Fate and, when bidden leave his fleet,  
 obeys and chooses to prefer death to fear.  
 Cornelia headlong rushed towards the enemy boat,  
 the less prepared to be apart from her husband as he left  
 because she feared disaster. 'Stay behind, my reckless wife,  
 you too, my son, I pray, and watch my fortunes 580  
 far from shore, and on this neck put to the test  
 the tyrant's loyalty,' he said. But, deaf to his injunction,  
 frantically Cornelia stretched out both her hands: "Where are you going  
 without me, cruel man? Am I deserted a second time,  
 kept away from Thessaly's disaster? Never with a happy omen are we  
 pulled apart, unhappy both. When you fled across the deep, you need not  
 have turned aside your ship, you could have left me in my hiding-place  
 in Lesbos, if it was your intent to keep me away from every land.  
 Or am I a satisfactory companion only on the waves?' When in vain she has  
 poured out these words, yet anxiously she hangs over the vessel's  
 end 590  
 and in stunned terror cannot turn her gaze away;  
 she cannot look at Magnus. The fleet lay at anchor, anxious  
 about their general's fate, not fearing crime or weapons,  
 but afraid that with groveling prayers Pompey would kneel before  
 the scepter given by his own hand. As he prepared to step across,  
 a Roman soldier greets him from the Pharian boat,  
 Septimius, who—shame upon the gods!—had put aside the javelin  
 and was bearing the degrading weapons of the king, as his minion,  
 brutal, savage, cruel and no less fierce for bloodshed  
 than any wild beast. Who would not have thought that you took  
 pity 600  
 on the peoples, Fortune, since this sword-hand had no part in war

and you had banished far from Thessaly his weapons so guilty?  
You station far and wide your swords, so that in every part of the world  
—alas!—a crime of civil war may be done for you. A dishonour  
to the very conquerors, a story which will always shame  
the gods: a Roman sword obeyed the king like this  
and the boy of Pella cut your head off, Magnus,  
with your own sword. With what reputation will posterity send  
Septimius into the centuries? What name will the wickedness have  
from those who call what Brutus did a crime?

Now the limit 610

of his final hour had come and, carried off into the Pharian boat,  
he was not now his own master. Then the monsters of the king  
prepare to bare the weapon. When he saw the swords close by,  
he covered up his face and head, disdaining  
to present them bare to Fortune; then he closed his eyes  
and held his breath to stop himself from breaking  
into speech and marring his eternal fame with tears.  
But after murderous Achillas stabbed his side  
with sword-point, with not a groan did he acknowledge  
the blow and did not heed the crime, but keeps his body motionless, 620  
and as he dies he tests himself, and in his breast he turns these thoughts:  
'Future ages which never will be silent about the toils of Rome  
are watching now, and time to come observes from all the world  
the boat and loyalty of Pharos: think now of your fame.  
For you the fates of lengthy life have flowed successful;  
the people cannot know, unless in death you prove it,  
whether you know how to endure adversity. Do not give away to shame  
or resent the author of your fate: whatever hand strikes you,  
think it your father-in-law's. Though they tear and mangle me,  
still fortunate am I, O god above, and no deity had the power 630  
to deprive me of this. In life prosperity is changed:  
death does not make a man unhappy. Cornelia sees this murder,  
my Pompey too: with all the more endurance, pain of mine,  
I beg, suppress your groans; my so and wife, if they admire  
me in death, love me'. Such control of mind  
had Magnus, he exercised this power over his dying spirit.

But Cornelia found it harder to behold the brutal crime  
than suffer it and with pititable words she fills  
the ether: "O husband, it is I have killed you, wicked I:  
distant Lesbos was the cause of delay fatal to you, 640  
and Caesar had reached the shores of Nile first;  
for who else has the right to do this crime? But whoever you are,  
sent by the gods against that life, acting for Caesar's anger  
or for yourself, you do not know, cruel man, where Magnus'

very guts are; you hurry and you rain down blows  
where hem defeated, prays them fall. Let him pay a penalty  
no less than death by witnessing my death first. Not free from blame  
in war am I, because alone of matrons, his companion  
through the waves and through the camps, deterred by no defeats,  
I welcomed hum when conquered—which even kings feared to do. 650  
And this is my reward, my husband, to be left in the safety of the ship?  
Traitor, were you being kind? As you approached your final destiny,  
did I deserve to live? I shall die, and not by the favour of the king.  
Allow me, sailors, to make a headlong leap for it  
the noose and twisted ropes around my neck, or let some comrade,  
truly worthy of Magnus, drive the sword right through.  
For Pompey he can do a service which he may then credit to Caesar's  
weapons. O cruel man, do you restrain me as I race towards my destiny?  
You still live, my husband, and Cornelia already is not  
her own mistress, Magnus: they prevent me from summoning death; 660  
for the victor I am saved.' So she spoke and fell among  
her companions' arms and is carried off, as the ship in panic races off.

But, as the weapons sound on Magnus' back and breast,  
the majestic beauty of his sacred features lasted,  
his expression reconciled with the gods; and utmost death  
changed nothing of the hero's bearing and his face: so say those  
who saw the severed head. For cruel Septimius  
in the very act of crime discovered a greater crime:  
he rips away the covering, lays bare the sacred face  
of Magnus, half-alive, he grabs the head still breathing 670  
and puts the drooping neck across a bench.  
Then he severs muscles, veins; and long he takes to break the knotty  
bones; not yet was it an art to send heads rolling with the sword.  
But after the severed neck was separated from the torso,  
the Pharian minion claims this right, to carry it in his hand.  
Roman soldier, contemptible and playing a supporting role,  
do you with hideous sword cut off the sacred head of Pompey  
not to carry it yourself? O density of deepest shame!  
So that the ungrateful boy can recognize Magnus, that shaggy  
hair by kings revered and lock which grace his noble 680  
brow were grasped and on a Pharian spear—  
while features are alive and sobs of breath impel  
the mouth to murmur, while unclosed eyes are stiffening—  
the head is fixed: when it commanded was, never  
was there peace; it swayed the laws, the Campus and the Rostra;  
with this face you stood proud, Roman Fortune.  
And the sight of it was not enough for the monstrous tyrant;

he wants proof of his wickedness to survive. Then by their hideous art  
the fluid is taken from the head, the brain removed  
and skin dried out, and rotten moisture flowed away from deep 690  
within, and the features were solidified by drugs instilled.

Last offspring, soon to perish, of the stock of Lagus,  
degenerate and soon to yield the sceptre to your impure sister,  
though you preserve the Macedonian in consecrated cave,  
and the ashes of the kings find rest beneath a piled-up mountain,  
though shades of Ptolemies and their disgraceful line  
are enclosed in Pyramids and Mausoleums too good for them,  
the shores strikes Pompey, and his headless corpse is tossed  
this way and that by shallow waters. Was it such a nuisance  
to keep his body whole for his father-in-law? 700

With this good faith Fortune to the end maintained the destiny  
so prosperous of Magnus, with this she summoned him in death  
from the highest peak, and brutally in a single day she made him pay  
for all the disasters from which she gave him so many years of freedom;  
and Pompey was a man who never saw joy and hardship  
mixed: when fortunate he was disturbed by none of the gods,  
when miserable spared by none; at one go Fortune knocked him down  
with the hand she had so long restrained. He is battered on the sands,  
torn to pieces on the rocks while drinking in the water through his wounds,  
the plaything of the sea, and when no distinctive shape remains 710  
the single mark of Magnus is the absence of the torn-off head.

## Commentary

**560-1 iam | Magnus** Line 560 ends L.'s curse on Egypt and begins the narrative of the murder proper, which may be surprising since *iam* in the resumptive sense usually signals an important episode at the start of a line, e.g. 1.183, 3.88, 3.388, 4.337, 7.647 (P. senses defeat at the battle of Pharsalus). Later, at 610 L. uses *iam* more forcefully to indicate a dramatic shift (see n.).

Overall, the line suggests that P. has given up the reins and is about to entrust himself to fate. This reflect an earlier simile at 7.123-7:

*sic fatur et arma  
permittit populis frenosque furentibus ira  
laxat et ut uictus uiolento nauita Coro  
dat regimen uentis ignauumque arte relict  
puppis onus trahitur.*

‘So he speaks and grants  
the people warfare and, as they rage with anger, he lets go  
their reins; like this the sailor, conquered by violent Corus,  
concedes control to the winds and, abandoning his skill, is swept along,  
a useless cargo on his ship.’ (Trans. Braund)

The ship’s cargo has finally arrived at its final destination, but L. does not continue the seemingly negative description of P. in the simile. There, he exited the role as a



protector and ruler of Rome so that chaos might finally engulf the nations. L. echoes the burden theme in this passage to indicate that while P. may have become a useless cargo of history (see Johnson 1987: 76-8), he has not yet lost his life, which has now become the focus of the poem. (See also Henderson 1988: 133-4 on the specific kind of historical anticipation and the cyclical nature of the civil war).

P. here may remind us of Palinurus' untimely death so that the Trojans may reach Italy. Trojans were guided by him on many occasions, but the sacrifice of the helmsman figure, whom L. recasts as P., allowed them finally to reach Italy (see *Aen.* 5.12-25, 827-71 and esp. 5.815, *unum pro multis dabitur caput*, where similarity to P. is explicit (for L.'s recasting of Palinurus see Quint 1993: 138-40). L.'s agenda, on the other hand, is geared towards hopelessness and destruction: in the sailor simile, P. gives up all control due to Cicero's and the army's desire to stage the final battle thus throwing all sense of direction into chaos. Links with the *Aeneid*, primarily the destruction of Troy, indicate L.'s preoccupation with utter helplessness and doom as P. moves towards his final moment.

*infanda litora* 'Evil shores'. Following Pothinus' speech and L.'s own curse on Egypt, *infanda* links the land with its king and sets the atmosphere for the passage. L. may have been thinking of *Aen.* 3.60, *scelerata terra*, where the Trojans discover the murder of Polydorus and flee the ghastly crime scene (3.13-64), as opposed to P. who moves towards his place of death.

***petebat*** Conative imperfect. Indication of P.'s direction of travel is significant. Throughout the epic, P. moves in the direction geographically, traditionally and conceptually opposite to that of Aeneas. Instead of Virgil's foundation-bound narrative, L.'s P. moves towards destruction and the epic moves along with him to portray the death of new Troy. On P.'s reverse journey see Rossi 2000; for the discussion of foundation myth in the *Aeneid* see Hardie 1993: 10-13 and Horsfall 1989: 8-27.

**562-3 *quem contra*** With *vecta*. Mayer (1981) describes the incongruities in tense and meaning of *appulerat*. L.'s vivid present (*fingens*, 564; *incusat* 566) abruptly replaces the pluperfect. Presumably, the Egyptian bark pulled alongside of P.'s ship as he attempting to make (*petebat*) for the shore. The overall shift in tense to vivid present as it dominates the temporal frame of the scene is for dramatic effect.

**563 *scelerata manus*** L. dehumanizes the occupants (see 599 n.). Also, L. postpones the names for dramatic effect, especially Septimius. Expression is not poetic: Cicero uses it with references to Catiline (1.23) and M. Antony (*Phil.* 2.85).

**564 *regna Phari*** Ptolemy XIII (the boy king) was heavily indebted to P. for his current position. His father, Ptolemy XII Auletes, received considerable

help from P. and owed his restoration after exile and the rule of Egypt to him. In fact, formal relations between Rome and Egypt began with this Ptolemy's rule. Relative indifference in relationships between the two empires, apart from occasional requests to Rome to settle dynastic conflicts (Siani-Davies 1997: 307), existed until Ptolemy XII's predecessor bequeathed the Egyptian throne to Rome (Bradford 2000: 33). After his ascension, Ptolemy XII negotiated an official confirmation of the Egyptian throne from Rome by means of a bribe of six thousand talents to P. and Caesar: Egypt became one of the friends and allies of the Roman people (Siani-Davies 1997: 316). His relationship with P. continued after he was exiled and P. argued incessantly for his return (ibid. 323). Though this did not happen until P. sent Aulus Gabinius, without the Senate's consent, to restore the king by force. Lucius Septimius, P.'s murderer, was a part of the expedition (see 597n.). For Ptolemy XII's relationship with P. and subsequent restoration see Strabo 12.3.34 and 17.1.11; Dio 39.12-14, 39.55-8; for Gabinius' involvement and ties to P. see Dio 36.23-6, 38.13, 30 and 39.55-63; Cicero *Pro L. Man.* 17-19; for his character, Plut. *Pom.* 25, 48.

**564-5 *celsae ... ratem*** At 8.39-40 P.'s vessel does not match the present lofty stern: *inde ratis trepidum uentis ac fluctibus inpar, | flumineis uix tuta uadis, euexit in altum*. L. obviously enjoys the height difference between the small Pharian boat full of criminals and P.'s symbolic direction downwards.

This inconsistency, however, points to a more significant contrast between the beginning of P.'s flight and his murder. As the aftermath of Pharsalus begins to sink in (8.1-32), L. develops juxtaposition between P.'s former fame and a desire for anonymity (*clara viri facies and cunctis ignotus gentibus esse* | *mallet et obscuro tutus transire per urbes* | *nomine*, 8.19-21), which is in turn contrasted with P.'s desire to be seen as he dies at 8.614, 8.635 (see nn.). In Plutarch, P. arrives in a Seleucian trireme (*Pom.* 77) having changed ships along the way. L.'s account is significantly different from Plutarch, see Appendix 5.

**566 *bimarem*** 'Lying between two seas'. Mayer (*ad loc.*) notes the coinage is Horace's and it became one of Ovid's favorites (*Car.* 1.7; e.g. *Met.* 6.419). It attained its high poetic status in Ovid and seemed to have virtually disappeared from epic. L. and Statius used it once each. The anomaly does not seem to have any parallels, especially since L.'s use is like Ovid's heavily poetic, but unlike Ovid is perhaps heavily ironic: the lines are spoken by the gang of murderers to excuse Ptolemy's absence. *bimaris* is also a common epithet for Corinth (e.g. Horace *Car.* 1.7.2, Ovid *Met.* 5.407, *Fasti* 4.501) which connects the murder narrative to Crassus whom L. compares to the same city (1.100-4).

**568-71 *fatorum leges*** that compel P. to bow to the eternal order (*cedit fatis*, 575). L. emphasizes a notion of larger governing designs of P.'s fate whereas the rest of the poem abandons gods and providence in relation to mankind in general as a manifestation of *invida fatorum series* (1.70; also, see Feeney 1991: 284). P. is especially singled out by Fate since his death is meant to be extraordinary and symbolic of the end of the Roman state.

**569-70 *vicinia mortis, damnatum leto*** An interesting conjunction since *mors* is mainly prosaic and *letum* is predominantly poetic. Bramble (1982) comments that L. is generally less concerned with embellishing his account by preferring a drier prosaic flavor to Virgil's musical language, which suits L.'s "sardonic" style. He cites *mors* as appearing 126 times and *letum* only 36 in the entire poem: "in civil war, death is not romantic" (p. 541 with n. 3). Mayer (1981: 12-14) is less sympathetic to L.'s use of language. Although he does recognize that L.'s phrasing is "*dictio quae feriet*", his stance on the poetic distancing vs. a direct, sardonic approach to the reality of civil war is not favorable to L.'s fondness for contrast and adaptation of pointedly prosaic vocabulary. His notes on *gladius* vs. *ensis* (385-6) and *cadavera* (438) illustrate the contrast well but do not recognize the aesthetic aspect of such distancing: L. is pointedly anti-poetic and anti-traditional and this is his purpose. Writers after L. (with a partial exception of Silius whose imitation of L. rests on jumbling together of prose and poetry rather than adapting a

contrast), tended toward a more traditional linguistic approach even with a marked difference in subject matter and aesthetic decisions. Mayer makes a suggestion that L. wrote in haste, hence his uncommon (unconscious?) fondness for everyday words (p. 14, see also pp. 18-20. Mayer's linguistic analysis of L. is excellent, but he is constantly aesthetically unsympathetic). In this case of *mors* meeting *letum* in the same line, a typical Lucanian conundrum is created: P. is close to his physical, visceral death, but his overall path in the epic culminates in *letum*, a poetic destruction of his character as opposed to his humanly 'impotent' nature (Johnson 1987: 76). It is intensified further by the doubleness of P.'s very character: he embodies a contradiction as a general in a terrible war who longs to be admired and to rest on his former fame and even in death his desire is to be seen (8.635, see n.). L.'s language thus encapsulates that character by stitching the prosaic with the poetic in a character whose prosaic nature led to a very poetic, pathetic destruction: nearness of physical death (*mors*) and a universal condemnation (*damnatum leto*) is a powerful hendiadys applied to a man whose life of victory and fame led nowhere but to be stabbed ingloriously in a dinghy. In analyzing L., especially his language, one must rely on aesthetics to determine, or perhaps approximate, the poet's intent. L. is a Poundian *logopoetist* to whom language is everything (Martindale 2005: 224, also Bramble 1982: 541) given the epic's overall anti-traditional, 'transgressionalist' nature. For more discussion of L.'s language see

Martindale (2005) 224-236, Bramble 1982: 540-4, Henderson 1986, esp. 135-156.

**571 non ... derant** Litotes. L. uses it often to heighten the atmosphere or ramp up pathos. Cf. e.g. *nec coiere pares* (1.130, before famous descriptions of Caes. and P.), *perque meos manes genero non esse licebit* (3.32, Julia speaking to P. from Hell), *ostenditque rogum non iusti flamma sepulchri* (9.54, C. catching sight of P.'s meager pyre).

**572-4** Echoes *Aen.* 2.54-6 *Et, si fata deum, si mens non laeva fuisset, | inpulerat ferro Argolicas foedare latebras, | Troiaque, nunc stares, Priamique arx alta maneres* as L. injects a significant dose of the fall of Troy into P.'s murder. The parallel is not literal but rather conceptual since L. works in an epic - even cosmic - chronology: one of the most significant events of the *Aeneid* was the destruction of Priam that spawned an equally universal event of Troy's new incarnation as Rome and ruler of the world.

L. seems to hint at a similar paradigm being developed: P.'s destruction is followed by a resurrection of his soul that settles in the hearts of the future opponents of tyranny, Brutus and Cato, but we know that all of this is ultimately bound to fail. L. did not write a 'resurrection' epic, his theme is death, failure and destruction with no end in sight and P. is at the center of this as a combination of his inherent weakness and the operation of *fatum* as

an inversion of a heroic and defiant Priam in Virgil. It is not so much pathos and pity for P. that L. is trying to evoke but a sense of universal failure in a bold allusion to the defining, no less universal moment in Roman history. The tragedy belongs ultimately to Rome where P. fits as the last symbol of a vain, once glorious city that has grown too large to support itself (1.72).

**si...si** Anaphora. L. heaps up irony and pathos in a programmatic conditional which, although the scene for murder has been set, attempts to oppose reality at least with language if not action.

**fides si pura foret** The purity of trust and loyalty at this point in the narrative is a manifestation of the poet's fractured voice at odds with itself. L. has long established the Egyptians' role in P.'s fate (see 581n.) but still refuses to accept the fact of their betrayal. The poet thus separates himself from the narrative to become a passionate spectator on par with his audience in terms of the dramatic presentation of events through the language of trust and loyalty applied to foreign powers. Throughout the epic, the separation of Romans from the barbarians is equal to the horror of separation between fellow Romans: the civil wars offer Rome's identity for spoils in 1.9 *gentibus inuisis Latium praebere cruorem*. but it is also equally crucial to P.'s character. He appears on numerous occasions either reminding everyone of his mighty foreign alliances or trying to enlist direct help of foreign powers



for his cause. For example, P. sends Sextus to seek Eastern help after realizing that his speech had no effect on the troops (2.631-49). The most telling scene is P.'s last attempt to enlist Parthia as an ally, which prompts a violent outburst from Lentulus (8.331-394). As a result, P. is insecure about trust either from fellow Romans or from his foreign alliances and this wavering produces dissonance on the level of the readers' conceptual understanding of *fides*. L. deliberately obscures traditional definitions of *fides*, *pietas* and *virtus* to create a universe of not just crumbled values but of the very conceptual foundation of those values. Just as he muddies and recreates *fatum* and *fortuna* (see 600n.), he does the same with loyalty and trust which become a vehicle for dismemberment of values rather than their unification.

**573 *vera pietate*** *Pietas* (loyalty), established in Virgil and Livy as a binding force, does not apply to L.'s characters in the same way. The general notion of *pietas* in Roman culture is "the force that binds men and society together in selfless dedication" (Ahl 1976: 275). In L., where the main emphasis is on severed ties, severed heads and broken bonds, *pietas* becomes displaced almost entirely by madness (see Ahl 1976: 274-9 and Hershkowitz 1998: 206-18, esp. 209-10, "*Pietas*, that most fundamental of Roman characteristics, is the one most violated by the *furor* of civil war. Lucan makes surprisingly little direct reference to the concept of *pietas* ... [and] it is generally

mentioned in opposition to *furor*”). L. changes his priorities significantly in dealing with issues of loyalty, especially since *pietas* has become either madness, according to Hershkowitz, or *nefas*, which is a deeper driving force behind the events of the civil war. L. thus compartmentalizes *pietas* into categories that pertain to individual groups bound by dedication dictated by personal loyalty to an individual or a narrow ideal, e.g. the ‘exemplary’ suicide of Vulteius and his men that presents a gruesome spectacle of loyalty to Caes.

As is the case with *fides*, *pietas* is also a part of the poet’s fractured voice since we are long aware whose cause Pothinus espoused, therefore enabling L. to present a disfigured notion of dedication. Specifically on the perverted notion of *pietas* in L. see Ahl 1976: 274-9 (also 275 52n. with a general bibliography) and Putnam 1995: 201-246, esp. 223-39.

**573-4 *sceptrorum auctori*** The concentration of *sceptra* in the last half of Bk. 8 (10 out 17 occurrences in the epic) create a framework of loyalty vs. treachery as the ownership and handling of rule becomes crucial in determining P.’s fate. Here the characters finally act out their initial distribution of roles that took place at 8.472-560. A little prior, the set of Roman speeches finished with Lentulus’ rebuke of P. after his suggestion to side with Parthia. He singled out Ptolemy as the only possible choice since P. will be able to collect his payment of gratitude: *sceptra puer Ptolemaeus habet*

*tibi debita, Magne, | tutelae commisa tuae* (448-9). As Lentulus brings his speech that sways the Senate's opinion toward Egypt, his forcefulness turns into a tragic irony: *nil pudet adsuetos sceptris: mitissima sors est | regnorum sub rege novo* (452-3): Lentulus believes that only an aged court could be a source of treachery, while the rule of a young king is the mildest. It turns out later that Lentulus' *mitissima sors* is Septimius - *nullaque ferarum | mitior in caedes* (599-600). At 472-3 the narrative shifts rapidly toward the tragic as the cameras are now rolling at young Ptolemy's court. L.'s inimitable taste for tragedy allows the aged Acoreus to call the assembly of the freaks (*monstra*, 474; cf. 613, *regia monstra*) to honour old loyalty to P.. His speech, a mere two-line paraphrase (480-1), is immediately thwarted by Pothinus' tour de force of *nefas* that delights the boy king with a hitherto unaccustomed honour (536-7). Overall, rule (*sceptrum*) has no power by itself, but it is a pivot around which L. creates a tragic web between Lentulus' good intentions that lead to nefarious persuasion and a deadly conspiracy. Earlier at 487-90 L. gives a gnomic condemnation of profit as it affects the power of rule: it dies as soon its owner has succumbed to questioning justice (*sceptrorum vis tota perit, si pendere iusta | incipit*, 489-90). The framework of *sceptrum* before P.'s murder acts as a series of narrative signals coming to a conclusion: by the end of 541 all actors have assumed roles and taken positions as embodiments of previous thematic currents: Cornelia, Deiotarus and the Mytileneans on one

side and Pothinus' noxious crew on the other. Further on 472-576 see Mayer 1981: 141-2.

**576 *obsequitur*** A single occurrence in the *Bellum Civile* that expresses full submission and compliance (*OLD* s.v. *obsequor* 3c). The enjambment emphasizes P.'s complete subordination in the previous line: *sed cedit fatis classemque relinquere iussus*. P.'s submission recalls his answer to Cicero that the latter forced him into the cataclysmic battle (7.84-5).

**579-92** P.'s last words to his wife. He is not excusing himself any longer (as he did earlier during their parting in Book 5) and is rather stern with C.: for all C.'s devotion and strength, his words betray a complete misunderstanding. As of this moment his concentration is solely on himself as he separates entirely from everyone and becomes a solo actor in the following murder scene. This enables L. to give P. his last shining moment as well as to continue the theme of C.'s passionate involvement as she is once again forced to the sidelines of the action. In terms of the relationship of P. and C., the theme of accusatory language due to her constant abandonment is continued. The rift between the couple is emphasized through the language of reproach, which constitutes the surface of the narrative whereas on the emotional level these words emphasize the couple's passionate involvement. During previous encounters with P. and C. (see Appendix 4) L. separated him

from his wife by emphasizing P.'s desire to preserve C. from the disasters he endured while she constantly pressed the issue of their inseparability as a true bond between them. In the murder scene, the rift reaches critical mass: C. is *amens* (583) at her husband's reluctance to accept her wholly into his fate, she calls him *crudelis* (584) and wishes she were still on Lesbos rather than endure another separation which she rightly feels is their last. She is *anxia* (590) to the point of being frozen in shock but unable to avert her eyes (590-2).

**579 *temeraria*** Mainly prosaic, avoided by Virgil but used quite frequently by Ovid (e.g. *Am.* 1.7.3, 2.11.3, *Her.* 6.21, 17.101, *Met.* 1.514, 2.50) and L. who adapts the word to his poetry (e.g. 5.682, 7.590, 8.795).

**581 *in hac cervice*** Apart from the disturbing foreshadowing and irony of the murder, P. (interestingly) focalizes the neck instead of the head to anticipate the grisly detail at 673. At the same time, L. does not differentiate precisely between *caput* and *cervix* (cf. 673 *caput* and 674 where *cervix* stands for *caput*). Thematically, nonetheless, P.'s headless trunk is a focal piece of the narrative driven by dismemberment.

Throughout the poem's grand mutilation narrative, P.'s head and/or neck have been mentioned as a ghastly premonition to this remark. First of all, in 1.98-104 the mention of Crassus reminds us of decapitation and may

serve as a subtle foreshadowing. Further on, P.'s death is increasingly associated with Egypt. In 2.725-31, while P. flees from Italy, L. calls his hero an exile and foreshadows a distant place for his undeserved end (*quaeritur indignae sedes longinqua ruinae*, 731). At the end of the Senate's meeting at Epirus, L. makes an explicit reference to Ptolemy XIII and P.'s head (5.67-64) giving a preview version of the murder. At 7.709-11 L. addresses P. allowing him the freedom of choosing a place for his death. Also, Lentulus' ghastly focalization of the heads of the Crassi in 8.435-8 serves as a subtle reminder closer to the murder passage and closes off the paradigm started in Book 1. At this point L. switches the scene to the Egyptian court, which takes directly into the vicinity of the murder passage as the atmosphere is amplified further.

**582 *fidem*** A repetition of 572 (*fides si pura foret*). Now it is P.'s turn to deliver his own ironically charged lines. His evocation of *fides* sounds as if he still somehow counts on Ptolemy's loyalty as his client.

**585 *omine laeto*** A binary opposition to the enjambed *distrahimur miseri* (586): C. focalizes the inseparability. It is also true generally in L.: his omens are far from happy. With relation to P. and C., Julia's apparition in Bk. 3 has a significant impact on the narrative (Appendix 4) as well as P.'s dream on

the eve of battle of Pharsalus which gives him a last look on the past before his dismemberment is begun.

**587 *Lesbi*** Lesbos is mentioned solely in association with C. and P. For P. it is a place of safety (5.724-7, 759) whereas C. thinks of it as torment and exile (5.780-1), which she reiterates here. Lesbos also becomes a quasi-Rome for P. who tells the Mytileneans that they have earned the wrath of Caesar by preserving his 'personal' Rome, C., for him. She, in turn, earned not only Caesar's anger but also admiration greater than the inhabitants had for P. (5.150-3) due to her virtuous and strong character. The historic P. likewise had a close relationship with Lesbos and Theophanes (present in Plutarch's account). See Yarrow 2006: 54-8.

**591-2 *nec quoquam avertere visus/nec Magnum spectare potest*** In C.'s frozen state of fascination L. executes his ruling stylistic principle of distancing, terrifying and entertaining the reader. The line emphasizes L.'s desire to involve the audience both visually and emotionally in the scene of murder by using reverse psychology. C. is unable to watch yet she does so passionately, which should produce the same effect on the audience. This fact has a larger dimension not just here but also in the global sense of recognizing and not being able to withstand the crime thrust before your eyes. Henderson 1987 deplores "the horror of the inconceivable and

programmatic collapse of reader into character into text: no one stays out of *this* [sic] story...” (see 149).

**592-3 *stetit...ad ducis eventum*** “The fleet stood anxiously awaiting what was going to happen to their leader”. The construction is not attested anywhere else (Mayer *ad loc.*) and is L.’s own invention; cf. 619 *consensit ad ictum*.

***arma nefasque*** Though at the end of the line, it recalls the famous *arma virumque* as an all-encompassing summary of L.’s epic and P.’s death in particular: weapons put to terrible use. The opening questions of the *Bellum Civile* reveal just that: *quis furor fuit, o cives? quae tanta licentia ferri?*

**594 *ne...adoret*** A jolt of fear reminiscent of 7.666-69 where the reader anticipates P. rushing to his death on the battlefield instead of which he goes around trying to stop his soldiers from fighting (see Appendix 3, 40n.) L. brings out anti-exemplary notes in P.’s character but, as opposed to his rhetorical defense of P. after his defeat at Pharsalus, it is the next character’s entrance that takes away our fear of P.’s weakness.

**596 *Romanus Pharia*** A glaring illogicality that L. favors throughout the epic (cf. e.g. *pila minantia pilis*). Here, however, the perversion is extended to



provoke even more anger: it is not enough that a foreigner eunuch has almost telepathically colluded with Caesar but that he had a fellow Roman to administer the atrocity and thus affirm the essence of civil war. L. pulls out all the stops in 596-600 to lavish Septimius with a description worthy of a true monster (see 599n.).

**597 *Septimius*** Military tribune under Gabinius in Syria, also a former soldier of P. in Spain (Dio 42.3; 573-4 n.). Achilles, commander of Ptolemy's army entrusted with the murder, enlists Septimius, Salvius (another Roman, a centurion) and several others to carry out the treacherous deed (Plut. *Pom.* 78), see 618 n.

**598 *posito deformia pilo*** *Deformia* is synonymous with *regia monstra* (8.613) and other epithets attributed to the gang and Sep. in particular (see n.) A distinctly Roman weapon (*pilum*, in an oblique case) flanks the upright deformity of an unnamed foreign instrument in Septimius' hands. The name of the weapon is postponed just as the band of criminals was unnamed at their first meeting with P., so are their weapons (see 563n.).

**599 *immanis, violentus, atrox*** Hendiadys. To intensify the atmosphere, L. portrays Septimius as a man-eating monster (*nullaque ferarum | mitior in caedes*, 599-600). Mayer notes linguistic similarities that tie Septimius to

Polyphemus in *Aen.* 3.658 (*monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens*), which Statius picks up later in *Theb.* 8.67, (*triste, insuetum, ingens*). L. consistently dehumanizes not just Septimius but the rest of the noxious crew: *scelerata manus* (563) and *regia monstra* (613) add to the inhuman flavor to the murder. Also, the appearance of a monster against a helpless human invites comparison to a gladiatorial setting.

**600-610** See Appendix 3 for the weight and significance of authorial interventions in the murder passage. In this digression that sustains dramatic tension between the introduction of the murderers and the murder itself, L.'s fractured voice is prominent again. *Fortuna*, the main addressee, is being established as not just a capricious destructive force but as deliberately plotting evil against the people of Rome and P. in particular. Fortune here reads as a paradoxical element out to harm the righteous and preserve the immoral and the criminal (Fantham 2003: 245-7); she propagates *nefas* by sparing the nations at the battle of Pharsalus from so noxious a criminal but she delivers a far more sinister blow by concealing her most hideous monster in a place where its strike would be most direct and unavoidable. Thus despite the location away from Italy and Romans Septimius is able to fulfill the curse of the civil wars. L. also prepares the reader for a story (*fabula*) that features a tragic overkill: P.'s fate is sealed by the most offensive combination of a Roman sword in obeisance to a foreign king (606-8). Both

the *fabula* and *posteritas*, which L. evokes as preserving this atrocity for the future ages in the closing rhetorical questions, create the necessary framework for P.'s dying monologue in which he echoes L.'s present address to Fortune.

**607 *Pellaeusque puer*** Boy-king Ptolemy (see 597n.). Mayer (*ad loc.*) notes the alliterative pair of 607 and *Romanus regi* (606) as vocalized contempt.

**600 *Fortuna*** One of L.'s most important watchwords (147 times in the epic) with an equally varied range of meaning. As noted earlier (600-10n.) *Fortuna* in this passage is viewed as malevolent and occurs 5 times in the murder passage. Difficulties associated with L.'s often personified semi-divine element in the epic are indeed great but in this passage she is cast as presiding destructive force and is personified 4 out of 5 times. After the current address, *Fortuna* is prominent towards the end of the passage (686, 701, 708), closely tied to P.'s downfall. Associations between P. and *Fortuna* can be briefly outlined as a failed relationship (or a love affair, see Ahl 1976: 286-9) where P. is past his prime and had already enjoyed all his allotted benefits. Fortune has her programmatic moment in 1.98-120 where two main reasons for the war – Crassus' defeat and Julia's death – are tied to the Fortune as being unable to sustain two leaders (*non cepit fortuna duos*, 1.110). P. has a fortune of not enduring second place (1.124) and relies on his

past achievements to guide him through the present turmoil (*multumque priori | credere fortunae*, 1.135). Julia also reiterates the change in P.'s luck as tied to his marriage to C. (*fortuna est mutata toris*, 3.21) who herself is a significant element in P.'s relationship with Fortune prominent in the theme of guilt and ill luck vis-à-vis C. and her husbands; esp. 5.762-5, 8.90-4 and 8.639. P. himself, in his failed address to the army (2.531-95), prepares to trust Fortune and even describes her as having a sense of justice and logic (2.567-8) which will be ultimately disproven during the tragedy of his murder where L. makes sure that Fortune brings P. as low as she possibly can (esp. 701-4) before L. can attempt a resurrection at the beginning of 9.

On Fortune in L. see Friedrich 1938, Dick 1967, Ahl 1976: 286-305, , Colish 1985: 254-75, Feeney 1991: 279-85 and Fantham 2003: 229-50.

**606 *fabula*** L. presents P.'s death as a story that will transcend history and attain the level of exemplary fiction for future generations (cf. Behr 2007: 107-12).

**610-11 *iam venerat horae...extremae*** Emphatic shift in action. After delaying P.'s murder for as long as he could, L. produces his most significant narrative marker of the murder scene. While the phrase resembles a common epic resumptive, such as the standard technique of dawn used to propel

action, the murder scene features a number of such shifts to mimic helplessness and loss of direction as one of the main themes.

**612** *perdiderat iam iura sui* Cf. 659-60, *et iam Cornelia non est | iuris, Magne, sui*. Mayer notes the contrasts between P.'s immediately following composure as well as his paradoxical similarity to his wife who is being held for life while P. is being held down to be murdered. Mayer continues to note a number of places in L. where governance of one's self is too often given up due to Caes.'s virtual enslavement of the world. L. puts forward the contrast between freedom and slavery due to war and Caes. in 7.363-384 at the close of P.'s transcendental speech.

**614-17** During the killing, P. resembles a Stoic figure. L. reserves this last moment to inject yet another dimension into an already complicated subject: a figure that has been predominantly lethargic is suddenly transformed into what resembles a Stoic sage. P.'s Stoicism is highly ironic: Lintott's (1971, esp. 501-5) shrewd analysis of the Stoic dimension of P. proves him to be (like Caes.) a Stoic fool rather than a *proficiens*, a man on the way to wisdom. Johnson 1987 provides a ruthless yet compelling dissection of P.'s folly and self-adulation as a general and human being (67-101, esp. 72-84). In general, L.'s Stoicism needs to be approached with caution given his propensity to create convoluted clusters of meaning and association.

The most complete study of L.'s relationship with the Stoic tradition is by Heitland 1887. Marti 1945 and Due 1962 also provide treatment of Stoicism in L. Colish 1985: 252-75 provides a great general study along with a detailed bibliography (252-3 157n.). More recently, Behr 2007 studies how the apostrophe and allegorical discourse are closely related to the Stoic doctrine in L.; her chapter on P. deals with the Stoic atmosphere in the overall tragic portrayal.

**614-15 *involvit vultus ... caput*** A traditional Roman gesture (cf. Suetonius *DJ* 82). Mayer notes the double function of *caput* as an object of *involvit* and *praeberere*. Deaths in Lucan are normally approached openly, very often with the desire of being seen, e.g. Scaeva who has two speeches while being pierced from all sides and does not actually die (Scaeva's speeches 6.224-62 and reappearance 10.542-6). P. hides his head in a conventional gesture but in his following soliloquy the murder is presented as an event watched by all the coming generations of Romans (*saecula...attendunt...speculatur*, 622-3). Likewise L. in his earlier address to Fortune invokes posterity as a judge of *fama*, which will attend Septimius' actions.

**618 *Achillas*** Commander of the Egyptian army and a guardian of the young Ptolemy XIII. If L. is credited with stripping account of characters for dramatic purposes as opposed to Plutarch (see Appendix 5), the latter also

paints a highly dramatic picture and in this case helps to shed more light on the preparation for the murder (see *Pom.* 77). Achilles was one of the chief instigators of the murder and was appointed the actual executioner (78.1), while Theodotus (played by Pothinus in L.) provided rhetorical justification. Achilles is significant because he is an Egyptian working alongside the Roman Septimius to kill P., which L. presents as a gross conspiracy against the Roman state. In Plutarch, it is Achilles who summons Septimius and another Roman, Salvius, presumably as a screen for safety and assurance of P.'s trust. In all, Plutarch makes Achilles initiate the murder as he salutes P. from the boat (78) but, like L., reserves the first stab for Septimius (79). After P.'s assassination and Caes.'s arrival he turned against Caes. and took Alexandria only for dissensions to arise between him and Ptolemy's younger sister Arsinoe who had her eunuch Ganymedes put Achilles to death. For this story see Dio 42.4, 36-40. See also 629 n.

**621 *seque probat moriens*** "Tests himself as he dies". Mayer (*ad loc.*)

provides a compelling round of evidence for this typically Stoic action. A Stoic was expected to be unmoved by pain and even smile at the executioner, e.g. Livy 21.2.6 and Sen. *Ep.* 13.5 and esp. 78.18 which L. borrows from directly. Mayer is rather dismissive of L.'s ability to convey successfully P.'s dying thoughts, but P. is too problematic a character: he is not a Stoic and L.

deliberately obscures meaning by introducing Stoic terminology just as he does with *felix* (see 630 n.).

**629 *crede manum soceri*** A misinterpretation with sinister overtones: both P. and C. (641) believe that the hand striking P. is Caes.'s. In fact, P. projects Caes. onto his murderer making him eerily present. Hardie (1993: 35-40) identifies possession and impersonation in epic as a vehicle for the person being imitated (in this case projected) to be actually present. His example from L. is Scaeva who, although not Caes., appropriates some of Caes.'s unstoppable nature (35). In this passage, Hardie continues, Achillas, one of the murderers, stands in for Caes. thus prompting P. to perceive him as such and make Caes.'s presence felt through appropriation (37-8). In *De Bell. Civ.* 3.104 Caesar calls Achillas *singulari hominem audacia* (a man of extraordinary daring). For his role in P.'s murder see also *ibid.* 108-110.

**630 *felix*** 'Fulfilled'. At the heart of his dying speech P. claims that his life has been fulfilled despite the present torture and humiliating defeat. The word is one of the most problematic in L.: Henderson (1988: 128-9) describes the semantic acrobatics of *felix*, e.g. the application of the epithet to Marius, Alexander the Great and Scaeva who attain their own specific *felicitas*. In relation to P., however, fulfillment has not been of his strengths. Ever since P.'s introduction at 1.129-43, which firmly puts his glory in the past,



fulfillment has eluded not only his generalship and rhetorical skills but also his relationship with C. Conversely, P.'s alignment with Sulla, *felix* by cognomen, adds more irony to the exclamation. L. calls P. *felix* (7.29) on the eve of the battle of Pharsalus when P. is given a glimpse of the happy past one last time, yet the reference is ambiguous: it could be either P. or Rome who is happy. Ahl notes the ambiguity and writes that neither P. nor Rome can enjoy the fruits of their love to the full (1976: 289 and *Bell. Civ.* 7.32. Ahl's overall argument centers around the association of Rome with C. which he transcribes as an unfulfilled love affair between P. and Rome; 287-289). Cf. also 7.727 *felix se nescit amari*, 8.706-7 *felix nullo turbante deorum | et nullo parcente miser*, 8.747 *Pompeio felicior umbra* to appreciate the sense of irony and ambiguity L. enjoys in applying the epithet to his most unfulfilled character. During the dying soliloquy, however, irony is the predominant element in P.'s exclamation. He believes that he is happy, fortunate to have great composure in death and have his family, along with future generations of Rome, admire him during his final act at center stage (see Johnson 1987: 79-81, 80 9n.). Hardie (1993: 38 46n.) draws the most telling parallel to the equally ironic and ambiguous exclamation: *sum pius Aeneas* (*Aen.* 1.378).

**634-5 *natus coniunxque peremptum/si mirantur amanti*** 634 ends with an accusative increasing the reader's anticipation, after which there is

another delay in the form of a short, aphoristic conditional. Finally, *amant* is P.'s last word proofing that in his mind love is equal to admiration.

**637 *non patiens*** C. proves that she is stronger than just watching: she would rather suffer. Impatience in the form of intolerance has also been attributed to both P. (e.g. 1.124) and Caes. (e.g. 2.650 and 3.453).

**639-41 *o coniunx ... Caesar*** Mayer notes L.'s model for this speech in Virgil *Aen.* 9.480-502. Euryalus' mother laments her son's death but rules out a possibility of a suicide whereas C. is much more forceful in her desire to die and also in giving specific directions for doing so (see 654-7 n.).

**646 *Qua votum est victo*** 'Where he, in his defeat, prays them fall'. Such paradoxical treatment of defeat as victory is common to L.'s treatment of P. with the most notable instance at 7.577-711.

**646-7** Note the tension between C.'s motives: she wants to die to follow her husband but it also looks as if she is trying to punish him by making him watch her death as P. did to her (Braund 1992: xxxii).

**652 *perfide*** A common poetic way to address a man abandoning his woman (e.g. Catullus *Car.* 64.132-3, Virgil *Aen.* 4.305 and 366). Mayer notes “a neat paradox” with *parcebas*. On L.’s models for C.’s language see Appendix 4.

**656-7 *exigat, praestare, inputet*** Commercial metaphors. C. attempts to persuade the sailors to let her die citing Caes.’s enormous credit in blood and destruction. In economic terms, Caes. owns the world because he pays no retribution for the amount of destruction he causes: his arrogance and fortune allow him an enormous credit. L. makes this explicit at the end of Bk. 4 (816-824). As his eulogy of Curio comes to a close, L. states the difference between previous leaders who bought Rome and Caes. who sold it. The price of Rome, however, is not measured by gold alone, which is what P. tried to prove in his attempt to assert his worth against the overall destruction (7.668, *seque negat tanti*). Later he still insists that *nondum uile sui pretium scit sanguinis esse* (8.9) but his currency had already dropped significantly against Caes.’s. The language of commodity and exchange plays a significant part in L.’s work as a metaphor for disrupted social order and the “triumph of venality” (the title of Coffee’s 2009 chapter on the disruption of norms of exchange in L.).

**662 *trepida fugiente carina*** Cf. 8.35 (*ratis trepidum*). Appears to be Lucan's coinage. Mayer notes that *trepida* implies rapid motion as well as agitation.

**663-91** P.'s decapitation comes as the pivotal moment that resonates throughout the epic (as discussed in 581 n.) but the act itself as presented here stands out in the epic tradition as anomalous and entirely *sui causa*. L.'s predecessors, Homer and Virgil, treated decapitation with specificity to battle and never for the sake of the pure grisly enjoyment Septimius takes in decapitating P.. McClellan (2010: 14-22) provides ample evidence of L.'s innovative approach vis-à-vis his predecessors and rightly states that L.'s explicit purpose is "overt corpse mutilation" (23). The overall framework created by countless headless and otherwise mutilated bodies in L. (see *ibid.* 14-15) speaks in overwhelming favor of the grotesque. Moreover, it is not just P.'s decapitation but also subsequent embalming that adds to the mutilation. L. treats embalming (see 688-91 n.) as part of the outrage against Pompey (*arte nefanda*, 688) and part of the overall body mutilation that evokes Erichtho along with . Even his funeral features grotesque description of half-burned flesh (8.756-8, esp. 777-8 and 786-7), which Cordus hastily buries in the sand. Overall, P.'s decapitation is a hyperbole in terms of tradition and the most important beheading of the poem (see Most 1992: 397).

There is also, however, a strong pathetic flavor in P.'s killing as the actual killing is flanked by L.'s angry address to Fortune and C.'s lamentation. Mayer (*ad loc*) states that L. aims specifically at the pathetic and is "more concerned with ethics than blood". It is true that moral abuse occupies a hugely important place in P.'s treatment, but it is more in keeping with L.'s style to fuse varying elements together to create something unique. The contrasts L. wanted to bring out the most seems to be between P.'s composure and happiness or fulfillment (*felix*) and the outrageous treatment of his body. L. wants as much as possible to make us see the dismemberment of P. as dismemberment of Rome as the final beheading of the state (see Bartsch 1997 ch. 1 for a discussion of dismemberment of state vs. dismemberment of an individual).

**663 *sonent*** Mayer (*ad loc*) suggests that P. is wearing a breastplate. Later Septimius (669, *scisso velamine*) cuts through P.'s clothes to reveal his head. No further conclusions seem possible since *sonere* applied directly to *pectora* and *terga* is anomalous and exists only here.

**664 *decus sacrae venerabile formae*** Strong contrast with *trahere damnatum leto* where P. was a victim of Fate. L. treats his death as a starting point that gives way to two 'solidifications' of P. At the moment of death his features become sacred, i.e. he enters the state of official symbolic

consecration in the form of a traditional *imago* (see Erasmo 2008: 114-16).

The second instance is solidification via a gruesome mutilation by embalming (see 688 n.). At 667 L. confirms that even in death P.'s features remained unchanged. By presenting P.'s head as an ancestor mask L. aligns him with Rome, or at least the Roman past paraded during funerals.

**665 *iratom*** MSS reading. Considerable difficulties in interpretations forced an emendation to *placatom* to restore consistency (Shackleton Bailey 1982 ad 8.665). P. resigned himself to the fates and chose death over fear (575-6) disregarding negativity – and consequent disarrangement of features - which *iratom* forces into the overall narrative of composure. Mayer (*ad loc*) argues that L. had trouble envisioning what he tried to describe and that there is a number of sources that confirm fixity of expression in death as a common trope, e.g. Diod. Sic. 17.58 (a decapitation), Lucr. 3.654 f, St. *Th.* 3.94 and Sen. *Herc. Oet.* 1608, 1684, 1726. Fantham (2003: 244-7) draws no conclusion but provides a compelling breakdown of evidence based on how L. uses *placare* elsewhere which makes the case both for and against the emendation. Since L.'s epic is generally claimed as unfinished, smaller points remain unedited.

**668 *maius scelus*** Septimius piles crime upon crime as is proper in the narrative where *scelus* and the variants appear 85 times generating a

powerful framework of transgression of law, morality and the civil right. Cf. Seneca *Tr.* 45 (*ipsasque ad aras maius admissum scelus*) and *Phoen.* 269 (*scelerisque pretium maius accepi scelus*) and 457-8 (*si placuit scelus, | maius paratum est*).

**669 scisso** From *scindo*, a particularly violent word in L., often intensified. It occurs with references to physical mutilation (3.192, 3.434, 3.638) and that of the state as well (1.551, 10.416).

**670 semianimis** Erasmo (2008: 115) notes that throughout the murder passage we never quite get the sense that P. is actually dead. Even though we are invited to contemplate the nature of death and P.'s response, the half-breathing moving head makes it rather uncomfortable. L. emphasizes this further at 682-4 before the head is fixed on a steak. The semi-alive state of P. fulfills a double role in creating the macabre and foreshadowing P.'s *katasterism* in Book 9.

**671 colla languentia** "Drooping neck". Lucan came close to this scene before in 3.737-8: *ille caput labens et iam languentia colla / uiso patre leuat*. Cf. *Aen.* 9.331, *pendentia colla* as Nisus and Euryalus hack off their opponents' heads.

**672-3 *tunc ... diu*** Note the enjambment for added macabre. Hutchinson (1993: 324) notes that it is small details such as this and the butcher's bench (671) that send shivers down the spine. L. substitutes the open grotesque of battle narrative and necromancy for equally terrifying subtleties.

**673 *nondum ... rotare*** L. justifies the sheer gruesomeness of Septimius' act thus doubling the macabre (Most 1992: 397 notes the sheer cynicism of the line). This is L.'s considerably more noticeable detailing that provokes further disgust by distancing the reader from the action and setting up a fictional account of the current methods of decapitation. McClellan (2010: 1-7) observes that decapitations that occurred in earlier epic, namely Homer, feature definite capability of warriors to lop off a head clean along with the helmet. L.'s purpose is therefore to shock and surprise the reader with a seemingly ridiculous remark, which at the same time produces visceral unease.

**675 *vindicat*** 'Lays claim to', legal vocabulary (*OLD* s.v. *vindico* 1). Achilles, representing Ptolemy, lays a legal claim to the most important piece of evidence.

**676 -711** Marked increase in juxtaposition of conflicting elements: Lucan develops a fugue-like ending to Pompey's murder in an intensified cascade of



contrasts that culminate together in the hyperbolic pathos of P.'s headless trunk (see 710-11 n.). The two murderers (*satelles* and *degener*) clash with P.'s sacred features (*sacrum caput*); the depravity of the young king (*inpius puer*) with P.'s age and reputation (*verenda | regibus hirta coma*). The contrasts increase in magnitude to include more abstract concepts that reflect some of L.'s main concerns, e.g. *sceleris superesse fidem*. The embalming mirrors the murder in its grisliness but contrasts it with its alien nature. L. continues to increase intensity with the lofty tombs finally ending in a pathetic scene of P.'s trunk on the shore.

**681 caesaries** P.'s revered hair is a flashback to Caes.'s meeting with *Roma* in 1.185-203. Just as P.'s earlier alignment with Crassus (684 n.), he is now associated with Rome and her lacerated hair (*caesaries*, 189) on her tower-bearing head (188). The state is now officially beheaded. *Caesaries* is chillingly evocative of Caes. whose presence at the Rubicon is also felt here. See Henderson 1987: 139 on Caes.'s linguistic possession of the narrative.

**683 singultus** Normally of *anima*, or breath, (*OLD* s.v. *singultus* 1b, c) but could also denote of blood spurting from a wound or the neck where the head had been cut off: cf. *Aen.* 9.332-3, *truncumque relinquit | sanguine singultantem*. In L., the words occurs only once elsewhere, 4.180 *arma rigant lacrimis, singultibus oscula rumpunt* 'they drench with tears their weapons,

with sobs they break their kisses' (trans. Braund) where *singultus* describes affection between fellow Romans.

Also see McClellan 2010: 7-8 on the history of the expression and its relation to decapitation in particular.

**684 *suffixum caput est*** L. aligns P. with Crassus at 1.98-108 whose death unleashed the civil war. It also concludes the Parthian paradigm from P.'s speech in 8.262-326 at the end of P. imagines that Fortune will avenge either him or the Crassi. Also, note the delay: the process starts with *ut*, then *Pharioque veruto*, and only now *suffixum*.

**688-91** After the murder, P.'s head is embalmed in an outrage that mirrors Septimius' piling crime upon crime and adds a dimension of a markedly alien practice of embalming which L. portrays as further mutilation of P.'s body. L. used the incident described in Tacitus (*Ann.* 6.16) where Nero embalmed Poppaea's body *regum externorum consuetudine* (after the custom of foreign kings) without cremating her as was the Roman custom but filling her body with spices. Markedly xenophobic attitude to the custom persisted in Rome since the Republic and variance in reaction to ethnic burial practices is recorded as early as Herodotus (*Hist.* 3.38) who also preserves one of the fullest treatments of the Egypt-specific practice (2.86-89). For history and attitude to embalming at Rome see Counts 1996.

**688 *arte nefanda*** Ptolemy XIII's choice of preservation of evidence evokes Erichtho's practices in general, but seems to echo 6.565-9 in particular where she performs a mutilation of a head.

**692-700** This frames L.'s curse of Egypt from 8.542-60, especially against the young Ptolemy, and allows him to set up the atmosphere in Book 10 where the Egyptian court appears once again in its deceptive glory. L. makes the contrast between the underserved tombs of the Ptolemaic dynasty and P. whose nameless corpse is struck by the waves. The clearness and transparency of L.'s words betray an elegiac tone and are meant to be taken at face value as a statement of pathos and grief at the injustice.

**693 *incestae sorori*** Cleopatra the VII. L. includes her here as part of his diatribe against Egyptians but it is also a foreshadowing of her appearance in Book 10, esp. her speech to Caes. at 82-103 where she feigns loyalty and, though seemingly accusing Pothinus of a crime against Rome (103), does the same with her pathetic appearance to beg Caes. for pardon. *Incesta* refers to both the young Ptolemy and Antony whom L. mentions at 10.70-2.

**694 *Macedon*** Alexander the Great. Usually *Macedo*, but here seems to perform metrical role (see Mayer ad loc). Cf. 10.20-52 where a far more

elaborate diatribe against Alexander compares him to Caes. (esp. 34-5, *terrarum fatale malum fulmenque*) in terms of the amount of destruction and suffering he brought into the world.

**695 *extracto monte*** Sc. *sub*; from *extrudo*, ‘under the heaped mountain’, i.e. tomb; as a past participle, refers mainly to structures and battlements (*OLD* s.v. 1). Rare in poetry though there are early appearances in Lucretius (e.g. 6.186). On two other occasions in L. (3.530 and 8.819) the meaning is the same as here.

**696 *seriemque pudendam*** “Line full of disgrace”. Mayer notes *series* used of a family (4.823). He does not mention a possible allusion between Caes.’s line whose last descendant sold Rome with the Ptolemy who also sold his alliance with P.

***pudendam*** Cf. *temptare pudendum* | *auxilium* (8.389-90) of P.’s proposition to call on the Parthians for help.

**697 *indignaque Mausolea*** ‘Mausoleums you do not deserve’. L. sets up a contrast with P.’s meager tomb.

**698 *litora Pompeium feriunt*** P. has become an object of Nature, a part of the elements themselves. The passives *iactatur* (699), *pulsatur* (708), *carpitur*

(709) contrast with predominantly active tenses in the preceding description of the tombs. The difference is that the Ptolemaic line is mostly extinct while L.'s P. is ready for a new life. The description of the body is reminiscent of Palinurus (*Aen.* 6.362, *nunc me fluctus habet versantque in litore venti*).

**701 *hac fide...pertulit*** The same sentiment is expressed by Virgil (*Aen.* 2.554-7) vis-à-vis Priam. L. gives P.'s *fabula* a fable-like ending that echoes the beginning of the murder scene at 581-2, *in hac cervice tyranni | explorete fidem*.

**702-4 *summo de culmine ... die*** L. fashions P. into a tragic character according to the Aristotelian model (see Behr 2007: 80-7). Even though the process of P.'s demise is a result of a series of historical and circumstantial twists, L. chose the span of a single day to force the tragic allusion and intensity.

***uno die*** Mayer (*ad loc*) notes L.'s tendency to use masculine with oblique cases of *dies*.

**703 *exegit*** Also commercial meaning, see 656 n.

**705 *fuist*** See 572-4 n. L.'s final remarks on P.'s death again bring out the fall of Troy, especially speeches by Hector (*Aen.* 2.281-95) and Panthus (2.324-6).

As P. dies, Rome's destruction is complete. The only difference between Virgil and L. is that in L. there is no hero, however flawed, escaping the carnage to found a new Troy or a new Rome. This is the constant pulsating black hole of L.'s universe.

**708 *dilata manu*** "The hand kept away for a long time". The combination of *defero* with *manus* is unattested anywhere else. Note the paradox regarding Fortune: the hand of Fortune, kept in restraint, knocked P. down at once with a single stroke.

**710 *ludibrium*** Cf. 7.379-80 (*Magnus, nisi vincitis, exul, | ludibrium soceri...*) where P. has a vision of what he might become and warns the multitude of nations to stop the slaughter and prevent, essentially, this phrase. The word is very rare in poetry, cf. *Aen.* 6.75 (*ne turbata volent rapidis ludibria ventis*) used of the Sybil's prophecies.

**710-11** It is hardly surprising that L. finishes P. off with an allusion to Priam since Virgil did the same (*Aen.* 2.557-8) but in reverse. Virgil was blatantly obvious in his reference (cf. Servius *In Verg. Aen.* 2.557.2) expressing the same sentiment as L.: death of Priam was as significant to him as the death of the last Republican. L. capitalizes on the allusion to complete the parallel between Troy's symbolic destruction as paving the way for the foundation of Rome whereas L. completes the destruction of the new Troy as the death of

*libertas*. As opposed to Virgil, whose sentence is simple and unambiguous (*avulsumque umeris caput et sine nomine corpus*), L. creates a new paradoxical identity for P.: his only distinguishing mark is the very absence of the severed head. Mayer dismisses L. as “inelegant” in adding superfluous detail that cancels out Virgil’s simple pathos (see *ad loc*), yet it is hardly surprising why L. chose a paradox. As opposed to Virgil who strove for Priam’s anonymity that allowed him to substitute Priam for P., L. wants an explicit confirmation that the corpse is indeed P.’s and the way to recognize it *is* by the absence of the head that has been one of L.’s focal points not just in the account of P.’s murder but of the entire work.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1:

#### Book 8 and its Place in the *Bellum Civile*

Book 8 occupies a peculiar place in the *Bellum Civile*: it narrates the flight and death of Pompey in an ostentatiously moralizing and grotesque form making it Lucan's first committed character portrayal. Book 8 may not appear as a defining 'central' moment of the epic, yet its significance cannot be diminished because of Lucan's sympathy for Pompey and therefore the attention and skill devoted to describing the general's demise. As for the actual placement of the book within the overall structure of the *Bellum Civile*, we cannot be certain: questions of scope and length of the epic are largely a matter for speculation.<sup>1</sup> Some scholars proposed a sixteen-book epic that would have ended with Caesar's death<sup>2</sup> and some argued that Lucan intended an opus stretching down to the battle of Actium.<sup>3</sup> A twelve book epic ending with Cato's suicide is a more likely ending since it would have preserved the atmosphere and required an attainable length in keeping with the *Aeneid* against whose "literary tyranny" Lucan rebelled.<sup>4</sup> A twelve-book poem would have placed the Erichtho episode in the middle as a re-working of Aeneas' trip to the Underworld. Yet, by observing general patterns of Lucan's design, we can easily

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<sup>1</sup> For the most complete summaries of the arguments Ahl 1976: 306-32 and Masters 1992: 234-59.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Marti 1970: 10-12.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. R.T. Bruère "The Scope of Lucan's Historical Epic" *Classical Philology* Vol. 55, No. 4, (Oct. 1950), pp. 217-35.

<sup>4</sup> See Ahl 1976: 319-26. The majority of scholarship points to the proposed twelve-book length as it would have closed many themes in the *Bellum Civile*.

assert that it is far from the organically composed *Aeneid* or Homer's *Iliad* and therefore thematic structure is more important in Lucan than a governing design encompassing smaller episodes. The episodic structure of the *Bellum Civile* has confirmed that a similar structural analysis is essentially futile since Lucan is not entirely concerned with the whole as he certainly is with self-contained pieces of unprecedented thematic and linguistic intensity.<sup>5</sup> Lucan's text revels in abolition and transgression; it defies traditional boundaries and crosses a number of Rubicons<sup>6</sup> in order to present an opposition to both history and literature in a manner where events, emotions and the grisly war take precedence over an arranged structure.

Book 8 opens the so-called character section of the epic where each of the three major figures takes precedence over otherwise episodic narrative. Books 1 to 6 feature an uneven mixture of focus, which shifts arbitrarily between the Caesarians and the Pompeians with particular emphases on self-contained episodes, which variously illustrate and comment on Lucan's subject. Among these are the battle at Massilia (Bk. 3) and Vulteius' suicide (Bk. 4) that comment variously on the nature of the civil war and the grotesque type of devotion induced by Caesar in his men respectively.<sup>7</sup> They also function as preparatory books for the battle of Pharsalus

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* Braund also mentions the performative aspect of Lucan's work: given the poem's open sensationalism and episodic structure, performances of self-contained episodes would have been very likely, perhaps even dictating Lucan's progress to a degree.

<sup>6</sup> Taken from Yanick Maes' "Starting Something Huge: Pharsalia I 183-193 and the Virgilian Intertext" in Walde 2004. His argument centers on the break with the tradition as a programmatic statement for both the subject and the form of Lucan's poem.

<sup>7</sup> The episodes at Massilia and the mass suicide show Lucan's treatment of the civil war by mirroring or opposing the leaders' actions and motives. The Massilians, for example, although a Greek colony, exhibit a much stronger sense of national preservation than Romans themselves, particularly the

primarily by anticipating and foretelling the final day of Roman liberty. Among these are the omens in 1.522-583 and the matron's prophecy in 2.38-42, Julia's prophecy in 3.8-36 and Appius' visitation of the oracle in 5.64-236 all of which contain messages of doom and destruction. The culmination of this anticipation is Sextus Pompey's consultation of Erichtho. The mentioned episodes also invite the discussion of the epic scope and structure, with which I will deal shortly, but I will begin with a brief look at how Book 8 fits into the overall pattern as a climax of the poem.

The battle of Pharsalus in Book 7 is largely anticlimactic - although no less chilling in his account - as the battle of battles we expect does not happen. Instead, we see an increased concentration of character-related material as Lucan chose to spend more time on Caesar and Pompey and their conflicting attitudes as well as a marked shift in the structure of the narrative itself. After the terrifying description of Erichtho's rites, which served as a climax for the preceding narrative, Book 7 takes over earlier themes and prepares the reader for the real climax of the epic, which is Pompey's flight and murder. It opens with Pompey's flashback to the past in a rare dream episode emphasizing the contrast with reality which next sees Pompey attempt to resist Cicero's urge to finally unleash the war (7.84-123). Both the dream and the exchange with Cicero recall earlier episodes of Pompey's indecisiveness and delay as well as contrast Caesar's universal desire to conquer.

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Pompeians who choose to flee instead of engaging the enemy. Vulteius' crew is an example of devotion that Caesar's troops, however bizarrely, exhibit in following their leader. Both episodes are part of the overall frame of *exemplum* literature of Livy and Valerius Maximus. I discuss this further in Chapter 3.

This is followed by an address to Thessaly as a terrifying otherworldly place, as the Erichtho episode proved just prior, and a long speech by Caesar in which he urges on destruction and, like a black hole, takes all the blame on himself.<sup>8</sup> The battle narrative is short<sup>9</sup> and does not measure up to Lucan's previous battles in their graphic power, yet it is full of terror and despair and contains one of the most beautiful woefully lyric passages in the epic.<sup>10</sup>

This change in the narrative technique emphasizes shorter, more pointed episodes that deal particularly with Pompey and the republican cause which help establish the atmosphere of alienation and particularly the shortness and poignancy of Pompey's murder later in Book 8. After the battle the focus is almost exclusively on Pompey who vainly tries to prevent destruction and somehow forestall the defeat by claiming that he is not worth that much.<sup>11</sup> An even sharper contrast between him and Caesar is established as the latter's overwhelming presence sweeps over the battlefield and occupies everything that was Pompey's. *Fortuna* is also present in Pompey's speech (7.659-66) as he blames her for the destruction: a theme that will recur specifically as he is murdered.<sup>12</sup> After Book 7 the civil war is effectively over and a new development is opened up, namely the tragedy of a man under whose leadership the war was lost.

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<sup>8</sup> Among these episodes is Caesar's role in felling the sacred grove in 3.432-449 and his ability to house all the dead souls within his unrepentant self in 7.772-6.

<sup>9</sup> The battle does not start until 460 and lasts only until 646 dominated by Caesar's Bellona-like figure and Domitius' death.

<sup>10</sup> "As the world is dying..." (7.617-46) is a set-piece combination of lyric and the grotesque which could be read as a separate poem commenting on the epic outside of it. It is similar to Purcell's sad and beautiful ode of Dido "When I am laid in earth" from his "Dido and Aeneas".

<sup>11</sup> 7.666-9. Pompey argues in economic terms; see 656-7 n.

<sup>12</sup> See 600n.

Structurally, the epic changes from portraying incidents and episodes to a sustained character treatment whose pivotal nature in the entire affair created considerable space for Lucan's innovative and complex treatment. Pompey is a hinge on whom the idea of liberty depended and was still alive, his figure - a tottering old trunk - is a quasi-Atlas that supported now non-existent foundations of a free state. The entire epic before the end of Book 7 depended on Pompey as its driving (and yielding) force which now is put into full perspective of a tragedy. Book 8 still retains the episodic structure of the previous narrative but the episodes are concentrated on Pompey as they increase dramatically to culminate in his death. He flees the battlefield to be reunited with Cornelia - a tragic episode in itself<sup>13</sup> - and attempts to salvage the pieces of a broken world in a mad proposition to side with Parthia, a proposition vehemently refuted by Lentulus, who proposes Egypt as the best bet since it owes Pompey its position of power. The pair of speeches highlights the tragic dimensions of Pompey's character as despair rather than logic prevails in his argument.<sup>14</sup> The episode in the Egyptian court is another contrasting rhetorical set-piece in which wickedness and betrayal in Pothinus' speech eclipse a short interjection in defense of loyalty by Acoreus,<sup>15</sup> which Lucan carried over from the sharp contrast between Pompey and Caesar emphasized in Book 7. Authorial interventions also become increasingly pointed in Book 8 as they perform a

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<sup>13</sup> See Appendix 4.

<sup>14</sup> The juxtaposition of speeches follows the pattern established since the introduction of Pompey and Caesar in Book 1. All of Pompey's speeches are in contrast with Caesar's whose rhetoric is much more persuasive. Here, however, Lentulus is of the same party as Pompey but his role is not to so much to counter Pompey's ineffectiveness as to create an atmosphere of irony that Lucan then carries over to the Egyptian court and Pothinus' address in particular.

<sup>15</sup> Acoreus, the just orator, only gets two lines in a paraphrase, 8.480-1.



particular structural role in framing episodes and shaping the emotional response of the audience.<sup>16</sup> The death and the beheading itself is a highly complex mixture of the grotesque, the tragic and the pathetic that Lucan has managed to create and crystallizes the contrasts developed earlier as a number of themes, most prominently Pompey's character as leader and the head of Rome as well as his relationship with Cornelia, come to a close.

As a whole, the book comes as a first unique and unified narrative after much negotiating of narrative space dedicated to specific episodes in the previous books. Book 7 serves as a bridge between the episodic structure and a more concentrated narrative which tends increasingly towards character portrayal that perhaps was meant to the end with Cato's suicide. Pompey's place in this setup is therefore assuredly central since his death not only marked the end of the war in symbolic terms but produced enough material for extending the appropriate atmosphere of a tragic defeat. In terms of structure Pompey would have been very likely to reappear at the end as a closure to Cato's remark in his own eulogy of the man<sup>17</sup> and certainly would have given Lucan an opportunity to compare and contrast Cato's Stoic qualities with Pompey's self-control. Moreover, given the fact that Lucan's Cato and Caesar are depicted as forces of change rather than historical figures may also indicate that the poem is about a change of the political order on the global scale, a change in national collective consciousness if you will, rather than a historical account. This change then has a logical end point at Cato's suicide but the

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<sup>16</sup> More on this in Appendix 2.

<sup>17</sup> Namely the fact that Cato is blatant about Pompey's shortcomings; see Appendix 2.

dramatic and tragic aspect of this change that sustains Lucan's narrative is the pivotal figure of Pompey.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> On the continued debate of scope and length of the epic see Bexley 2009.

## **Appendix 2:**

### **Pompey**

Lucan's choice of writing Pompey as an odd, insecure, vain and a deeply tragic figure adds depth to the monochromatic nature of a work where Pompey's adversaries, Caesar and Cato, are as black and white as characters become. The latter two, of course, are not cut-outs: Lucan takes them to such an extreme that their seeming one-sidedness transcends human nature and becomes a superhuman force or a binary opposition of pure opposing energies. For this Lucan needed a bridge and a foil, someone human who would stand for a brief moment amid the great flashes of energy of the supernovas and reflect the full tragedy of the historical subject under scrutiny. In other words, Pompey is a key figure in Lucan's hyper-dramatic treatment of history as he shows the reality of the human side which in the end is treated as an exemplary story not of a courageous general but rather a case of dignity overcoming the outrage of betrayal - as the final scene of Pompey's murder will demonstrate.

In general, Pompey is a paradox that refuses to be unraveled.<sup>19</sup> He is vain and insecure, yet somehow he manages to attract attention and win the sympathies

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<sup>19</sup> Treatments of Pompey's character I found most useful are Ahl 1967: 150-89, Johnson 1987: 67-101, Rudich 1997: 156-69 and Leigh 1997: 111-57. Leigh deals mainly with Book 7 yet through placing Pompey on the battlefield at Pharsalus he manages to draw the complete character out of the entire narrative.

of both the reader, the characters and the author.<sup>20</sup> Lucan deliberately mixes contrasting and often conflicting qualities in Pompey who becomes a distinct sub-narrative, a puzzle, even a fable, as Lucan himself claims,<sup>21</sup> that is not readily available to inspire awe (like Caesar and Cato) but to be observed and judged as a sum of its parts as opposed to a whole.<sup>22</sup> Major milestones in understanding Pompey's character in the *Bellum Civile* are his introduction at 1.120-43, his speech to the army in 2.531-595, parts of Book 7 that deal with his attitude to the final battle at Pharsalus, and his death in Book 8 which, paradoxically, is the central moment of his life. A good starting point, however, is Cato's eulogy of Pompey late in the epic (9.190-214) as it provides an insight into the paradox in a series of juxtapositions that mark the conflicting nature of the man. Cato begins with *civis obit* ('a citizen has died', 190), which, in his mind, is the highest compliment and a theme for the rest of his address.<sup>23</sup> He was inferior to his ancestors in dealing with power yet he remained respectful; he showed reluctance to accept absolute rulership and preserved civic freedoms (191-4). He was a master of not harming liberty while still retaining great influence and did not demand anything from war: instead he preferred that whatever the populace might want to bestow upon him could also be refused him (194-6). He dealt with the official government of the Senate the same

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<sup>20</sup> The particular episode is Lucan's treatment of Pompey after the battle of Pharsalus in 7.680-727. Despite his loss, Lucan offers a long sympathetic eulogy of Pompey in which the physical loss is seen as a win in moral terms.

<sup>21</sup> 8.612. During his angry address to Fortune, Lucan presents Pompey's story as a moral fable of tragedy, defeat and dignity. As Pompey is killed, his symbolic nature during the war attains the status of an exemplary tale after his death; see 39n. below. The aspect of *fabula* is discussed in 606 n.

<sup>22</sup> Rudich (1997): 156.

<sup>23</sup> Ahl 1976: 158.

way by asserting his individual authority while not obstructing the legitimacy and importance of the major republican institution.<sup>24</sup> All around, Pompey was a sensible and conscientious leader who maintained a fair balance between republican values and the power of a single individual: a dangerous line in Roman politics that he managed to sustain. He possessed formidable military skill but was also capable of ceasing from warfare. Once at war, however, his activity was concentrated on restoring peace (199-200). So far Cato painted a portrait that mixed aversion with sympathy, but this is where his praise ends. Pompey was not the last defense of the republican order: he was simply the last in line before the doomed state finally succumbed to Caesar's power. He was merely a fictional idea of liberty that perished when Sulla and Marius destroyed republican ideals. Cato puts it simply by saying that all shabby screens that protected a non-existent republic are completely gone and tyranny is ready to storm the already fallen city (206-7). Cato's agenda, of course, is blatantly obvious but as it stands in terms of the overall narrative his assessment is fair.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, he praises Pompey's composure at the time of death and wishes to be presented to his own conqueror without his head. But even then Pompey is the next to best thing, not the thing itself.<sup>26</sup> Cato mixes praise and criticism in his account which conflicts with Lucan's purpose of creating a narrative that sets up a weak character to overcome Fate in his final moment. While Cato is

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<sup>24</sup> 9.194-5. Cato uses *rector* ('guide, leader'), one of Cicero's terms to describe prudent governorship and proper authority (e.g. *De Or.* 1.211.6, *De Rep.* 2.51.11)

<sup>25</sup> Cato's agenda is somewhat iconoclastic: the idea of *ficta* seems to erase Pompey from the entire narrative as irrelevant.

<sup>26</sup> 211. Cato turns the circumstances of Pompey's murder against Pompey just previously: *cui quaerendos Pharium scelus obtulit enses* (209, 'the wickedness of Pharos brought to him the swords he should have sought').

brutally realistic, Lucan is brutally tragic.<sup>27</sup> His assessment of Pompey, dependent on the key episodes mentioned above, paints a picture where unfairness of fate and fortune prevail. Lucan's treatment of Pompey is pointedly dramatic as he takes an approach of mixing Pompey's negative qualities but adding a dose of sympathy for the character that ultimately concentrates on Pompey's tragedy and the defining moment of his death.

Two main problems arise from this speech and reflect on the preceding narrative: Pompey's association with Rome as her protector and the manner of Pompey's death. Cato's words conflict with Lucan's own treatment of Pompey as several important passages and pointed authorial interventions demonstrate. Lucan constantly associates Pompey with Rome's last defense despite Cato's claim and the manner of Pompey's death, which Lucan crafts with utmost precision, reveals that the author is concerned more with the drama and tragedy of Pompey's life rather than his political flaws or moral weakness. Lucan is interested in the sharpness and clarity of Pompey's tragic fate and imbues his character with a high degree of emotion, passion and humanity that create the necessary depth required in Pompey's complex figure. Pompey begins the *Bellum Civile* as a personification of

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<sup>27</sup> Johnson 1976 implies that Cato and Lucan work in unison in their ruthless dissection of Pompey (72). I think it is more fruitful to look at the relationship between Lucan and his internal narratees as separate and even conflicting especially since Lucan often enters the poem himself to comment on a variety of subjects. Lucan establishes Cato as an unreliable narrator: Cato's purpose, clearly established at 2.388 as 'a husband and father of Rome', seems to clash with Pompey's role as a protector of Rome, which Lucan does not oppose and even endorses, especially in Pompey's response to Cicero (7.87-120). Cato's eulogy, therefore, is in conflict with Lucan's own treatment of the Pompey-Rome paradigm mainly because of his subjective sympathy but also because of the tragic and symbolic aspects of Pompey's character that Lucan is so keen to emphasize: as Pompey loses the battle of Pharsalus, Lucan writes that rivalry is from now on between liberty and Caesar (7.695-6). Also, see Ahl 1976: 158-9 on the conflicting lines of association between Cato, Pompey and the Republic.

Rome and ends it as a Virgilian symbol of the destruction of Troy.<sup>28</sup> An apocalyptic vision of Rome 1.67-82 (particularly the inability to bear her own weight) programs the epic and also foreshadows Pompey's entrance described as a contrast between him and Caesar (120-57). Lucan emphasizes the tragedy from the beginning: the contrast between the two leaders is clear overkill since no question about who will win this death match can ever arise.<sup>29</sup> Pompey is a weak old man<sup>30</sup> and has forgotten the art of war through neglect and complete devotion to civic activities and excessive populism (131-5). The oak tree simile that follows shows him as a hollow tree trunk used for dedications and homage to once unmatched military success (135-140). Pompey had become an object of veneration, something acted upon by others, a passive figure whose former power united Rome as a fusion of her leader's successes with his lack or tyrannical ambition.<sup>31</sup> Pompey's speech (2.526-595) to his army boasts that he *is* essentially Rome, her only legitimate protector (538-9) against the frenzied Gallic hordes of Caesar. Pompey emphasizes his legitimacy and right, but Lucan, while giving the general a patriotic address of lawful right vs. tyrannical *nefas*, emphasizes Pompey's ineffectiveness and internal

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<sup>28</sup> See 19 n above.

<sup>29</sup> In addition to deliberate exaggeration Lucan also adds gladiatorial overtones. Pompey reminds us of a weak fighter or a wounded beast meant for a dramatically spectacular kill. Pompey partakes of one of Lucan's biggest thematic designs: fascination with death and the gladiatorial spectacle. On this aspect of Lucan's poem see Ahl 1976: 84-115 for a comprehensive study; Leigh 1997 makes the theme of spectacle the overall subject of his study of Lucan. One of the main themes in his work (final three chapters in particular) is the Caesarians' desire to turn the civil war into a spectacle. His chapter on Pompey (110-58) deals with the general as a spectator. Leigh's excellent study offers analysis of the notable 'gladiatorial' episodes in Lucan such as the battle of Massilia in Book 3, Hercules and Antaeus, the Vulteus episode in Book 4, and the Libyan snakes in Book 9. In addition, see Roche 2009 7n. for a useful general overview of the theme.

<sup>30</sup> Lucan exaggerates: Pompey was not much older.

<sup>31</sup> In short, Pompey is a subject of the past and an object of the present. Henderson 1987 illustrates the linguistic opposition in this grotesque relationship that manifests itself in the very language of the poem (137-8).

weakness. The entire speech does not actually address the army (as all Caesar's speeches do) but Caesar. Pompey is engaged in a dialogue with a figure whom he is imagining to be Caesar, his own version of the adversary rather than the real one. His catalogue of Roman victories against enemies of the State places Caesar among them (539-54) but carries only a rhetorical appeal that may rouse a debate, not a battle. Pompey's argument is that he lacks tyrannical ambitions (562-7) and his proof, a crucial point for Lucan's exploration of tragedy vis-à-vis Pompey, is that Fortune is not a blind curse but has a sense of logic and right (567-8).<sup>32</sup> Pompey is, of course, tremendously wrong as Lucan ruthlessly sets his character up for the opposite: Fortune is in fact blind, even Apuleian in nature,<sup>33</sup> as Pompey himself will come to lament at and after the battle of Pharsalus and most importantly at the moment of his death. Pompey's speech is boastful and even vain in its sheer ineffectiveness and failure to inspire opposition, yet it preserves all the necessary notes of a good leader who relies on law and civility. Pompey's main failure, however, is that his speech is not even a great address to Caesar: there are overpowering notes of an attempt at self-persuasion, a degree of consciousness of the situation that is completely forbidden if one is to win. Pompey places constant emphasis on the glory of his past achievements thus making his address to Fortune as both rightly justified and deeply tragic as he tries to find ways to believe that Rome's - and his - former glory may somehow preserve justice. Despair and tragedy

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<sup>32</sup> Major difficulties associated with Lucan's treatment of Fortune and Fate stem from the poet's lack of adhering to well-defined categories of function of either. See 600 n.

<sup>33</sup> *Caeca Fortuna* acts as Lucius' cruel persecutor in the *Metamorphoses* but the novel is often seen as a *Bildungsroman* whereas Lucan's Fortuna offers nothing of learning and fosters evil.



pervade the ending of the speech as Pompey begins to hurl accusations into the empty air that fail to find Caesar, accusations that end in his most hubristic and tragic utterance so far: “it is not you [the Roman weapons] flee, but I they follow” (575).<sup>34</sup> Pompey fails to persuade himself but, most importantly, his army whose response is emphatically unenthusiastic (596-7) and Lucan gives us a preview of Book 8 in the following episode where Pompey, after losing a rhetorical contest, sends his son Sextus to advocate Eastern alliances to help with the struggle.<sup>35</sup>

The next time Pompey appears in an official setting is at the Senate’s meeting at Epirus (5.9-49). Although he does not speak, he is at the center as an officially appointed leader. The emphasis of the episode is on legality and right as proper state procedures are still carried out during the war. Pompey’s previously seen boastfulness is somewhat tamed as the Senate explains to the coalition that they are not in Pompey’s party but he is in theirs (13-14). Shortly afterwards he is appointed as leader but Lucan’s word choice (*imponere*, imposed, 48) betrays tragic notes as he ties Pompey’s fate to Rome’s (48-9) - the latter known to have collapsed already.

The most striking and lengthy episode in reading Pompey is Book 7 which opens with the “final part of happy life for Magnus” (7) in a rare dream episode<sup>36</sup> that takes us back to his theater in 1.133 and closes an important chapter in

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<sup>34</sup> Trans. Braund. All further translations and English quotations are hers as well.

<sup>35</sup> 2.628-649. Pompey is utterly helpless while the narrative is dominated by the still unseen yet quite terrifying Caesar (2.600).

<sup>36</sup> Lucan’s dreams are very rare yet their function of framing narratives is greatly significant. Another important dream related to Pompey is his vision of Julia (3.8-35) who embodies his link to Caesar as something much more sinister than a marriage tie as hell is being expanded to accommodate all the dead from the civil war and she herself is waiting for him to re-join his wife.

Pompey's life. As Cato remarks about the screens of legality disappearing after Pompey's death, so whatever is left of Pompey's confidence and overall hope disappears in Book 7. Fortune, which he regarded as sensible, gives him a glimpse of Rome he used to have (24) as she prepares to strike Pompey with all the power she used to elevate him, but Lucan, who writes this as an apostrophe to the guards of the camp, injects his characteristic sympathy as he also watches over Pompey's final repose. Lucan, however, continues his address in different terms: he does not (at least not yet) see Fortune as hostile and laments her losing Pompey's grave as Rome will weep for him in a single lament (33-44). In general, Book 7 goes back to the introduction of Pompey and Caesar at the beginning to pick up the same contrasts and expand them considerably in the context of the final battle as the thunderbolt finally strikes the oak. During the course of the book, Pompey sees his fortune change from bad to worse while Caesar, whose unbridled audacity runs the show, gains a truly universal momentum. After the dream, Pompey is confronted by Cicero who urges him to finally unleash the battle with everyone eager to engage the enemy. His short but pointed speech ends with a painfully unambiguous question: *scire senatus avet, miles te, Magne, sequatur | an comes?* ("The Senate is anxious to know whether they should follow you, Magnus, as a soldier or as a companion?" 84-5). Pompey is offended and feels he has been betrayed by gods and Fate (85-6) and his resulting speech is full of passive anger as he tries to distance himself from the universal ruin that everyone is desperate to experience. In response to Cicero, he makes a clear - and clever - distinction between a soldier and

a general (*si milite Magno, | non duce tempus eget*, ‘if the moment needs | Magnus the soldier, not Magnus the general’ 87-8) that brings back Caesar’s utterance at the crossing of the Rubicon, namely that he is a self-imposed soldier of Fortune and Rome without boundaries or hesitation.<sup>37</sup> During the course of the speech Pompey is essentially right: he emphasizes the difference between delay and action as rational and prudent, backed by legality of his position as an official general. He still clings to right when all right has been abolished since Caesar’s meeting with Rome’s vision. Pompey is rightfully angry as he ironically tells Fortune to keep the State she entrusted to him safely in blind war (110-11) and his catalogue of disasters that will follow is painfully accurate yet it is his correctness that makes him a tragic figure.<sup>38</sup> Lucan pulls out all the stops as he piles on irony in every word of Pompey, but it is too late.

After the battle is began and lost, we see a marked change in Pompey’s character. In a long lyrical and tragic episode (647-711) his initial fear and anger are still justified but he does not give in to them, instead he is a man brought low by the disaster and in the last throes of battle attempts to overcome the destruction by offering himself, his family and influence as a sacrifice (659-62). He laments the loss he tried to prevent and attempts to avert it again – only to exacerbate the coming tragedy. Pompey rushes onto the battlefield but not to die, as one would expect from

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<sup>37</sup> 1.183-203, esp. 201-2. Pompey’s response to Cicero seems to be modeled on Caesar’s response to *Roma*. Irony and contrast, doubtlessly, are the main differences since Caesar hesitates a little but ultimately overcomes Roma’s pleas and crosses the river, while Pompey tarries arguing in hindsight.

<sup>38</sup> This is where an allusion to the fall of Troy begins: Pompey is somewhat of a Laocoön as he clearly sees the coming danger. Lucan, however, amplifies the tragedy greatly as no ruse of a wooden horse is hiding the imminent doom.

an exemplary figure: he tries to persuade the soldiers that the cause of war is not worth the value of death (668-70).<sup>39</sup> Lucan makes a stunning remark that Pompey was afraid lest his soldiers see his dead body and fight to the death for their leader: Pompey still thinks the battle is being fought for his sake (668-9). A number of excuses are presented for Pompey's flight, with the most ironic one being that he does not want Caesar to see his dead body (671-3). Lucan avoids making an ethical comment on Pompey's obvious vanity and conceit yet he has a greater plan in mind, namely to offer a dignified portrayal of the defeat of a good general. Lucan foreshadows Pompey's decapitation (674-5) as his head becomes the focus closer to Book 8, emphasizes the dignity of his unchanged expression (680-6) and shows sympathy for the man whose ill luck forced him to preside over the universal ruin. Pompey's defeat becomes an act of heroic dignity instead of an act of heroism; Lucan's focus is on the larger narrative design that sees Pompey steered towards his final stage act of the murder where dignity replaces the heroics. Lucan chose to postpone the final treatment of his character until Book 8 where Pompey appears as a fully-fledged tragic hero.<sup>40</sup> The transition to tragedy that foreshadows Pompey's dignified manner of death is already established in Lucan's apostrophe following

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<sup>39</sup> Leigh emphasizes Pompey's showmanship and gives an excellent analysis of contrasting *exemplum* narratives between Pompey's flight and a similar situation of the aging general Camillus in Livy's Book 6. His basic argument is that a defeated general, though good, remains under suspicion. While Leigh's arguments are very convincing, I think Lucan intended to portray Pompey not as a failed general but a truly unlucky man whose dignity is the one thing that remains unbroken. Even though there are unmistakable notes of irony and complacency in Pompey's character, not a single individual in the epic is able to escape Lucan's criticism. I think that a combination of true pathos and bitter irony is what drives Pompey's character. See Leigh 1997: 115-134.

<sup>40</sup> See Behr 2007: 80-7; she draws out parallels between Pompey and the Aristotelean tragic paradigm in terms of Lucan's sympathetic portrayal of Pompey.

Pompey's flight from Pharsalus.<sup>41</sup> This allows Lucan to reserve judgment on the character until the actual end just as Lucan refrained from openly condemning Pompey's actions elsewhere.

In Book 8 we see Pompey change from a general to an exile who begins to suffer the effects of his loss. Lucan makes his apostrophe to Pompey the main theme of Book 8 that culminates in the most significant moment of Pompey's life. The general pattern of Book 8 vis-à-vis Pompey is that Lucan gradually pulls all the stops out and allows irony and pathos to enter the narrative in a steady and unbroken flood. We begin with images of flight and exile that flow into an emotional and disconsolate meeting with Cornelia.<sup>42</sup> A series of rhetorical exchanges follow that reintroduce Pompey's weakness as a speaker: his ideas that Parthia would be an ideal candidate to help revive the struggle prompt a righteous outburst from Lentulus who advises that a real ally, someone obliged to Pompey, must be invoked.<sup>43</sup> In this context Pompey is not only the weaker rhetorician but also a person maddened by his loss. Lucan again mixes sympathetic qualities and weakness in Pompey's character and extends the irony even further as the scene shifts to the Egyptian court. Pothinus, one of the voices of the civil wars, delivers a

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<sup>41</sup> 7.677-727. The passage switches between narrative and apostrophe and is one of Lucan's most sincere and lyrical addresses full of passion and dignity as the author rises above the heaps of slaughter together with his character to lament the death of Liberty. Pompey was the last variable (or a semi-constant, if you will) in the equation of Liberty and Caesar (7.691-6).

<sup>42</sup> I treat her role in Pompey narrative in Appendix 4.

<sup>43</sup> Lucan relishes the irony of the speeches. Lentulus' insistence that they must go to Egypt echoes 7.711, *terras elige morti* ('choose a land for your death') where Lucan apostrophizes Pompey as the latter flees.

grand praise of *nefas* aimed at stroking the immature Ptolemy's vanity.<sup>44</sup> Lucan's following tirade establishes the angry, indignant tone of the narrative that will be contrasted with Pompey's composure at the incredible outrage prepared for him by Fate and Fortune.<sup>45</sup> Up to this point Lucan has been careful in bringing Pompey as low as he could before he finally springs his trap in the murder passage: Pompey's incredible composure and dignity are meant to outshine all his previous mistakes and prove the true worth of his character.<sup>46</sup> The most significant moments of the murder passage, apart from constant emphasis on Pompey's composure, are Lucan's address to Fortune (600-9) and Pompey's dying soliloquy that follow each other and create a dialogue between the author and his character confirming that the former's devotion and loyalty remained unbroken.<sup>47</sup> Lucan uses *fabula* (606) within the narrative to refer to Pompey's end as an *exemplum* of betrayal and irony,<sup>48</sup> which Pompey picks up immediately using the same narrative frame of a sad saga that will be watched and heeded by the coming generations (622-4). Thus a spectatorial (and gladiatorial) element of Pompey's character attains a new, more dignified dimension as true, larger-than-Livy *exemplum*, where admiration replaces previous adulation and vanity.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> 8.482-535. Just like Lucan's address to Pompey mentioned in 41n., Pothinus's speech is a tour de force of the opposite side of the author's sympathies. Lucan clearly enjoys writing impassioned addresses and makes the most of his poetic talent in setting up mood and atmosphere through speeches.

<sup>45</sup> Authorial interventions play an integral part in framing the narrative in the second half of Book 8 with which I deal in more detail in the following Appendix.

<sup>46</sup> Even the generally negative Johnson comments on "the shining moment" of Pompey's life.

<sup>47</sup> See the following Appendix.

<sup>48</sup> Especially in 607 where by metonymy Pompey's own sword is used to murder him.

<sup>49</sup> 634-5. The lines are also ironic (see Commentary *ad loc.*), but Lucan has no qualms about pathos.

In terms of history and its vicious trap that Pompey was forced into,<sup>50</sup> Lucan recreates a highly dramatic account of the civil war, which is about a change of character as much as it is about the horrid nature of the war. Lucan's Pompey is drastically different from the historical one as a stage actor is different from the person he or she is portraying.<sup>51</sup> Pompey's character is a meditation on the subject of general history and subjective narrative, how we perceive it and how Lucan wanted us to perceive it which creates that major divide we experience as readers of history and readers of Lucan. In terms of Lucan's subject and his chosen mode of epic, the difference is fundamental: Pompey is precisely the difference between prose and poetry, between the subject and its expression. In Roman terms, Lucan's Pompey is a meditative rhetorical exercise that he deliberately left unfinished or, most likely, conceived as 'unfinishable', something that has to be continually observed, judged, and re-examined.

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<sup>50</sup> Johnson 1987: 68-9. He sees Pompey as a scapegoat of history Lucan had no choice but to include, which resulted in what Johnson argues is a starkly negative portrayal.

<sup>51</sup> I have not dealt with the differences between Lucan's account and that of other historians. As I did not intend the present work to be about Lucan's relationship with his sources, I forgo this discussion. In my postscript I include general comments on Lucan and Plutarch since the latter also attempted to offer a dramatic account.

## Appendix 3:

### Pompey's Murder

The passage is in many ways the culmination of the epic. Lucan takes considerable time to prepare and frame Pompey's murder in an emphatically tragic and carefully crafted manner.<sup>52</sup> The narrative space, bestowed quite freely on the episodic structure in Books 1 to 7, narrows considerably in the last half of 7 to be almost exclusively Pompey's. As the epic progresses, the narrative gradually surrounds and closes in on his progressively alienated figure, from similes and digressions on Roman history, to the parting with Cornelia, to the battle of Pharsalus and finally to Book 8. The narrative extends even further into the first half of Book 9, in which eulogies and laments are presented, with the final grotesque closure of Caesar's 'viewing' Pompey's head.<sup>53</sup> In a larger scheme still, Pompey's death is presented as universally significant. Virgil's Priam, whose death marked the fall of Troy, is recast by Lucan to be the signifier of the fall of Rome in the same manner, only larger and more insidious and grotesque since the *Aeneid* moves from death to a new life while the *Bellum Civile* destroys that very life which was started by the fall of Troy.<sup>54</sup> Had Lucan finished his work, or at least left a clear indication of the scope, the trajectory of Pompey's character still would have been

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<sup>52</sup> On the passage as a whole see Mayer 1981: 153-4, Johnson 1987: 79-81, and Erasmo 2008: 109-16. Hutchinson 1993: 314-26 was indispensable in showing great depth of perception as well as providing guidance through the complexity and beauty of the passage.

<sup>53</sup> Mayer 1981: 186.

<sup>54</sup> The movement of Pompey in the *Bellum Civile* is geographically, philosophically and morally opposed to that of Aeneas and Virgil's whole epic: Pompey presides over the death of Rome, a new Troy that was turned into ashes by its own hand. See Commentary 561 n.



responsible for the 'anti-Aeneid' element of the poem in a retelling of a fall of the empire Virgil wrote would have no limits.

Lucan takes time to frame and prepare. A more detailed look at the passage shows that Lucan chooses to break up the narrative into conflicting points of view by making our eyes dart in horror from one scene to the next, mixing the pathos and the grotesque: Pompey's murder is by far one of Lucan's best scenes. I will begin with the authorial interventions<sup>55</sup> as a way of getting into a more detailed discussion of the passage. These are carefully placed to prepare and emphasize specific points of the narrative to focus the reader's attention on the murder and the surrounding themes. At 8.542-560 Lucan launches a diatribe against Ptolemy's court emphasizing the disgrace and betrayal of a foreign power in conspiracy with the civil wars themselves and particularly young Ptolemy who owes his rule to Pompey. This section sets the scene for Pompey's arrival at Egypt in the most emphatic terms as the imminent disaster and irony are thrown at the audience as a gross abuse of loyalty. At 599-610 an extended address to Fortune echoes the themes of a universal conspiracy against Pompey in the face of his once favorite *Fortuna* and particularly Ptolemy's Roman accomplice Septimius who holds (figuratively) Magnus' own sword as the murder weapon (596-7). Lucan takes this sentiment to such a degree that it would not compare in the slightest with the supposed crime of Brutus and Cassius (609). After Pompey is decapitated, another diatribe against Egypt blends outright offense with lyricism as Lucan mourns Pompey (692-711). The contrast in this digression is between the perpetrators and

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<sup>55</sup> See Hutchinson (1993) 315-16.

the result of their crime, but Lucan does not just lament. He shifts our focus back to Pompey's life as a man of contradiction and a sufferer of a most cruel fate of enduring the most unjust end as Pompey never saw the good and the bad mixed: it was either prosperity or utter ruin (701-8). He then shifts back to the pathos as Pompey is revealed as the Priam of the *Bellum Civile*, a plaything of the sea (*ludibrium pelagi*, 710) with the grotesque inversion of the identity being the absence of the head. The namelessness of Priam's corpse is sharply contrasted with Pompey's trunk<sup>56</sup> as both figures endure the unspeakably literal iconoclasm.<sup>57</sup> Authorial commentary is an emotional and structural guide to Pompey's death. It frames our view of the murder by providing checkpoints of reaction and thematic resonance with the epic's main current of the perverted nature of the war. It also serves to break up the narrative into pieces to reflect the episodic structure and mimic the dismemberment both bodily and narrative.

The murder itself is unnaturally (and chillingly) long which is also due to frequent interjections and relentless jumps between scenes and smaller inserted commentary.<sup>58</sup> This is achieved primarily through a careful presentation of scenes

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<sup>56</sup> On the parallels between Pompey and Priam see Bowie 1990, Hinds 1998: 8-10 and Erasmo 2008: 109-10. Also, see 711 n. On the centrality and framing of Priam's death see Austin 1964 *ad loc.* Also, Virgil omits the actual decapitation thereby taming the grotesque: Priam is struck on his side but his corpse reappears on the shore without the head. By contrast, Lucan preserves all the gruesome detail of Septimius' crime to drive into the readers' minds the horror of reality and the perversion of the civil war. Lucan's point in preserving such detail is explicitly esthetic: severed bones, muscle and ligaments of Pompey's neck represent the tragic death of a man, the now headless state and the horrific universal fall of dignity. On the esthetic implications of the grotesque in Lucan and Virgil see 663-691n.

<sup>57</sup> The narrative iconoclasm continues in Cato's eulogy of Pompey, which I discussed in the previous chapter.

<sup>58</sup> Although I am not fully applying theory to the passage, I use some narratological terminology to help describe Lucan's deliberate 'rending' of the narrative. For the terminology and method I adapt De Jong's (1989) seminal study *Narrators and Focalizers: The Presentation of the Story in the Iliad*

and introduction of actors into Pompey's last showpiece of death. Pompey arrives in Egypt and prepares to disembark as the seemingly friendly delegation of Egyptians sail out to greet him, feigning loyalty and providing a cheap excuse for not coming in full regalia (560-67).<sup>59</sup> Lucan injects more irony by shifting the focus to Pompey's companions who exhibit awareness of the coming crime (571), which immediately establishes tension between Pompey and the Egyptian boat as they are focalized from the outside. Lucan also loses no time to refute the murderers' excuse and emphasize Pompey's role as the bestower of the kingdom to Ptolemy (574). The global focus on murder is reestablished when Pompey puts aside fear and chooses death (575), yet with an added element of honor which will mark Pompey's final hour.

Cornelia bursts in violently onto the scene following the established mood and her departing husband, which prompts a subtle yet a ghastly remark from Pompey: *in hac cervice tyranni | explorete fidem* (581-2). Thus, the focus on murder is both added and removed: Cornelia draws attention away from the murder lamenting a new departure which will be the last, while Pompey pulls the focus back to the grisly scene that awaits him. The husband and wife pull the unity of the passage in different directions - a theme that continues to intensify as Cornelia reappears later - as the build up to the murder continues. Cornelia speaks and accuses Pompey of preventing her from sharing his fate (583-90) which Lucan

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(Amsterdam) and Fowler's (2000) "Deviant Focalization in the *Aeneid*" in *Roman Constructions* (Oxford).

<sup>59</sup> Main shifts of focus in the passage occur with *iam* (560) and *at* (637, 663, and 674) indicating the major contrasting scenes. See 560 n.

transforms into a paradox that pulls up the curtain of the final act: *nec quoquam avertere visus | nec Magnum spectare potest* (591-2). The audience is quiet as the scene is yet again focalized by Pompey's fleet (592-5) but this time it is fear whether Pompey himself would succumb to weakness and betray his principles. The fear is immediately allayed in the following line when Septimius stomps the floorboards slowly until his name is revealed in an enjambed delay (596-7). Lucan packs the irony of his entire epic into the line that introduces the main villain in a string of contradicting nouns followed by a ghastly ironic verb (*salutat*) and in the next line finally utters the name.<sup>60</sup> A description worthy of an ancient monster follows the name as Lucan emphasizes (and dehumanizes) Septimius' figure.<sup>61</sup> Lucan dismembers the word order in the sentence describing the villain, putting considerable emphasis on the grotesque weapons of the king with the Roman *pilum* tucked away in an ablative absolute at the end (598).<sup>62</sup> With the stage set and characters introduced, Lucan launches an address to Fortune, in which, as I mentioned earlier, themes of universal betrayal and irony are prominent in directing our emotional response.

The murder proper starts at 610 with a common resumptive<sup>63</sup> most notably with Pompey losing control of himself (*perdiderat iam iura sui*, 612) that echoes *sed cedit fatis* at 575. But again Lucan does not allow a straight narrative: the monsters ready the knives and prepare to strike (612-13) but Pompey, contrary to his loss of

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<sup>60</sup> See Commentary 566-7 n.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.* 599-600 n.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid. ad loc.*

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid. ad loc.*

physical direction just earlier, gains another, hitherto unprecedented dimension, of someone openly rejecting *Fatum* and the chilling edge of death in a gesture of incredible composure and defiance. Everything about Pompey changes in an instant as he disdains to show Fortune his face (615), he holds his breath in order not to contaminate his eternal fame with weakness and tears (614-15). As soon as the first blade enters his body time suddenly freezes - an effect worthy of cinema - and we are inside Pompey's mind. His monologue, as I argued in the previous chapter, is a confirmation and a revelation of his character to himself and also to the reader. The man we judged by his actions of indecision, vanity and fear is transformed into a dignified figure whose abominable and shameful betrayal will stand as an example of the treachery and perversion of the civil wars. The soliloquy creates an inner theater of the world as it watches the Egyptian boat and the kind of loyalty he suffered (623-4). Pompey has to gather all his strength in the moment of final preservation of his fame (*nunc consule famae*, 624), which at this point has become a poetic paradigm of honor vs. betrayal. He does not lament his fortune but rather comments on his life in universal, almost religious, terms that success is transient and the only strength one can truly exhibit is to die with honor (625-7). He tells himself to see Caesar in the hand that strikes him (629) in an act of universal defiance, that not even a god can rob him of the happiness (*felix*, 630), which he knew despite the present evils. After the final (paradoxical) invocation of the transience of life, Pompey addresses Cornelia and Sextus who are watching this and the reader is brought back from the heights of final reflection to the play in front of

them. Lucan reminds us that a theatrical element is not over as the monologue is also Pompey's inner theater: the world as he focalizes it for us. A theme that starts at 1.133 and continues in 7.7-12 is concluded in the final performance of Pompey's death as he remains aware of the coming generations and his closest family watching him die. In the theater in Book 1 and 7 he was happy in his civil role. In the theater of his death he does not lose the sense of life and fortune as he knew it.

We would expect the murder to resume immediately after the monologue, but the time resumes with Cornelia bursting on stage once again echoing Pompey's own words. She (and Lucan) try to pull the focus away from the murder in a similar accusatory manner that laments her inability and desire to share Pompey's fate. Most notably, she identifies herself with the real guts of Magnus<sup>64</sup> and tries to counter Pompey's death with her own. She exhausts herself with emotion - highlighting Pompey's composure<sup>65</sup> - and faints, allowing the narrative of the murder to resume. At this point Lucan has a chance to indulge in his favorite grotesque yet does not lose the overall moral focus of the account. The rest of Pompey's murder scene is filled with horror, pathos and indignation. Further emphasis is placed on Pompey's composure but there is a sudden jolt: *fatentur | qui lacerum videre caput* (666-7, 'so say those | who saw the severed head'). This is no doubt a reference to Caesar who will come to view Pompey's head but it is also an ingenious way to introduce the decapitation: just before it happens we are thrown forward to take a look at the severed and embalmed head, just like a sudden flash

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<sup>64</sup> Hutchinson 1993: 325 notes a hidden yet an incredibly visceral commentary: Cornelia seems to invite the murderers to probe deeper into Pompey's body as some kind of voyeuristic torture.

<sup>65</sup> Hutchinson (1993): 320; see also Appendix 4.

on the screen.<sup>66</sup> Septimius, who has been waiting on stage all this time, enters in the role of a butcher (668-684). A simple murder would not do as further proof of victim's identity is required.<sup>67</sup> Lucan does not make blood and gore flood the boat (as he might have) but concentrates on the smaller, yet no less gut-churning, detail.<sup>68</sup> First, Septimius cuts through (*scisso velamine*, 669) Pompey's cloak and Pompey is only half dead (*semianimi Magni spirantiaque occupat ora*, 670), both of which betray a psychopathic lust for murder. Hutchinson notes the "brilliant and sordid practicality" in the detail of the bench (*obliquo...transtro*, 671)<sup>69</sup> that serves as the butcher's table. A real shock comes in the delayed (and enjambed) *diu* (for a long time, 673) as Septimius slowly but surely cuts through tendons, veins and bone with a sword.<sup>70</sup> But Lucan, like Septimius, does not stop there. A grotesque and chilling (almost laughable) justification of such a horrid way of decapitating comes immediately after: the art of severing heads with a single blow had not yet been invented (*nondum artis erat caput ense rotare*, 673),<sup>71</sup> which piles horror on horror in the way Pompey's body is treated. A short invective against Septimius follows (676-8) where the same flash-forward as in 666-7 occurs. Lucan accuses Septimius of disdaining to carry the head of his victim and the next scene sees the head impaled on an Egyptian spear in order to prove to Ptolemy the identity of the victim

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<sup>66</sup> In general, Lucan's ability to manipulate time in the passage is very visual and has cinematic effect, which, given the complexity of the narrative, begs for existence of a script.

<sup>67</sup> At this point Pompey's identity is split along with his body. His head survives as a token of the crime while his body is a nameless trunk whose only identifying feature is the absence of the head.

<sup>68</sup> Mayer 1981: 663-91 n. argues that Lucan deliberately avoids the grotesque focusing on pathos and moral abuse instead. By contrast, Hutchinson and Erasmo notice a significant degree of repellent detail as one of the main ingredients of this murder scene.

<sup>69</sup> Hutchinson (1993): 323.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> Most 1992: 397 sees Pompey's murder as the central scene of the epic.

(679-80). In further emphasis on the disgraceful and disgusting treatment of Pompey, Lucan delays the actual impaling (*suffixum caput est*) until 684 while the half dead moving head remains constantly in front of the camera (680-3).<sup>72</sup> A grotesque “superimposition of heads”<sup>73</sup> occurs in 684-6 where a great deal of contrast and a variety of focal points mix together: a paradoxical detail that a dead head was fearsome when it urged war (684-5) is placed alongside Roman Fortune who used the same head as a source of pride (686).

In all, Lucan’s treatment of Pompey’s death is elaborate and unprecedented. Another truly strange detail of embalming in 687-691, *arte nefanda* in particular, serves as a grisly reminder of Erichtho’s practices of reanimation which Lucan contrasts and compares with the equally abominable practice of embalming.<sup>74</sup> Lucan seems to be interested in the same effect as, Hutchinson comments,<sup>75</sup> he has to bring Pompey to his absolute lowest by piling outrage upon outrage before starting to build him back up again in a new incarnation as a kind of an avenging spirit and a memorial of struggle against Caesar in Book 9. Up to this point Lucan was interested primarily in Pompey’s head with its metaphoric, moral and grotesque implications. The focus, though it shifted considerably, started to narrow with Pompey’s pointing at his head at 581-2 and ended in the gruesome decapitation and violation of the corpse. Lucan closes the ‘head’ portion of the

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<sup>72</sup> Septimius grabs Pompey by his hair, *caesaries* (681), which sounds ghastly similar to Caesar. In essence, this is a flashback to 1.183-218 where Caesar crosses the Rubicon. On the parallel and Henderson’s 1987 comments see 681 n.

<sup>73</sup> See Hutchinson (1993): 324.

<sup>74</sup> Erasmo 2008: 116; Commentary 688-91 n.

<sup>75</sup> Hutchinson 1993: 324.



murder with another moral diatribe against the entire line of Alexander and his successors (692-700) thus framing the narrative of murder between the two harangues that again aim to imprint moral and emotional indignation on the reader.

Lucan closes the passage by shifting the focus from Pompey's head to his body in a lyrical and moving lament that also prepares the burial scene. He reiterates the themes of fortune and its transience in a fable-like conclusion complete with a moral (701-8). The repetition of *hac* (701, 702) infuses the tone with a deeply ironic version of a fairy-tale ending as Fortune was so kind to preserve Pompey for as long as she did only to cast him down utterly in a single day. Here the fable is mixed with the Aristotelean tragic formula that again plays with our expectation and emotion. Lucan restates Pompey's dying soliloquy as the latter never saw good and bad mixed, that he was fortunate (*felix*) because he was not bothered by any divinity and utterly unhappy (*miser*) when hounded by the entire world. The emphasis on the body attains truly lyric proportions as Pompey is identified with Priam and his demise with the fall of Troy. *fuit* (705) answers to Panthus' words *Fuimus Troes, fuit Ilium et ingens | gloria Teucrorum* (*Aen.* 2.325-6, 'We Trojans | were, Troy has been; gone is the giant glory | of Teucrians' Trans. Mandelbaum) and the headless body is, of course, Priam's. Amid the literary artistry, the theater and the pathos Lucan found the most powerful conclusion to his story of Pompey, namely that Troy - now Rome - perished by treachery and violence.

## Appendix 4:

### Pompey and Cornelia

An added level of complexity in Pompey's character is his relationship with Cornelia to whom Lucan gives considerable time in the spotlight. Pompey's character, as I have shown in the previous chapter, combines a complex array of qualities one of which is his role as a lover and a husband.<sup>76</sup> Cornelia, however, is not an accessory to Pompey's character: she is a fully fleshed out figure that occupies her own distinct place in the epic. In contrast with a more conventional female character associated with lament and the supernatural,<sup>77</sup> Cornelia is imbued with significant strength and determination that allow her character a well-defined emotional space vis-à-vis Pompey. Cornelia is not able to change the course of events or change her husband's destiny but she can, and does, provide a strong emotional commentary coupled with a keen sense of justice and ability to see through Pompey's self-centered speeches. In this sense, she is separate from her husband as a constant counterpoint to his conceit, which is responsible for the emotional gulf between the two. Thematically, of course, Pompey and Cornelia are inseparable. Just as Pompey is doomed to lose from the beginning, his wife is constantly associated with bringing destruction to her husbands - the fact she constantly laments (e.g. and more on this later). The couple's union is (paradoxically) in their tragedy and separation that haunts them from the first time

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<sup>76</sup> On themes and analysis of the couple's relationship see Ahl 1976: 173-83.

<sup>77</sup> Female characters in Lucan are often associated with the supernatural (see Braund 1992, xxix-xxx). See Keith 2000: 86-9 for an overview and analysis of female characters in Lucan.

we encounter them together as both are locked within the same destructive *Fatum*. Despite the overall atmosphere of tragedy, however, Lucan's masterful portrayal includes a sense of depth created by the warmth, love and devotion that Pompey and Cornelia share, the love that is at the base of their turbulent and deep involvement.

To begin, Lucan's literary models outline some of the thematic bases on which the characters are built. Most of Pompey and Cornelia's relationship depends on Ovid's story of Alcyone and Ceyx, with added shades of Ariadne and Virgil's Dido.<sup>78</sup> In addition to the warmth, emotion and pathos which are taken from these models, Lucan includes a rhetorical dimension to the relationship with speeches that do not just complement but contrast with each other and in which Cornelia always comes out the stronger of the two. Needless to say, however, Lucan never copies his models. A high degree of originality and even distortion is ever present but it always adds extra dimensions in our perception of his deeply original re-workings.

Other women involved in the *Bellum Civile* (Marcia and Cleopatra) perform a specific function of adding to and complementing their husband's behavior. Cornelia does so as well, but she is also a considerably stronger character and often casts a shadow over Pompey's weakness. Their relationship is not that of pure pathos and constant lamentation (although she performs that role as well on occasions) but is a

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<sup>78</sup> The most detailed and comprehensive treatment of Lucan's literary models for Cornelia and Pompey scenes is found in Bruère's article "Lucan's Cornelia" to which I will refer on the need basis throughout the chapter. Bruère also brilliantly treats the differences between Lucan and historical sources with respect to Cornelia episodes. In addition, see Barratt 1979: 722-815 n.

game of contrast between Cornelia's devotion and strength and Pompey's insecurity.<sup>79</sup>

Cornelia's entrance in Book 5, the scene of parting, is carefully prepared. First mention of Cornelia comes from Marcia who sees her as an *exemplum* of a wife showing unconditional love and devotion in following her husband through the trials of war.<sup>80</sup> Second mention is made by Julia who foreshadows Cornelia in terms of the overall tragedy of Pompey's fate and her role as a bringer of destruction (3.20-3):

*coniuge me laetos duxisti, Magne, triumphos  
fortuna est mutata toris, semperque potentis  
detrahere in cladem fato damnata maritos  
innupsit tepido paelex Cornelia busto.*

*While I was your spouse, Magnus, you led happy triumphs home:  
your fortune changed with your marriage-bed, and that paramour,  
Cornelia, condemned by Fate to drag her mighty husbands down  
always to disaster, married into a warm womb.*

Both introductions create preconceived judgments about Cornelia before we get to see her in person, but both Marcia and Julia turn out to be right.

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<sup>79</sup> Other couples in the *Bellum Civile* include Marcia and Cato, Pompey and his former wife Julia and Caesar and Cleopatra who, although not strictly married, form a contrasting paradigm in relation to the others. Marcia and Cato's union is austere and funereal; Julia's appearance clarifies Pompey's doomed figure and Caesar and Cleopatra is union of luxury and lust.

<sup>80</sup> 2.338-50; see Fantham 1992 ad loc.

Our first meeting with Cornelia is a parting scene at Brundisium where Pompey decides to send her away to Lesbos in order to escape the dangers of the coming battle (5.722-815). Lucan begins with an affectionate apostrophe to Cornelia and establishes the atmosphere of warmth and devotion the couple shares.<sup>81</sup> Using the love as background, Lucan continues to introduce a number of problematic themes such as Pompey's weakness vs. Cornelia's strength that shape their relationship in subsequent episodes. Pompey views Cornelia as the most sacred part of his life, something he would not dare to expose to the blows of fate (730-1) but at the same delays breaking his decision to hide her away on Lesbos. While he shows affection and love for Cornelia, he demonstrates his indecision and even a betrayal of his wife's affection by not communicating openly his intentions. His speech makes it clear in grand but ineffective rhetoric that he only wishes to keep Cornelia safe during the final engagement. The weight of Pompey's disaster (756) is bound to crush her but what he seems to really mean is that he will have a safe refuge should he be defeated (759). In essence, Pompey, although he does love his wife, does not appear to express it, which inflames Cornelia's keen sense of justice as she protests Pompey's selfishness. She reiterates Julia's claim about bringing doom to her husbands (762-6) but turns around sharply to rebuke Pompey in series of brilliant questions that expose Pompey's weakness at the core:

*sic est tibi cognita, Magne,*

*nostra fides? credisne aliquid mihi tutius esse*

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<sup>81</sup> 722-733, particularly the detail of Pompey stealing time from fate to be with his wife which Lucan terms "a sweet indulgence".

*quam tibi? non olim casu pendemus ab uno?*

*Is that how well you know my loyalty,*

*Magnus? Do you believe my safety is different from yours?*

*Have we not long depended on one and the same chance?*<sup>82</sup>

*Fides* is very powerful in exposing Pompey's unwillingness to trust while the issue of safety and the singular Fate cannot be separated the way Pompey would like. Cornelia then, in very practical and effective terms, dissects Pompey's selfish plea to instruct him in the true nature of devotion and companionship. As Pompey taught her to follow him and accustomed her to endure all the dangers of war (776-7), he now pushes Cornelia away to safety, which she cannot bear without her husband. At the same time, she does not claim mere emotional dependence: she defies being enslaved to a fate of pointless endurance and perpetual mourning yet she will follow her husband down to hell (773-4).<sup>83</sup> Cornelia skillfully brings the emotional aspect too by asking Pompey to consider how safe will she really be if she is forced to haunt the cliffs awaiting news from him and what kind of pain it is to be the last to find out about his fate (779-84). She caps her speech by brilliantly practical strategic advice that Lesbos will be the first place Pompey's enemies will go if they want her as a hostage or a victim, given her name and reputation (784-

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<sup>82</sup> The pattern of Cornelia's speech is the same she will use later in Book 8: invocation of Caesar, a series of rhetorical questions followed by a series of proofs that Pompey is wrong.

<sup>83</sup> Hunink 1992 *ad loc* observes that just as Julia claimed that she would follow Pompey from hell, Cornelia claims that she will follow him down to hell if necessary. Moreover, Cornelia's attempt to embrace her absent husband is a reminder of how Pompey tried to embrace Julia's shade (3.34-5). In addition Lucan masterfully foreshadows Pompey's death and adds tragic tones to the episode: Pompey's absence is equated with his being dead as Cornelia acts out a standard motif of a living figure trying to embrace a dead loved one, e.g. Orpheus and Eurydice in *Met.* 10.56-9.

90). The emotional rift is strongly visible in this scene yet Lucan is careful not to take the confrontation too far. Cornelia's outrage, after all, is only partly prompted by Pompey's weakness; she still loves him and cares for him, as the next scene of desperate longing amply demonstrates. Neither is able to say good-bye, Cornelia faints and is carried away (799-801). Lucan shows his mastery of detail by revealing that the couple is in bed thus emphasizing warmth and closeness of their relationship (791). But the same bed becomes a symbol of separation as Cornelia manically tries to embrace Pompey who is not there and leaves his side free (805-13). Another important background element for justifying both characters is the impending doom of the battle of Pharsalus that Pompey and Cornelia seem to be aware of throughout the exchange<sup>84</sup> and as they prepare for the worst, emotions reach their breaking point. Cornelia's outburst in particular is justifiable on the grounds of genuine fear that her husband will not return, but Lucan ends the episode with a tragic twist: Cornelia's mourning, devastating though it is for her, is premature as it forecasts Pompey's return (815).

The scene of the couple's reunion in 8.40-158 looks and reads like a tragedy. Pompey disembarks and walks on an empty beach where he meets Cornelia in a two-actor scene with the chorus of the inhabitants of Lesbos filling their part shortly afterwards. The scene has a much more somber and dejected mood with a similar emphasis on Pompey's weak, selfish rhetoric and Cornelia's considerably stronger response. Pompey and Cornelia share the same love, which Lucan again

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<sup>84</sup> Bruère 1951: 224 observes that the characters have consistent foreknowledge of events to come. This adds to the tragic and the theatrical dimensions alike.

emphasizes in physical terms: after Cornelia learns of her husband's fate she collapses but Pompey's embrace revives her (66-7). Pompey then delivers a speech as an admonition to his wife's excessive emotional response (71). Again, self-centeredness pervades his address as he tells Cornelia not to be so devastated at the first blow of fortune and that she should have more affection for him now that he is defeated (78-81). He bids her to be the first and only one to follow Magnus now everyone else has left him, which again sounds as if Pompey, not Pompey *and* Cornelia, is his main concern. Essentially he is right: it is not proper to mourn him while still alive (82-3) but he greatly misinterprets the lesson Cornelia taught him at Brundisium. Conceitedly, Pompey exclaims:

*tu nulla tulisti*

*bella damna meo: vivit post proelia Magnus,  
sed fortuna perit. quod defles, illud amasti* (83-5)<sup>85</sup>

*No losses have you*

*suffered from my war: Magnus lives on after the battles; it is  
his fortune which has perished. Your tears are for the thing you loved.*

Pompey makes the same mistake of dismembering the fateful partnership of the couple by placing the emphasis on his reputation as the object of love. Cornelia too has endured the same, if not greater, degree of anguish while waiting for Pompey. Her response follows the same pattern she used in Book 5, only the emotional

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<sup>85</sup> Pompey obviously implies that she loved his status and not him. The phrase tells more about Pompey's attitude to himself than about his ability to console his wife as we are not quite sure what Pompey weeps about. See Ahl 1976: 175-6.



content is much stronger. She wishes to die as an expiation of her guilt by invoking Julia's avenging spirit that, in her view, proved much stronger than her devotion (100-5).<sup>86</sup> Cornelia fails to respond in the same sharp fashion she did earlier but it is the sheer anguish and distress of offering herself as a sacrifice Lucan uses to emphasize her devotion. The fact that she wants to die now is sharply contrasted with Pompey's self-preservation when he loses the battle of Pharsalus. In addition, despite Pompey's magnanimity in equating Cornelia with Rome (131-3) followed by his grand eulogy of Lesbos<sup>87</sup>, the Mytileneans weep for her more than for Pompey since she became a symbol and an *exemplum* of devotion and endurance:

*Pompeiumque minus, cuius fortuna dolorem  
moverat, ast illam, quam toto tempore belli  
ut civem videre suam, discedere cernens  
ingemuit populus (150-3)*

*And as they saw her leave, the people groaned, less  
for Pompey, whose fortune had aroused their sorrow,  
than for her, whom in all the time of war they regarded  
as a fellow citizen.*

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<sup>86</sup> Lucan never makes it clear that Cornelia knew about Pompey's dream. Bruère 1951: 227 believes this is an inconsistency, but it is perfectly plausible that Pompey could have confided his dream to her.

<sup>87</sup> I see the detail of Pompey's equating Cornelia to Rome as slightly problematic: he never says it to her but to the "chorus" of Mytileneans as praise for their actions. Although the detail may belong in a bag with the other details that identify Cornelia with Rome, in this speech it seems to serve a purely rhetorical purpose for Pompey.

Now that Lucan has established death and sacrifice as important themes, the next scene of Pompey's murder revolves around Cornelia's desire to die in order to prevent Pompey's death or to follow him. In the murder scene, Cornelia's involvement is not just emotional and rhetorical but also narrative: her interjections break up the pattern of the murder as if trying to delay it.<sup>88</sup> Cornelia's keen sense of the impending disaster is amplified as she is trying not to let Pompey board the Egyptian skiff without her (577-8). A similar pattern is repeated with Pompey rebuking his reckless wife compelling her to watch from afar (580). Her forceful and indignant response is justified: she feels condemned to watch and wait but not participate which for her is the crucial point of all she has been trying to tell Pompey since Book 5. The emotional gulf, created by Pompey's alienating himself in his suffering, grows wider in proportion to the situation and hurts Cornelia even more: she exclaims he should not have come back but should have left her on Lesbos (588). Lucan also takes charge to deliver more pointed *sententiae* (as at 588) as well as paradoxes and aphorisms that pertain to Cornelia. His most telling example is at 591-2: *attonitoque metu nec quoquam avertere visu | nec Magnum spectare potest* (And in stunned terror cannot turn her gaze away; | she cannot look at Magnus).<sup>89</sup> Cornelia's second entrance occupies the space between Pompey's dying soliloquy and the actual death but more importantly it frames Pompey's monologue. The most important feature of Cornelia's presence in the murder passage does not entirely depend on content. She encloses her husband between her two addresses and,

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<sup>88</sup> As part of the overall framework of delaying Pompey's death described in Appendix 3.

<sup>89</sup> The expression exemplifies the relationship: Cornelia cannot believe she endures what she does but she cannot stop loving Pompey.

although they are full of complaint and even indignation, they seem to build a defense around Pompey and give him time to compose his mind as he prepares to die.<sup>90</sup>

Despite the outlined differences between Pompey and Cornelia, the emotional rift has been mainly due to Pompey, while his wife showed loyalty and care without being a slave to his intentions. Cornelia shows greater strength of character than Pompey: she is more resolved but at the same time she is the one that keeps the relationship in perspective and delivers her own eulogy for Pompey in which she affirms her devotion to a husband cursed by ill fortune and condemned by history.<sup>91</sup> Lucan did not re-create the traditional paradigm of women's role in literature but he imbued Cornelia with unprecedented strength of character that gave her a clearly defined space in the epic.

It may seem also that Pompey, especially in relation to Cornelia, is more negative than the dignified persona I established in Chapter 3. Pompey, as opposed to Caesar, Cato *and* Cornelia, has multiple dimensions that play off one another to create complex intersections of a soldier, a general and a husband. These characters surround Pompey and help reflect his strengths and weaknesses with Cornelia acting as a model, an *exemplum*, of dignity with which Pompey can transcend

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<sup>90</sup> The observation is also in Bruère 1951: 229, although he does not mention the narrative frame.

<sup>91</sup> 9.51-116. Lucan places Cornelia's speech before Cato's. She is again identified as a mourner and a devoted follower of Pompey in her resolve to follow her husband by wasting herself with mourning. It seems that Lucan has preserved for a noble task of relaying Pompey's message of the necessity of his struggle to Sextus thus forming an extension of Pompey's will and, more importantly, her own role in the course of the events. The detail of the message to Sextus has been viewed as an inconsistency by Bruère 1951: 230 since Pompey theoretically could have delivered the message as he stepped into the Egyptian boat, but it seems more in keeping with Cornelia's character that Lucan wanted her to appear not as a mere mourner but as someone significant in the larger scheme of the war.

misfortune and accept his fate with resolve. At the same time, as Lucan demonstrates in Book 9 during Cornelia's last appearance, she is not meant to detract from Pompey but help illustrate his character more fully from her point of view. Despite the immense upheavals and Pompey's sometimes ill-timed decisions they were husband and wife and Cornelia affirmed her love and devotion to the man she considered worthy dying for just from grief alone (9.107-8).

## Appendix 5:

### Lucan and Plutarch

Lucan's choice of constructing his narrative of Pompey's murder can also be highlighted by observing some similarities and differences vis-à-vis closing sections of Plutarch's *Life of Pompey* (78-80). A major point of difference is Lucan's sacrifice of linear narrative to achieve a highly dramatic effect of sharp transitions between episodes. Another equally significant feature is the apparent scarcity of characters in Lucan's treatment. Plutarch's account of the murder is shorter and more linear but is much more populated and even cluttered with too many secondary characters and actions. Lucan utilizes episodic structure to prolong and postpone the murder for the sake of pathos. A small number of characters helps him to maximize the narrative space reserved for authorial interventions and speeches which are the engine of the episode. Also, Plutarch spends little time narrating the actual murder, whereas Lucan's interest in mutilation of Pompey is clearly one of the central points of his account.

Below is a comparison of the two episodes to help visualize the differences more clearly, which will provide a background for looking at some of the more salient points in greater detail.<sup>92</sup>

#### Lucan

560-7 Pompey reaches Egypt where he is greeted by a small bark occupied by unnamed characters that bid him to come over to their vessel. They make a brief excuse to Pompey that the shoreline is too treacherous for landing in a ship.

#### Plutarch

78 There are elaborate preparations and arrangements made by the Egyptians on the shore to prevent Pompey from a chance escape. When he arrives, however, Cornelia senses trouble and laments her husband's death. She attempts to send two centurions into the boat to protect Pompey. His freedman Philip and a servant Scythes come along with him.

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<sup>92</sup> For the sake of space and scope I am comparing only the murder narratives. A greater overview of differences can be achieved by reading sections 73-8 in Plutarch vis-à-vis Lucan's Book 8. See also Mayer 1981: Introduction to lines 1-108 for a great overview.

## Lucan

578-92 Cornelia throws herself towards the enemy boat sensing death and not wanting to leave Pompey. His admonition prompts her to launch into a lament mixed with accusations and laced with tragedy.

592-600 Lucan builds up suspense through focalizing the fear of Pompey's retinue and introduces Septimius as the main villain and perpetrator of the murder.

610-21 Pompey is finally in the boat and sees the murderers draw their weapons. He covers his head and holds his speech, but as Achilles delivers the first blow, Pompey's thoughts take the forefront of the action.

621-662 Lucan inserts a pair of speeches: Pompey's soliloquy followed by Cornelia's lament, both of which deal strongly with internal reflections rather than narrative. Pompey's ship races off at 662 allowing the rest of

## Plutarch

When Achilles was stretching his hand out to Pompey, the latter turned around and quoted Sophocles to his wife and friends.

79.2-3 Upon seeing Septimius inside the boat Pompey addresses him as an old friend, while the latter merely nods. Awkward silence ensues, during which Pompey begins to read from a speech he prepared for Ptolemy. Cornelia, who is watching anxiously, sees the Egyptian army assemble on the shore and interprets this as a favorable sign thinking that a royal welcome for Pompey.

79.4 As Philip helps Pompey rise, Septimius stabs him from the back, then Salvius (yet another Roman present in the boat) and then Achilles. Pompey draws his cloak over his head and with a groan succumbs to their blows.

80.1 As soon as Pompey's companions realize their leader has been killed, they raise a great lament and flee. The Egyptians attempt to pursue but the wind is against them. The murderers then cut off Pompey's head and toss his naked corpse overboard.

the murder to proceed.

663-91 Pompey is finally killed and Septimius mutilates his body. The head is cut off and then, presumably in flash-forward to the Egyptian court, is embalmed to preserve evidence of the crime.

This basic comparison shows the differences in timing and composition of the two narratives. Plutarch is much more linear and concise, while Lucan deliberately draws the moments of particular interest, such as the mutilation section. Lucan makes the murder considerably longer with a clear purpose of drawing out as much pathos and suspense as he can. The actual murder narrative occupies four distinct sections: 560-7 where Pompey goes into the boat, 578-92 where he admonishes Cornelia and is physically stepping outside the ship, 610-21 where murderers draw the swords and 663-91 where Pompey is finally killed. One of the key separation points from Plutarch is Lucan's omission of secondary detail and exclusive attention to characters' thoughts and expression. The effect is that of stripping of the narrative achieved by bypassing details Plutarch chooses to preserve. Particularly interesting is the mutilation section almost entirely omitted in Plutarch. He merely states that the head had been cut off (80.1), whereas Lucan, true to his design principles, makes this section a focal point due to its intensity and length. As I have shown earlier (Appendix 3 and 663-91 n.), Lucan's main focus is visceral unease, disgust and indignation, which paint Pompey as a tragic hero and express hatred towards the murderers.

Plutarch inserts almost no authorial commentary on the subject. Lucan, as we have already seen, makes the authorial interjection into building material for his narrative. He uses it to delay the murder, arrange how characters enter and exit the stage (as is the case with Septimius) and, most importantly, express his own indignation at the atrocity. Plutarch substitutes this with a sense of closure and

revenge for Pompey in the closing section of his biography (80.2-6), but Lucan does something entirely different. Later in Book 9 Pompey's soul does escape to become a kind of an avenging spirit, but in the murder passage proper a disturbing sense that Pompey is not quite dead never leaves the reader. Furthermore, Lucan's narrative is full of hopelessness and doom that cancel out any kind of possibility of positive reflection. Plutarch, on the other hand, allows some glimmers of hope, as his attempt at closure shows, and particularly in case of Cornelia who misinterprets the purpose of the Egyptians' gathering on the shore (79.2-3). Lucan's Cornelia plays a much more prominent role as she tries to delay the murder and subsequently die herself.

The same could be said about Pompey who in Plutarch cites some Sophocles before his departure:

Ὅστις δὲ πρὸς τύραννον ἐμπορεύεται,  
κείνου ἴστί δοῦλος, κἂν ἐλεύθερος μόλῃ. (78.4.8-10)

*Whoever makes his way to a tyrant,  
He is his slave, even though he departs as a free man.*

The quotation seems to suggest that there is hope in the fact that his life might be preserved despite his becoming a servant. Lucan has Pompey utter a much more sinister remark at 581-2 that ties together the tyrant, loyalty and his neck in one sentence rife with hopelessness and betrayal. The same could be said about Pompey's internal monologue at the time of murder in Lucan and Plutarch somewhat awkward detail of Pompey reading speech he prepared for Ptolemy. Again, Plutarch allows some hope to seep through, whereas Lucan's aim is to utterly strip his narrative off any expectations other than death. Lucan equivalent of hope is Pompey's dying words that affirm his composure and defiance of the crime. He is much more grim and even somewhat majestic in his tragedy as he delivers the soliloquy. Plutarch's Pompey seems weaker and submissive in 79.4.5 (ἀλλὰ στενάξας μόνον, ἐνεκαρτέρησε ταῖς πληγαῖς, 'but with a mere groan, he submitted to their blows') compared to Lucan where Pompey puts all his force into preserving



his dignity and remain silent (614-17).

Another detail that adds to the chilling atmosphere of Lucan's narrative is his blurring of physical distance between the Egyptian boat and Pompey's ship. In Plutarch, the Egyptian bark begins to sail away and the murder happens some way off Pompey's ship (79.1.2-3). Lucan does not mention any sailing, which may lead the reader to assume that the murder happens right in front of Cornelia's eyes. The detail is intensely grotesque but comes out more clearly when compared to Plutarch's treatment of the same events. This episode speaks of Lucan's manipulation of physical space that is much more blurred and even abstract thus creating quite a realistic sense of a mind dashing between thoughts and even under immense stress.

Lucan also manipulates time in a different manner. As I already mentioned, Plutarch's Pompey seems to kill time while rehearsing his speech in the boat. Lucan actually freezes time entirely to stop the murder and create space for Pompey's dying speech. It affords not only a visual effect or an ingenious way to create narrative space, but also puts Pompey outside of time. There is a constant emphasis on the sacred nature of his features and his head as Pompey moves closer to resemble an *imago*, which effectively creates a Pompey out of history, an *exemplum* of a deeply tragic end.<sup>93</sup>

Such comparison may not be entirely fair to Plutarch whose purpose is quite different from Lucan's poetic design, but an overview of choices that Lucan makes opens deeper insights into how a complex narrative about a historical event functions in a non-historical setting, which is Lucan's distinct priority. Lucan achieves not just a reworking of history into poetry in terms of linguistic organization, but a conceptual reorganization of material.

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<sup>93</sup> As discussed in Appendix 2.