Dead and Deader:
The Treatment of the Corpse in Latin Imperial Epic Poetry

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
in
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES
(Classics)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
(Vancouver)

August 2015
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Abstract

This dissertation examines the maltreatment of dead bodies in the epic poems of Lucan (Bellum Ciuile), Statius (Thebaid), and Silius Italicus (Punica). I focus on the depiction of corpses, their varied functions in each epic, and the literary engagement these authors have with the treatment of corpses in epics past, particularly Homer’s Iliad and Virgil’s Aeneid. I demonstrate the ingenuity with which these poets deploy corpses in their works by emphasizing the interplay and intertextuality between these authors, how they strive to be different from their epic predecessors and each other through their skillful elaborations on a major epic motif. The two main categories of maltreatment I analyze include the physical abuse directed at an enemy corpse and, similarly, the withholding or perversion of burial rites.

In my Introduction I identify a major gap in scholarship concerning the treatment of corpses in Roman Imperial epic that my dissertation aims to fill. My project begins from a number of studies on corpse treatment in the Iliad, and my desire to provide a similar analysis of this theme for the Roman epics. Chapter 2 sets a baseline for epic corpse treatment by looking in detail at the Iliad and Aeneid, with the intention of establishing a normative framework which proves valuable for highlighting deviations from the norm in the treatment of corpses in Imperial epic. Chapter 3 analyzes decapitation in Lucan, Statius, and Silius, scenes which directly target and exploit less explicit constructions in Homer and Virgil. Chapter 4 looks at the wide array of burial perversions and abuses in Lucan, with a focus on Pompey’s fragmented burial rites. Chapters 5 and 6 analyze burial perversions in Statius and Silius, respectively, structured around Creon’s burial denial edict in the Thebaid and Hannibal’s warped funerals for Roman generals in the Punica. A brief Conclusion
summarizes my findings, and looks ahead to further research on this topic. My project shows that encapsulated in the corpses and their treatment, these epics reveal a deep concern with violence, horror, life, and death, that reflects the larger disturbed functioning of each poet’s epic universe.
Preface

This dissertation is original, independent, and unpublished work by the author, A.M. McClellan.
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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviations for Classical authors and their works follow Hornblower, Spawforth, and Eidinow, eds. (2012), *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* 4th ed. (Oxford), with occasional expansions for the sake of clarity. The exception is Lucan’s *Bellum Civile* which, for convenience, I have abbreviated “BC”.

For the main Latin authors discussed in this dissertation, I have used the following editions (exceptions/emendations cited in notes): Mynors (1969) for Virgil’s *Aeneid*, Housman (1927) for Lucan’s *Bellum Civile*, Hill (1983) for Statius’ *Thebaid*, and Delz (1987) for Silius Italicus’ *Punica*. Other Greek and Latin quotations are from the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (TLG) and the Packard Humanities Institute (PHI).

I have used modern translations for major authors: Lattimore (1951) for Homer’s *Iliad* (with Latinized proper names for consistency); Ahl (2007) for Virgil’s *Aeneid*; Braund (1992) for Lucan; Joyce (2008) for Statius’ *Thebaid*; and Duff (1934) for Silius. All other translations are my own.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbrev</th>
<th>Work</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A&amp;R</td>
<td><em>Atene e Roma</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AClass</td>
<td><em>Acta Classica: Proceedings of the Classical Association of South Africa</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AJPh</td>
<td><em>American Journal of Philology</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASNP</td>
<td><em>Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, Cl. di Lettere e Filosofia</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BStudLat</td>
<td><em>Bollettino di studi latini</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>CIL</td>
<td>(1862-), <em>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</em> (Berlin).</td>
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<tr>
<td>CJ</td>
<td><em>Classical Journal</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C&amp;MAnt</td>
<td><em>Classical Antiquity</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C&amp;M</td>
<td><em>Classica et Medievalia</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C&amp;SB</td>
<td><em>Cultura e scuola</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPh</td>
<td><em>Classical Philology</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQ</td>
<td><em>Classical Quarterly</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>CW</td>
<td><em>The Classical World</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>EL</td>
<td><em>Etudes de lettres</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G&amp;R</td>
<td><em>Greece and Rome</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRBS</td>
<td><em>Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal Acronym</td>
<td>Title</td>
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<td>-----------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>HSCPh</td>
<td>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILS</td>
<td>Dessau, H. (1892-1916), Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae (Berlin).</td>
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<tr>
<td>JHS</td>
<td>Journal of Hellenic Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JRS</td>
<td>Journal of Roman Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIMC</td>
<td>In 1982-2009, Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae (Zurich).</td>
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<tr>
<td>JBL</td>
<td>Journal of Biblical Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maurenbrecher</td>
<td>Maurenbrecher, B. (1891), C. Sallusti Crispi historiarum reliquiae (Leipzig).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MD</td>
<td>Materiali e discussion per l’analisi dei testi classici</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MH</td>
<td>Museum Helveticum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORA</td>
<td>Oxford Research Archive</td>
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<tr>
<td>PCPhS</td>
<td>Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>PVS</td>
<td>Proceedings of the Virgil Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REA</td>
<td>Revue des études anciennes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REL</td>
<td>Revue des études latines</td>
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<tr>
<td>RhM</td>
<td>Rheinisches Museum für Philologie</td>
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<tr>
<td>RIL</td>
<td>Rendiconti dell’Istituto Lombardo, Classe di Lettere, Scienze morali e storiche</td>
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<td>Skutsch</td>
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<td>TLL</td>
<td>(1900-), Thesaurus Linguae Latinae (Leipzig).</td>
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<tr>
<td>VL</td>
<td>Vita latina</td>
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<tr>
<td>WJA</td>
<td>Würzburger Jahrbücher für die Altertumswissenschaft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS</td>
<td>Wiener Studien: Zeitschrift für klassische Philologie und Patristik</td>
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<tr>
<td>YCIS</td>
<td>Yale Classical Studies</td>
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Acknowledgements

I wish to express my warmest gratitude to a number of people who have provided their time and support as I wrote this dissertation. First thanks go to my supervisor Susanna Braund. In my first semester at UBC in 2008 during my MA program, I read Lucan with Susanna, and this was no minor revelation. In many ways this project begins there with her. Through an MA and PhD she has never steered me wrong. Her comments and advice (academic and otherwise) have been invaluable, and I cannot begin to express or do justice my debts to her. Many thanks are also due to my committee members, Siobhán McElDuff and Toph Marshall. Siobhán’s and Toph’s astute comments, challenging questions, and excellent suggestions have made me think much harder and have greatly improved this final product. Any errors or follies are mine in toto.

I have presented portions of this project at conferences and universities in Seattle, Vancouver, New Brunswick (NJ), Winnipeg, Waco, and Boulder, and I am grateful to the audiences for helpful comments on what was often very much ‘work in progress’. Thanks are due to Keyne Cheshire, who read a portion of the dissertation and provided excellent feedback, and to my faculty, peers, and friends in the Department of Classical, Near Eastern, and Religious Studies at UBC for their support and encouragement. I was fortunate to have had departmental and university financial support to complete this project—I would absolutely not have been able to otherwise. Special thanks to Les and Leslie Varley for treating me like family (more than I could have hoped for), and for being my home away from home. Extra special thanks to Zana Bass for putting up with me and for indulging my tastes for gore, even if our conversations sometimes give her nightmares.
Most especially I want to thank my parents Karen and Michael. They have always been encouraging, supportive, enthusiastic, funny. They have fully earned and deserve this extra page all to themselves. They have always been there for me. They are the very best of parents.
ζάνα δώρον
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

*A book about dead bodies is a conversational curveball.*

1.1. ‘Viewing’ Epic Corpses

As book 8 of Lucan’s *Bellum Civile* builds to a crescendo, with Pompey’s relentlessly foreshadowed death and mutilation fast approaching, the poet describes the paradoxical reaction of Pompey’s wife Cornelia to what awaits her doomed husband. She levels protests at Pompey as he leaves the relative safety of his fleet for the tiny death-boat off the coast of Egypt that will serve as the stage for his grisly murder and decapitation. Paralyzed, Cornelia fixes her gaze reluctantly upon him (*BC* 8.589-92):

> haec ubi frustra effudit, prima pendet tamen anxia puppe, attonitoque metu nec quomauertere uisus nec Magnum spectare potest.

> When in vain she has poured out these words, yet anxiously she hangs over the vessel’s end and in stunned fear cannot turn her gaze away; she cannot look at Magnus.

This scene has received virtually no critical reaction from scholars despite its almost kindred connection to an earlier moment of paradoxical paralysis that has been posited as a launching pad for recent debate about the ‘competing voices’ in Lucan’s narrative. Before he describes the extreme horrors of the battle of Pharsalus between Pompey’s Republican forces and Caesar’s army, Lucan attempts to relegate his subject to darkness and to silence (7.552-6):

> hanc fuge, mens, partem belli tenebrisque relinque, nullaque tantorum discat me uate malorum, quam multum bellis liceat ciuilibus, aetas.
a potius pereant lacrimae pereantque querellae:
quidquid in hac acie gessisti, Roma, tacebo.

Mind of mine, shun this part of battle and leave it to darkness
and from my words let no age learn of horrors
so immense, of how much is licensed in civil war.
Better that these tears and protests go unheard:
whatever you did in this battle, Rome, I shall not tell.

The events of the civil war’s climax are too horrible to narrate, yet Lucan, by continuing his
narrative, betrays his own obsession with its horrifying content, as this praeteritio makes way
immediately for an elaborate description of the battle that should not be described (the civil
war is nefas, and so ‘unspeakable’).

But the paradox here is a larger feature of Lucan’s poetic program, as Jamie Masters
has articulated: ‘In the struggle between Caesar and Pompey, then, lies the paradigm of
Lucan’s narrative technique: the conflict between the will to tell the story and the horror
which shies from telling it…’ If Lucan’s narratorial dilemma describes something like a
distorted metapoetics of writing about epic nefas, then in Cornelia’s frozen stare is to be
found a programmatic metapoetic marker for a system of viewing, or reading it. Her vision of
the scene we are about to witness, presaged from the outset (and imbued with forewarning,
both intratextual and of course historical) as a post mortem mutilation, is the perspective
through which we are invited to view the abuses we know will follow; the scene is
‘focalized’ through Cornelia. Yet the outcome of this perspective alignment is unsettling. For

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1 See Feeney (1991): 276-7 with notes.
2 Masters (1992): 9, and further 147-8: ‘if by now I can speak safely of the split in Lucan’s poetic persona, then
one way in which this split manifests itself is in the opposition of a poet who is too horrified to speak, and a
poet who, with apparent grisly relish and Silver Latin exuberance, is quite prepared to taint himself with the
Cornelia, the paradox proves too much: she faints (8.661-2) before Pompey’s head is severed and thrust onto a pike. She cannot ‘read’ any further, but we must, with Lucan, go on.

This scene in Lucan 8 powerfully articulates both the difficulties involved in viewing/reading scenes of corpse maltreatment and the simultaneous allure and attraction to abuses that provoke horror and pleasure. Cornelia cannot help but watch, she is paralyzed, until the inherent paradox conquers her and she passes out. We read on (or we don’t), but like Lucan’s Cornelia, as an audience for this cruelty we may find ourselves caught in what Noël Carroll calls the ‘horror paradox’: we want to watch (or read) but we feel the moral implications of viewing something horrific, something almost always signaled to us by the narrator or other intratextual characters as unwatchable or unspeakable, and, in the act of viewing, we become paralyzed by these incongruous emotional reactions.

Philosophizing and theorizing, ancient and modern, have focused directly on the corpse as an instigator of paralyzing horror. Plato and Aristotle recognized a similar paradoxical phenomenon of the simultaneous attraction and aversion to rotting corpses. Plato describes the disturbing situation at Republic 4.439e-40a, where one Leontius is unable to pull his eyes away from corpses festering in the street despite his revulsion both at their sight and at his own inability to look away. His inability to avert his gaze, caught between

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4 Plat. Rep. 4.439e-40a: ἀλλ᾽, ἦν δ᾽ ἐγώ, ποτὲ ἂκοίσας τι πιστεύω τούτῳ ὡς ἄρα Δεόντως ὁ Ἀγλαίωνος ἀκών ἐκ Πειραιῶν ὑπὸ τῷ βόρειον τεῖχος ἐκτὸς, αἰσθάνεσθαι νεκρῶς παρά τῷ δημίῳ κειμένου, ἀμα μὲν ἰδεῖν ἐπιθυμοὶ, ἀμα δὲ αὐδάνεραίναι καὶ ἀποτρέπει έαυτόν, καὶ τέως μὲν μάχοιτε καὶ μείζοντε καὶ παρακαλύπτει, κρατούμενος δ᾽, ἢν υπὸ τῆς ἐπιθυμίας, διελκύσας τοὺς ἐπιθυμεῖς, προσδραμὼν πρὸς τοὺς νεκροὺς, ἢ δούς ἡμῖν ἐφ᾽ ἐφ᾽ ὅ κακοδαίμονες, ἐμπλήσθητε τοῦ καλοῦ θεάματος', ‘But’, I said, ‘I once heard a story which I believe, that Leontius the son of Aglaion, on his way up from the Peiraeus under the outer side of the northern wall, becoming aware of dead bodies that lay at the place of public execution at the same time felt a desire to see them and a repugnance and aversion, and that for a time he resisted and veiled his head, but overpowered in despite of all by his desire, with wide staring eyes he rushed up to the corpses and cried, “there, you wretches, take your fill of the fine spectacle”’. 
incompatible responses of desire (ἐπιθυμοὶ...ἐπιθυμίας) and disgust (δυσχεραίνοι), is so disturbing to him that he curses his own eyes (ὁ κακοδαίμονες). Aristotle describes a similar reaction, but as it applies to the mimesis of horrific images, at Poetics 1448b 10-12: ‘we enjoy contemplating the most precise images of things whose actual sight is painful to us, such as the forms of the vilest animals and of corpses’. Aristotle does not elaborate beyond stating that mimetic objects, no matter how horrific, are inherently (σύμφυτος) enjoyable to everyone (τὸ χαίρει...πάντας).

For Julia Kristeva the corpse is the ultimate form of abjection, which pulls and repels the viewer simultaneously: ‘It is death infecting life’, and this at the same time ‘beckons to us and ends up engulfing us’. Adriana Cavarero expands upon this notion of viewer paralysis when confronted with scenes of horror (the Horrorism of her book’s title), by focusing on the dead body which has itself been broken, dismembered, mutilated, mangled, exploded, dehumanized (she zeroes in on suicide bombings): ‘movement is blocked in total paralysis, and each victim is affected on its own. Gripped by revulsion in the face of a form of violence that appears more inadmissible than death, the body reacts as if nailed to the spot, hairs standing on end’. She identifies a true physical reaction to the viewing of horrific images that, in many ways, perfectly applies to Lucan’s aphoristic psychologizing of Cornelia’s paralyzed gaze at Pompey in BC 8.

Yet all of these analyses focus on the corpse as an endpoint, as a limit. Even Cavarero’s discussion of violence that rips the body to pieces focuses on the moment of

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5 Arist. Poet. 1448b 10-12: ἃ γὰρ αὐτὰ λυπηρὰς ὀρῶμεν, τούτων τὰς εἰκόνας τὰς μᾶλλα ἰκριβωμένας χαίρομεν θεωροῦντες, οἷον θηρίων τῆς μορφᾶς τῶν ἀτιμοτάτων καὶ νεκρῶν.
death; the experience of horror does not extend beyond violence that is life-ending. But for the Roman epicists of the early imperial period, death was a limit that needed to be ruptured and explored, it needed to be viewed.

My project is to dissect the maltreatment of the human body after death in the imperial epics of Lucan, Statius, and Silius Italicus. To contextualize properly this motif of corpse maltreatment, my study works (largely) diachronically, starting with discussions of corpse treatment in Homer’s *Iliad* and Virgil’s *Aeneid*. The two main categories of maltreatment I analyze include the physical abuse directed at an enemy corpse and the denial, withholding, or perversion/distortion of burial rites. These two categories will be useful for framing the various discussions in my chapters, but it is important to stress that I consider them each to be appropriately identifiable as the ‘maltreatment’ of the dead. They involve actions taken consciously against the rights owed to dead bodies by (more or less) universal Greco-Roman customs and standards: corporeal ‘preservation’ or integrity, burial/funeral rites, familial and/or communal rites of mourning, the last kiss, the closing of the eyes; perhaps also commemoration, procession, ritual *laudationes* or panegyrics, and so on. In any case, the physical abuse of a corpse in these poems typically results in the denial of proper burial rites for that corpse, and so there will be considerable overlap in my analyses. The main aim of this dissertation will be to follow the motif of maltreatment through these epics and to analyze both the individual poetic innovations on the motif (an expanding ‘aestheticization’ of graphic violence), and also, more broadly, how the dead and their

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9 See the important critique in Miller (2014): 109-15. Miller’s book was published a bit too late for me to fully integrate it into my discussions, but it does share an important interest with my own study in the limits of violence in war and violence aimed at objects (corpses, statues, institutions, words) that cannot fight back.

treatment in these poems offer insight into each poet’s conception of war, violence and its extremes, and violence in Roman society.

Following the motif of maltreatment implies the development of that motif over time, as a product of intertextual and interpretative processes.\(^\text{11}\) What Homer does with corpse treatment in the *Iliad* is re-examined and repurposed by Virgil, whose engagement with the motif is then repurposed by Lucan, who is also (simultaneously) reading Homer through Virgil’s reading of Homer, and also, at times, reading Homer irrespective of Virgil’s reading of Homer, and so on. Scholars have termed this system of intertextual gymnastics ‘double allusion’, or ‘window reference’ in the system of epic poetics.\(^\text{12}\) The allusive and intertextual games at play here can be very complicated, and though I do not necessarily subscribe to Jacques Derrida’s conception of analyzing complex literature (in his case, reading Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake*) as a ‘war’ between author and reader to reconstruct a dizzying system of overlapping intertextual references,\(^\text{13}\) sometimes it does feel this way when reading Latin epic.

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\(^{11}\) Some excellent monographs have tracked major themes, motifs, or issues through a series of epic poems. I will single out a few here that have been influential for my project: Feeney (1991) on the gods in epic; Hardie (1993) on sacrifice, Heaven and Hell, imperial/dynastic/poetic succession, and so much more; Quint (1993) on epics of victory and epics of defeat; Hershkowitz (1998) on madness in Greek and Roman epic; Ripoll (1998) on heroism in the Flavian epics; Keith (2000) and Augoustakis (2010) on women in epic (Augoustakis looks specifically at the Flavian poems); Coffee (2009) on economic exchange in Roman epic. Chaudhuri’s (2014) project on ‘theomachy’ (i.e. attempts by mortals or heroes to wage war against a god or gods) from Homer to the Renaissance epics is most similar to my project in that it examines a specific motif over generations of poetic elaboration.


\(^{13}\) Derrida (1985): 145-58, esp. 147-9. So, e.g.: ‘Being in memory of [Joyce]: not necessarily to remember him, no, but to be in his memory; to inhabit his memory, which is henceforth greater than all your finite memory can, in a single instant or a single vocable, gather up of cultures, languages, mythologies, religions, philosophies,
A quick note then on intertextuality. When I refer to intertexts or allusions\textsuperscript{14} linking the work of a later author to an earlier author’s ‘model’ text, I am making certain assumptions about the creative and allusive process of composition and poetic engagement. Authorial intentionality in the analysis of intertextuality has been a major point of debate in classical philology. Recovering the intention of the alluding author does not necessarily affect our ability to interpret intertexts in a void, but this does not mean we should ignore intentionality altogether, even if we cannot prove it, since this process of (attempted) ‘recovery’ is useful for a deep engagement with the text(s). In this way I align myself generally with Stephen Hinds and Joe Farrell who have both sought to revive the role of the author in reader-response criticism, in many ways as a reaction to the semiological reader-oriented intertextual framework that aims to eliminate the author from the picture entirely.\textsuperscript{15} I will make claims, at times, about an author’s (irretrievable) intentions, but the importance or validity of these claims will ultimately rest on my ability to convince readers that there is something meaningful that emerges from the relationship between the specific texts I highlight, whether that relationship was ‘intended’ or not. Roman epic is so vastly self-reflexive, intra-/extra-critical, and self-conscious of generic literary history, that intertextual

\textsuperscript{14} I typically prefer the former, though I deploy ‘allusion’ and ‘reference’ at times as well. Fowler (1997a) and Hinds (1998): esp. 17-51 discuss the distinctions between ‘intertext’ and ‘allusion’, and the (frequent) difficulties of those distinctions.

\textsuperscript{15} See Hinds (1998): 47-51, 144: ‘while conceding the fact that, for us as critics, the alluding poet is ultimately and necessarily a figure whom we ourselves read out from the text, let us continue to employ our enlarged version of “allusion”, along with its intention-bearing author, as a discourse which is good to think with—which enables us to conceptualize and to handle certain kinds of intertextual transaction more economically and effectively than does any alternative’ (50); Farrell (2005). For reader-oriented approaches, see the programmatic comments in Fowler (1997a); Gale (2000): 4-6; Edmunds (2001): 153-4.
cues are as much an orchestrated open-armed invitation to the reader as a Derridean challenge to interpretative warfare.

Something like an elaborate poetic dialogue is discernible through the texts, but text-centered philological readings are importantly inseparable from cultural-historical, ideological, readings of these poems. This should be obvious, so much so that almost twenty years ago Alessandro Barchiesi could compare dissenters on either side to Japanese snipers lost in the jungle, fighting a war lost long ago.\(^\text{16}\) That the poetic intertexts are everywhere supplemented by presupposed cultural-historical intertexts adds a deeper context to the poetic dialogue, and with it creates a cohesive system for unpacking meaning. For my purposes, the presupposed reference point for the Roman epics is most crucially Roman civil wars and the abuses that inevitably came along with them; amphitheatrical display is important too, though there we are dealing more with violence inflicted upon living bodies.\(^\text{17}\) Corpse abuse and burial denial were hallmarks of the civil wars, both Republican and Imperial,\(^\text{18}\) and the impact of witnessing these abuses cannot have been insignificant to the authors and their audiences. The *Aeneid* is loaded with civil war imagery teasing at the civil wars Virgil lived through leading up to the establishment of the principate, and Lucan wrote an entire epic detailing the civil war between Caesar and Pompey that Virgil references elliptically. The Flavian epicists fill their verses with civil war, and while this plays off earlier epic civil war

\(^{16}\) Barchiesi (2001): 147, originally published in Barchiesi (1997). I quote from the English version (2001): ‘Dealing with intertextuality does not imply taking sides in a debate, more or less implicit, between formalist and historicist readings of ancient texts. The polemic between formalist and historicist readers has long been exhausted, and the last Japanese snipers isolated in the jungle should have been informed of this by now’. See more generally the programmatic discussion in Barchiesi (1984): chapters 3 and 4.

\(^{17}\) Leigh (1997) takes the spectacle of the amphitheater as a starting point for discussing spectacular violence in Lucan, with some excellent results. See also Most’s (1992) powerful essay.

themes, the events of 68-69 CE\textsuperscript{19} (and the later Saturninian revolt of 89, a ‘civil war’ according to Suet. Dom. 6.2), which brought about the establishment of the Flavian dynasty, provide a constant historical reference point for the horrors contained in those poems.

1.2. Project Origins and Aims

To steal a line from Mary Roach’s wonderfully morbid book \textit{Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers}: ‘A book about dead bodies is a conversational curveball’.\textsuperscript{20} This has mostly been my experience talking to colleagues, friends, and family. But more to the point, it has also been my experience examining scholarship on issues related to corpse maltreatment in epic poetry. I leave more extended discussion of secondary sources to later analyses and my footnotes (where I have tried to be as inclusive as possible) but to speak here generally, little has been written in any length or depth about corpse abuse in Roman epic, and when scholars do broach the topic, the discussions are most often selective, with individual scenes or individual poems singled out as cases for analysis.\textsuperscript{21} There are of course exceptions,\textsuperscript{22} some excellent ones, but even when scholars do enter into the discussion of

\begin{enumerate}[\textsuperscript{19}] Morgan (2006) is the most detailed and stimulating account of the civil wars of 68-69 CE.
\textsuperscript{20} Roach (2003): 14, and the epigraph to this introduction.
\textsuperscript{22} See esp. Burck (1981) on epic funeral rites from Homer to Silius, generally (though he is not enormously analytical on the imperial epics); Pagán (2000), covering some epic scenes of post-battle epic carnage, and issues related to non-burial (esp. in the \textit{Theb.}); Berno (2004) on connected scenes of abuse in Virgil, Seneca, and Lucan; Erasmo (2008) esp. chap. 4 on the burial rites of Pompey in \textit{BC}, Opheltes in \textit{Theb.} 6, and the funeral
corpse maltreatment more broadly it is usually deployed as a means of describing the behavior of the abuser, while the corpse itself is something of an afterthought, ‘collateral damage’ to larger interests in human furor and rage, or exegeses on madness, bloodlust, and so on. I have tried to start from the perspective of the corpse and work back the other way around like, as Giovanni De Luna describes it in his excellent book on corpse treatment in modern warfare, ‘looking at the grass from the perspective of the roots’. That is, I am attempting to signal the corpse as a crucial entryway into analyses of the violence and abuses of war in these epic poems and not simply as a physical byproduct of war. I privilege the corpse as a critical ‘character’ in these poems, a character with a bizarre post mortem existence that defies the typical limitation imposed by death. These poets, by guiding reader attention to the now-lifeless body, demand that the corpse is worthy of the same attention that the living person had been, and this focus cuts against instinctive human impulses. This shift in focus is revelatory for the functioning of each poet’s epic universe. My project offers a fundamental re-evaluation of violence and warfare in Latin epic poetry through this readjustment of interpretative perspective.

I say ‘Latin epic’ because there are a number of excellent works on the motif of corpse maltreatment in the Iliad that deserve special mention. Charles Segal’s The Theme of the Mutilation of the Corpse in the Iliad is the seminal study, and many of Segal’s

rites in Theb. 12; van der Keur (2013) on corpses and burial rites in Statius (generally) and Silius’ (spurious?) catalogue of world-burial-practice in Pun. 13.

23 De Luna (2006): 42: ‘il tentativo di conoscere, storicamente la guerra (e anche i grandi fenomeni novecenteschi di violenza di massa come le Shoah), partendo dalla sua conclusione, da quei morti che rappresentano il suo unico, concreto prodotto finale. È come guardare l’erba dalla parte delle radici…’ (my emphasis). De Luna’s book details mass globalized violence in war, mostly war in the 20th century, from the perspective of the treatment of corpses in those wars. Each chapter works outwardly from a single photograph displaying corpse maltreatment in a particular warzone. The book is shocking and powerful, and has helped frame many of my discussions for this project.
conclusions form the basis of later large-scale examinations and elaborations by (especially) James Redfield, Emily Vermeule, Jasper Griffin, Jean-Pierre Vernant, and Michael Clarke.\textsuperscript{24} These studies have in many ways served as my own launching-pad, and my project comprises a concerted attempt to provide for the later Roman epic material on corpses something like what these Homeric scholars have done for the \textit{Iliad}.

A central driving force of these analyses of corpse treatment in the \textit{Iliad} concerns the ‘limits’ placed on violence in war. This has obvious implications for individual actors (victors and victims, killers and killed), but also for the larger picture in the poem of the institution of warfare and its intrinsic parameters; this last point has been less clearly articulated, but it has ramifications for my interests in the later Roman epics and so deserves a brief examination. While the aims of war and warring are circumstantial and variable—war can be about economics and supply-lines, territory, about politics, or religion—warfare itself, especially ancient warfare, provides killing and death as a brutal but reasonable way of negotiating the ‘transaction’ of the conflict,\textsuperscript{25} whatever it is about exactly. Killing and death are necessary, requisite characteristics of this transaction; they are definable and measurable. The killing becomes a real problem only if the actors fail to appreciate it as the appropriate limit of the use of force in war.

When Achilles abuses Hector’s corpse, when he refuses him the death-rights of burial, and refuses his family and city the rights of ritual mourning over his body, he proves not just his own savagery, but also instigates an attack upon these parameters of war. This act or rather the repeated attempted mutilation of Hector’s corpse provides a redefinition of the

\textsuperscript{24} Segal (1971); Redfield (1975); Vermeule (1979), Griffin (1980); Vernant (1991); Clarke (1999).
\textsuperscript{25} On issues related to the commerce or transaction of war in the Roman epic context, see Coffee’s (2009) excellent study.
basic nature of the Trojan War, and the final books of the poem set about analyzing (and ultimately righting) the wrongs of Achilles’ transgressions of the normative and regulative features of the institution of war. We know that he has crossed some discernible threshold related to the use of violence because the gods tell us he has gone too far (not to mention the outrage of the human actors in the poem). His actions provoke especially Apollo’s complaints and disgust (24.33-54), and lead to Zeus’ own wrath and intervention and a return to the codes of humanity, which amount to the proper upholding of the rights owed to the dead in war. The issue is not that Hector has been killed (I do not mean to undermine the singular importance of his death for Troy’s fate), but rather, what happens after he is killed. It is the maltreatment of his corpse that precipitates chaos and instigates divine intervention.

Given that the *Iliad* is the Ur-text of war, the parameters of war defined therein are crucial for the shaping of subsequent articulations of war in literature, particularly epic literature, and so the system of ‘appropriate’ (and inappropriate) expressions of violence in the transaction of war in later literature (and culture) ultimately are reflected by and reflect back upon this Iliadic model.

Among Étienne Balibar’s reflections on ‘extreme violence’ is his insistence on the uncontrollability of war in its relation to warfare’s tendency to revert to extremes of violence, which everywhere serve to destabilize the very definitions of the limits of violence in war. There is some acknowledgement of and adaptation from Carl von Clausewitz’s basic logic that war, principally defined as a duel between opposing forces, naturally passes to extremes of violence: ‘war is an act of force, and there is no logical limit to the application of that force. Each side, therefore, compels its opponent to follow suit; a reciprocal action is started
which must lead, in theory, to extremes’. Balibar is interested in these extremes and how far the use of violence can push them. The limits of extreme violence are elusive, mobile, and contested (they are ‘heterogeneous’: each war has different ways of measuring what constitutes a transgression of the limits of violence), but they always constitute a transition from the ‘appropriate’ wartime exercise of might, or ‘violence-of-power’ (Gewalt) to the implementation of cruelty.

In considering the treatment of Hector’s corpse, what is intrinsically cruel about Achilles’ actions is their utter gratuitousness and redundancy. Apollo identifies this, though somewhat obliquely, when he complains to Zeus and the other gods in a striking turn of phrase that Achilles is attempting to mutilate ‘mute earth’ (II. 24.53-4: μὴ ἄγαθῷ περ ἐόντι νεμεσισθεὶσ’ οἱ ἡμείς· | κωφὴν γὰρ δὴ γαῖαν ἀεικίζει μενειάνων, ‘Great as he is, let him take care not to make us angry; | for see, he does dishonour to the dumb earth in his fury’). His actions are monstrous, sub-human. He has lost control of his ‘might’, his ‘violence’ (βη, 24.42; βία [Att.] = uis = ‘violence’), and is attacking lifeless flesh that cannot fight back or protect itself (though, of course, the corpse is being protected by the gods: see further below). Moreover, Achilles’ actions are situated outside of the immediate context of battle, inasmuch as they do not occur during the course of regular combat and so signify precisely the sort of action that ruptures the limit of death as the final act of violence in war. With Hector dead, nothing more can or need be gained save a demonstration of abject cruelty. Achilles has gone too far and the gods intervene.

26 Clausewitz (1976): 77.
De Luna discusses Achilles’ treatment of Hector as an entry-point for his analysis of corpse abuse in modern warfare. Some of his conclusions share commonalities with Balibar’s interest in extreme violence and its limits in war. He identifies the extremity of Achilles’ violence by psychologizing his actions, focusing on the ‘existential void’ (‘vuoto esistenziale’) the dead enemy leaves his victor. With no one alive to fight, the dead enemy removes all reason for hostilities, and this should correspond to an end of violence. But Hector’s death does not provide a limit or an end for Achilles’ cruelty, it is only the beginning: ‘Achilles does not stop, his fury is not appeased by the corpse of Hector, the war persists no longer against the enemy, but against his dead body’. The physical state of Hector’s corpse (as in the state of all corpses in all wars) becomes an ‘extraordinary document’ for uncovering the nature of his killer, which in turn offers a valuable glimpse and insight into the nature of the war itself.

Yet despite his efforts, what is so crucial here, and what is so crucial for our understanding of the limits of violence in the Iliad is that Achilles is repeatedly and definitively unable to successfully carry out the mutilation of Hector’s corpse. The gods prevent Achilles’ cruelty reaching fruition (e.g. Il. 23.184-91, 24.18-20, 411-23). His actions signify an act of war against the parameters of war, but the poet does not allow the actual act to materialize fully. Achilles may not be able to be trusted to care for the body of Hector, but larger forces ensure its protection. There is still in the Iliad some limit to extreme violence in war (dictated, naturally, by poetic, aesthetic, and moral factors) despite often the best efforts of individual characters who would seek to transgress that limit.

30 De Luna (2006): 53: ‘E invece Achille non si ferma, la sua furia non si placa davanti al cadaver di Ettore, la guerra continua non più contro il nemico, ma contro il suo corpo morto’.
I have lingered here on Achilles’ treatment of Hector in the Iliad to stress the point that my project explicitly and contrastingly targets moments in epic poetry where the extremes of violence utterly disrupt this system of limitation. Achilles’ maltreatment of Hector is the locus classicus, the ‘gold standard’ of epic corpse abuse, but in reality it does not fully qualify as abuse, since Hector’s body is protected from all of Achilles’ attacks against it. Roman epic’s greatest innovation on the theme of violence in a genre defined by violence is to shatter the limits Homeric epic placed on the extremity of violence in war. And this is expressed most emphatically in the abuses dealt to the dead. What differentiates the extremes of violence in Homer and the post-Augustan epicists is that the Latin poets are all aestheticians of overwhelming cruelty.

The imperial epics disrupt the system of limitation related to violence contained in Homer’s and (to a certain degree) Virgil’s poems for a reason. There are obvious aesthetic considerations, and these are of primary concern to me. As Hardie has demonstrated most successfully, following the observations of Harold Bloom, epic (while not alone among literary genres) is intimately concerned with generic self-referentiality and a poetics of competition, and scenes of violence are no exception to this competitive poetic engagement. Epicists strive to stand out among the crowd of generations of prior tradition, and the creative manipulation of earlier model scenes, especially violent ones, provided a powerful path to poetic notoriety. Visceral violence—the politically sponsored, endorsed, and monopolized extreme violence in Rome (civil war abuses, ‘head-hunting’, gladiatorial competition, exposure on the Scalae Gemoniae and in the Fora, corpse-dumping in the Tiber,

and so on)—was everywhere pushing against (and through) the limit of killing as an endpoint to violence. Corpse maltreatment becomes a mainstay of the fabric of imperial epic in many ways because it reflected precisely the politically motivated extreme violence that defined the establishment and continuation of the Roman principate; epic abuses resonate because they reflect the real world violences endemic in a society intimately bound to the horrors of war.

Not only extreme violence, but an obsession with extremity in general defined the early imperial period, as Carlin Barton has demonstrated.34 By examining the collective psychology of Romans from the end of the Republic through the first two centuries CE, particularly concerning boundaries, transgressions, and the limits of human endurance, Barton argues that all strata of Roman society participated in an overindulgent, self-defeating ‘theatre of excess’. While she does not discuss corpse maltreatment directly, she homes in on the excess of cruelty and violence that became so rampant as to create (through the tendencies of our sources) a ‘trivialization’ of violence, and an indifference to suffering where deaths as entertainment had ceased to scandalize. While Barton probably goes too far when she claims that Rome was a ‘frolicking theatre of violence’,35 it is true that many of our sources aim to betray a playfully indifference to the abuses and displays of cruelty. In many ways, this indifference and mockery were perhaps the most reasonable way to deal with the often horrific levels of violence that were a daily occurrence in Rome.

This project could have been much larger. By privileging martial epic I largely avoid Homer’s *Odyssey*, Apollonius’ *Argonautica*, Ennius’ *Annales*, Lucretius’ *De rerum natura*, Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, Valerius Flaccus’ *Argonautica*, and Statius’ *Achilleid*, even though

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all of these poems do address issues related to corpse (mal)treatment and/or burial rites. While most of these seven epics do find their way into discussions in this dissertation, I have not pursued a detailed examination of any of them. Martial epic is about war, and the dead are the most visceral and tangible ‘objects’ that fill the pages of this genre.

I have been selective too in my discussions of scenes from the martial poems. I have tried to cast a wide net, but often this has led to the underdevelopment of scenes related to corpse maltreatment that deserve much more consideration than I have provided: the abuse of Curio’s corpse in BC 4 is one example, as is the impaling of Hasdrubal’s severed head at the end of Punica 15, which I have discussed in its function as the surrogate ‘beheading’ and abuse of Hannibal, but not enough on its own terms. So too the mass conflagration and mass pyre at Saguntum in Punica 2 receives only brief mention in its connection to the postscript on Hannibal’s future death that closes the same book. What is here is not exhaustive, but it should make it possible to follow the motif of corpse maltreatment from one epic to the next. The dissertation ends with a brief glance ahead to further research on this topic, and avenues for investigation that I was unable to develop fully here but I hope to consider in future work.

1.3. Chapter Summaries

The second chapter examines the motif of corpse treatment in Homer’s Iliad and Virgil’s Aeneid. My main goal in this chapter is to set a baseline for epic corpse treatment by looking at two foundational and familiar works, with the intention of establishing a normative framework which will prove valuable for highlighting deviations from the norm in the treatment of corpses in Imperial epic. The chapter begins with the Iliad. In this section (2.1), I lay out the basic pattern of corpse treatment in the poem with examples that fully flesh out
the general observations I have stressed above. In particular, I highlight Sarpedon, Patroclus, and Hector, all of whose corpses receive some form of attempted abuse but are eventually rescued from that abuse by the gods. Much of this follows the general consensus among scholarship that corpse maltreatment is threatened, feared, and even attempted in the poem, but ultimately unfulfilled. Yet despite the overwhelming emphasis on corpse preservation in the *Iliad*, scholars have almost universally ignored the case of Imbrius in book 13. My discussion of Locrian Ajax’s *post mortem* decapitation of Imbrius (*Il.* 13.201-205) aims to problematize this general picture of corpse ‘preservation’ in the poem, and I offer some larger structural, aesthetic, and thematic insights into the functioning of this scene in the epic.

The next section (2.2) examines Virgil’s narrative strategies concerning the abuse of corpses in the *Aeneid*. While it is clear that Virgil departs from Homer in allowing a wider range of corpse abuse into his poem, in every case Virgil pulls away from describing it and blankets the abuse in narrative silence. My interest is in this silence and the meaning we can extract from it. Methodologically, my analysis takes root from a consideration of the Homeric motifs of the treatment of dead heroes and I consider Virgil’s adaptation of and departure from his great epic model. I also analyze violent action elsewhere in the *Aeneid* outside the sphere of *post mortem* abuse, and the ways in which the reader can supplement the narrative silences in the scenes of corpse abuse through comparison with the physical description of violence dealt to living fighters. I demonstrate that Virgil’s allegiance to Homeric poetics allowed him to go only so far: while the *Iliad* expresses a moral horror of carrying out the mutilation of corpses, there is in the *Aeneid* a moral horror of describing the abuses that we know have happened, even though Virgil is prepared to concede that corpse abuse actually does occur. The section ends with a consideration of the civil war violence and
corpse maltreatment from Marius and Sulla to Actium and the establishment of the
principate, as a means of contextualizing some of the (silent) abuses contained within the
Aeneid.

Chapter 3 is a detailed examination of three scenes (one from each of the imperial
epics) that directly target and exploit the most brutal form of epic maltreatment: decapitation
and further abuses aimed at a severed head. The first section (3.1) analyzes the death and
abuse of Pompey in Lucan BC 8 in a small skiff off the coast of Egypt. Section 3.2 looks,
first, at the decapitation of Melanippus in Statius’ Thebaid 8, and Tydeus’ cannibalizing of
Melanippus’ head, and second at the Thebans’ abuse of Tydeus’ own corpse in book 9.
Section 3.3 examines the decapitation of Asbyte by Theron in Silius’ Punica 2, and
Hannibal’s subsequent abuse of Theron’s corpse in retaliation for Theron’s slaying of the
Carthaginian general’s ally Asbyte. These scenes are all built explicitly upon model scenes in
the Iliad and Aeneid, which the later epicists have infused with elements of post mortem
abuse and grotesquerie either ignored or only hinted at in the earlier poems. Through
consideration of the ways Lucan, Statius, and Silius expand upon their models, this chapter
offers a vivid glimpse into the dark evolution of the motif of corpse maltreatment from the
‘classic’ texts of Homer and Virgil, who had sought (in their own unique ways) to set a limit
on the level of violence congruent with the world of epic poetry. Although this chapter
consists of close readings of a specific moment in each poem, these particular scenes also
function crucially as emblematic of major themes that permeate each work, and I elaborate
upon on these points as I work through the material, as a means of foregrounding further
discussion in subsequent sections.
Chapter 4 focuses on burial denial and perversion broadly in Lucan’s *Bellum Civile*. I analyze scenes involving some of the major players in the epic, in an attempt to tease out the larger thematic thrust of burial rites in the poem. I begin in section 4.1 with the elderly survivor’s recollection of the civil war between Marius and Sulla in BC 2. This flashback is crucial for Lucan’s handling of the issues of burial rites as it anticipates the horrors to come, particularly the warped burial of Pompey in book 8, which I discuss next (4.2). Lucan expands Pompey’s death, abuse, and burial rites over the final three extant books of the epic (with material anticipating his burial(s) and also looking beyond the space provided by the epic framework). All of the disparate scenes create a patchwork of repeated but slightly altered burial rites, none of which function as a legitimate ‘whole’ (doubling the repetition of depictions of Pompey’s physical mutilation in the poem). I then, in section 4.3, consider Caesar’s role in relation to burial rites by analyzing four scenes that demonstrate his rejection of or lack of interest in what happens to the human body after death (including his own body). I end (4.4) with Erichtho’s ‘zombie’ prophetic corpse-soldier, his quasi-prophecy predictive of further death, and the witch’s paradoxical, yet almost loving, funeral for the corpse-soldier in book 6. I argue that Lucan lingers on the repetitions of denied or perverted/warped burials and issues of death-in-life, and life-in-death, as a means of highlighting his perception of Neronian Rome as a slavish ‘necropolitical death-world’, to repurpose a phrase (and the theoretical/philosophical framework) from Achille Mbembe’s article ‘Necropolitics’, on violence and abuse in the post-colony.36

Chapter 5 looks at burial denial and perversion in Statius’ *Thebaid*. My discussion of these motifs in Statius’ poem centers around Creon’s burial abnegation decree at *Thebaid* 11.661-4. This point marks the official moment when burial rites are denied, but the theme has been building steadily over the course of the epic. The chapter also considers a series of bizarre burial perversions, particularly the funerals for the fallen Argive leaders, all of whom receive a warping of traditional rites (section 5.2). Section 5.3 considers the role of women and their attempts to provide burial for their loved ones, specifically Hypsipyle, Argia and Antigone, and the Argive women. The final section (5.4) details Iris’ ‘preservation’ of the dead Argive leaders, and the strange case of Maeon’s preserved corpse in book 3.

Chapter 6 analyzes burial rites in Silius’ *Punica*. The chapter begins at 6.1 with an examination of what I call ‘corpse-tombs’ and ‘corpse-burial’ in the poem. I touch on this in my chapter on Statius, who also provides evidence of this bizarre funereal perversion. Both Silius and Statius warp the motif of a warrior falling in death upon a dead comrade, or comrades dying in unison (like Nisus and Euryalus in *Aen.* 9), into the corpses of the dead (often suicides) offering their bodies as ‘tombs’ for a fallen warrior. I argue that this reflects the level of desperation these epics project given the paucity of successful burials in the poems; anything resembling a ‘funeral’ finds acceptance even if it would otherwise be rejected as a perversity of proper custom. My interest in section 6.2 concerns the figure of Hannibal and his perversions of Roman burial practice when he conducts rites over the corpses of three slain Roman generals (L. Aemilius Paulus, T. Sempronius Gracchus, and M. Claudius Marcellus). This analysis sets the stage in section 6.3 for an examination of Hannibal’s quasi-funeral rites that close the poem in book 17, mimicking and masking the triumphal parade for Scipio Africanus that, I argue, simultaneously doubles as a funeral
parade. In both chapters 5 and 6 (on these Flavian epics) I contextualize and supplement arguments by considering the role of the civil wars following the death of Nero in 68 CE, which brought about the establishment of the Flavian dynasty. Most crucial are the post mortem abuses and exposures in the wars of 69 CE, the cyclical death and ‘rebirth’ of Roman autocracy, and the burning of the Capitol and the Temple of Jupiter Capitoline.

The dissertation ends with a review of my findings and major arguments in the main chapters, and offers a brief look at other issues related to corpse maltreatment in these poems, and future research projects I am developing on this topic. In particular, I lay out some initial claims for examining post mortem bodily function in the poems (this develops a theme I could only touch on here). Martin Dinter has discussed the ‘automatism of severed limbs’ in Lucan (via largely evidence from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*), and what I propose here is an expansion upon these ideas both in *BC* and in the other post-Augustan epics.

By the end of my project, I hope to have demonstrated the variety of ways in which Lucan, Statius, and Silius address issues of corpse maltreatment, and their ingenuity in reworking a major epic motif. I present this poetic engagement largely as a disruption of Homeric and Virgilian interests in corpse treatment in the *Iliad* and *Aeneid*, but in my analyses of particular scenes in the post-Augustan epics I illustrate that the referential dialogue is far more complex than this. In many ways Lucan becomes a crucial ‘canonical’ text for the Flavian epicists, who everywhere draw on his morbid and self-defeating poetics to highlight the horrors of their own epic universes. And while we have difficulties determining influence one way or the other, Silius’ and Statius’ poems certainly interact with

each other. I also show that these epics are importantly products of their times. Just as Virgil’s *Aeneid* is inseparable from the context of the civil wars that plagued Rome for decades before and during his writing, so too the imperial epics are bound to the principate that emerged from the horrors Virgil is grappling with in his poetry. For Lucan, the civil wars that spawned Caesarism had not ended. Neronian Rome is simply an extension and repetition of the abuses that destroyed the Republic. The civil wars that rocked Rome following the collapse of the Julio-Claudian dynasty in 68 CE must have made Lucan seem a grim *uates* to his successors, and Statius and Silius evoke Lucanian darkness as they feed imagery of Rome’s civil war abuses into their epics of mytho-historical retreat.
CHAPTER 2

DEADTIME STORIES: CORPSE MALTREATMENT IN HOMER’S 
ILIAD AND VIRGIL’S AENEID

In a square surrounded by trees, with a statue in the middle, a pack of dogs is 
devouring a man’s corpse. He must have died a short while ago, his limbs are not 
rigid, as can be seen when the dogs shake them to tear from the bone the flesh caught 
between their teeth. A crow hops around in search of an opening to get close to the 
feast.
—José Saramago, Blindness (trans. G. Pontiero) p.263

My focus in this chapter is on corpse maltreatment generally in Homer’s Iliad and Virgil’s 
Aeneid. These are the ‘classic’ martial epic texts in Greek and Latin, and the ways in which 
they address issues of corpse mutilation and burial abnegation provide critical poetic context 
for the post-Augustan epicists’ handling of these themes in their own poems. In the Iliad we 
find numerous examples of threatened, feared, and attempted corpse maltreatment, and the 
theme of abuse builds steadily until Achilles slays Hector and refuses to return his body to 
his family for proper obsequies. Ultimately the gods intervene, and all threats and acts of 
abuse are unfulfilled, except in the case of Imbrius in book 13. In my discussion I look in 
detail at the scene of Imbrius’ abuse, and offer some explanations for this anomalous case. 
Virgil follows Homer in placing significant emphasis on corpse treatment, and even goes 
beyond Homer by allowing a greater range of abuse to seep into his poem. But he too places 
a certain limit on the abuse by refusing to narrate the scenes of mutilation that we know 
occur. In Homer there exists a moral horror of carrying out the abuse of a corpse; in Virgil 
there exists a moral horror of describing the abuses that the poet does allow entry into his 
poem.
2.1. Deadtime Stories: The *Iliad*’s Baseline of Abuse

*Live fast, die young, and be a good-looking corpse*
—Willard Motley, *Knock on Any Door*

*Live fast, die young, and leave a beautiful corpse*
—Lil’ Wayne, ‘*Krazy*’

The *Iliad* is a poem obsessively concerned with the composition, or probably better, the decomposition of the human body.¹ Warriors are hacked to pieces with alarming and breathtaking variety and ingenuity in the heat of battle. Yet there exists a special focus in the poem on what might be inflicted on the body once the warrior has been killed. Attempts at corpse mutilation abound, as do threats and fears of abuse, voiced by characters within the poem. Concomitant with this is the poem’s emphasis on proper burial practice. Attempts to deny this most basic rite are poignantly highlighted as deviating from the norm, which finds its model in the elaborate funeral of Patroclus, occupying the bulk of book 23. I will begin this discussion by laying out some of the normative features related to the theme of corpse treatment in the *Iliad*, which will largely comprise a review of some earlier scholarship on this topic, before shifting focus to a scene that I think problematizes this picture. I will offer some ideas I have in an attempt to tease out deeper meaning from a relatively minor scene in the *Iliad*: Locrian Ajax’s rarely discussed decapitation of Imbrius in book 13.

In the *Iliad* the main focus on corpses concerns the treatment and preservation of dead heroes. Minor or unnamed characters occupy little narrative space with regard to their treatment or burial, though Homer does provide a description of the collective burial rites of mostly insignificant fighters on either side, after a momentary truce (7.421-32, 433-41. cf.

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¹ Vermeule (1979): 95-9 is particularly instructive.
323-43, 375-7, 394-7), as well as the rites granted to those lost to Apollo’s plague at 1.52. The corpses are heaped in a single burial mound, and Homer’s unwillingness to belabor the funeral rites of minor characters is doubled by the aside that the corpses themselves were difficult to identify (7.424). The funeral rites here are collective and cursory. Far more narrative space is granted to the treatment of Hector’s corpse by Achilles and of Sarpedon’s during the bloody Leichenkampf, both of which represent the fullest examples of the physical affront to corpses in the Iliad.

After the death of Sarpedon follows a lengthy skirmish between the Achaeans and Trojans to recover his corpse (16.562-665)—the first instance in the poem of the fate of a dead warrior’s body becoming a point of consideration. That the two sides would risk further bloodshed to claim the body of a fallen warrior is indicative of the importance of proper burial from his comrades’ perspective (here, the Trojans) and of the withholding of that rite, which amounts to corpse mutilation, by his enemies (the Greeks). Patroclus says as much during his pre-battle speech at Il. 16.559-61:

\[
\text{ἀλλ᾽ ἐξ ἐμοὶ ἄεικοσαίμεθ' ἐλάντεσ,}
\text{τεῦχε' τ' ὀμοιώμεθα, καὶ τὶν' ἐταίρων}
\text{αὐτοῦ ἀμυνομένων δαμασάμεθα ἐνελεί ὁμίλῳ.}
\]

If only we could win and dishonour his body and strip the armour from his shoulders, and kill with the pitiless bronze some one of his companions who fight to defend him.5

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2 On these lines, see Garland (1985): 92-3; Kirk (1990): ad locc.
5 The death of Patroclus and the subsequent Leichenkampf in the following book (inverting the scenario of Sarpedon’s death) offer further articulations of the motivations of rival armies battling over the fate of one warrior. Homer offers opposing motivational cries from both armies, vying for the body (Il. 17.314-22).
The fate of Sarpedon’s corpse is presaged earlier by Sarpedon himself, who begs Hector to save his body from the Achaeans should he die from a wound he has received from Tlepolemus (5.684-8). That Hector flees without reply foreshadows Sarpedon’s corpse’s fate here and anticipates the uncertain outcome of the skirmish in book 16. Glaucus voices further concern over the fate of the corpse, when he chides Hector for neglecting to protect Sarpedon and the Lycian allies from the Myrmidons, whom he fears will despoil Sarpedon and ‘disfigure his corpse’ (16.545: ἀεικίζουσι δὲ νεκρὸν). Here for the first time the verb aeikizein appears in the Iliad. The theme of corpse abuse and the fate of dead heroes begins here and intensifies throughout the remainder of the poem.6

The two armies battle around Sarpedon’s corpse in a destructive fog stirred up by Zeus (16.567-8), as each in turn attempts to claim the body. By the end of the fighting Sarpedon’s corpse is made unrecognizable, covered head to toe with weapons, blood, and dust (637-40). A simile comparing the armies to flies buzzing about full milk pails hints at the decay awaiting the corpse,7 and brings back sharply the image of corpse abuse and the warrior’s fate. After Zeus drives off the Trojans, the Achaeans strip the armor from Sarpedon’s corpse and parade it around the Achaean camp (663-5).

Though here the abuse of Sarpedon’s corpse is largely accidental (a product of the battle waged around and on top of it), this scene anticipates the abuse Achilles attempts to level against Hector’s corpse in book 22.8 After Achilles kills the Trojan prince and strips

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8 Note that Sarpedon’s plea in book 5 concerning his corpse is directed to Hector, and his mention of his wife and baby son (5.388) mirrors Hector’s own situation in book 22. The poet sets up Sarpedon even this early as a model for Hector and his corpse treatment. Perhaps this is why Hector flees without response to Sarpedon’s plea: with Kirk (1990): ad 5.384-8.
him of his armor, the Achaeans circle around Hector and take turns stabbing his corpse, sharing—at least ritually—in his slaughter (22.369-75). Hector’s ‘imposing beauty’ stands out to the Achaeans who compare his once impenetrable frame to its present lifelessness. He was beautiful in life as Achilles approached to kill him (321: χρόα καλόν), and now beautiful in death (370-1: οὐ καὶ θηρᾶσαντο φυήν καὶ εἴδος ἀγητόν | Ἐκτορος, ‘[They] gazed upon the stature and on the imposing beauty | of Hector’). They stab him to test the softness of his flesh, but also to corrupt that beauty, to make him ugly. Achilles further disfigures the corpse by dragging Hector on the ground behind his chariot, leaving the head, in particular, to be ground face-first into the dust (397-98). This treatment of Hector’s corpse mars the hero’s face (402-3: κάρη δ’ ἀπαν ἐν κονίησαι | κεῖτο πάρος χαρίν, ‘and all that head that was once so handsome was tumbled | in the dust’), mirroring the fate of Sarpedon, whom not even a man who knew him well could recognize (16.638-9: οὐδεὶς ἀν ἐπὶ φράδμων περ ἄνηρ Σαρπηδόνα διὸν | ἐγνω, ‘No longer | could a man, even a knowing one, have made out the godlike | Sarpedon’), covered head to toe in weapons and dust (639-40: κονίησαν).

The initial disfiguring of Hector’s corpse is granted by Zeus (403-04)—Achilles’ ‘wrath’ is explicitly associated with Zeus from the prologue (1.5: Δίς...βουλή, ‘the plan of Zeus’)—but Achilles takes this beyond the bounds of battlefield anger by his repeated abuse. Hector is barely even himself anymore, just ‘dumb earth’ and utterly defenseless, as Apollo

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powerfully complains to the gods near the beginning of book 24 (Il. 24.53-4: μὴ ἅγαθῷ περ ἐόντι νεμεσσηδέωμέν οἱ ἡμεῖς: | κωφὴν γὰρ δὴ γαῖαν ἀκουίζει μενεαίνων, ‘Great as he is, let him take care not to make us angry; | for see, he does dishonour to the dumb earth in his fury’). He continues the disfiguring abuse of Hector’s corpse as he drags the body around Patroclus’ pyre, attempting to tear the flesh (23.187; 24.21, 51-2, 416-17). Sarpedon’s disfiguring was incidental, on account of the fighting taking place around it, but the Achaean’s and Achilles’ actions betray a deeper agenda, an attempt at dehumanizing, at blurring the lines between the uniqueness of an individual and the universality of anonymous human or animal flesh (or of dirt, earth) which squares with Adriana Cavarero’s ideas of ‘horrorism’, of homicidal overkill (she writes at length about the Iliad, but largely misses the importance of the fact that Hector is dead while all of this is happening). Achilles is not satisfied with simply killing Hector: he wants to make him less-than-human, to destroy him.

Along with the physical defiling of corpses, the narrative contains threats and fears of corpse mutilation. We have seen Glaucus’ fear of the mutilation of Sarpedon’s corpse (16.545). Elsewhere, the Iliad is riddled with threats of corpses being consumed by dogs and birds, including the horrific description from the prologue of things to come (1-5):

\[
\muὴν ἄειδε θεὰ Πηληιάδεω Άχλῆος
οὐλομέινην, ἡ μυρὶ Ἀχαιοῖς ἀλγε ἑθηκε,
πολλὰς δ’ ἰδῆμους ψυχὰς Άδι προϊάψεν
ήρωων, αὐτοὺς δὲ ἐλωρία τεῖχε κύνεσσαν
\]


Sing, goddess, the anger of Peleus’ son Achilles
and its devastation, which put pains thousandfold upon the Achaeans,
hurled in their multitudes to the house of Hades strong souls
of heroes, but gave their bodies to be the delicate feasting
of dogs, of all birds, and the will of Zeus was accomplished…

I note beyond this 25 examples of threats and fears (direct or narratively implied) of corpses
being left to the devices of dogs and/or birds. Among these, Hector aims to throw
Patroclus’ body to the dogs, but not before removing his head from his corpse (17.126-7). As
Charles Segal and others have noted, the threat of corpse abuse through decapitation takes on
a life of its own at this point, as Hector’s attempt is rephrased by Iris in a dream to Achilles.
The goddess shifts the language slightly, but significantly, to include the impaling of
Patroclus’ head on a pike (18.175-7). Later, Achilles returns the threat of decapitation to
Hector (18.333-5)—the dragging of Hector’s head in the dust and his facial disfiguring
(22.397-403) has some symbolic overtones of decapitation, but will be as far as the poet
allows the earlier threat to work its way into the actual abuse. Patroclus’ blood-stained
helmet rolls in the dust (16.794-6), evocative of decapitation and Hector’s subsequent threat.

Hector will himself wear that same bloody helmet, sealing his own fate and allusions to

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13 See Pagliaro (1956) on the motif of corpse mutilation in the proem.
14 Cf. Il. 2.392-3; 4.236-7; 8.379-80; 11.393-5, 453-4, 817-18; 13.233, 831-2; 15.351; 16.836; 17.125-7, 153,
254-5, 556-8; 18.270-2, 283; 22.42-3, 66-76, 88-9, 335-6, 354, 508-09; 23.182-3; 24.211-12, 408-09. See,
variously, Bassett (1933): 47-50 and (1938): 204; Faust (1970); Segal (1971): passim; Redfield (1975): 168-9,
15 The first threat of decapitation is in fact uttered by Euphorbus about 100 lines earlier (17.39-40), aimed at
Menelaus in retaliation for the latter’s slaying of Euphorbus’ brother Hyperenor at 14.516-19. For the theme of
decapitation in the Iliad, see Friedrich (2003): 45-51; Fenik (1968): 15 n.11, 84; Segal (1971): 20-3; Walsh
contains seven examples of battlefield decapitation: 10.454-7; 11.146; 11.261; 13.202-05; 14.465-8; 14.496;
20.481-3 (I discuss the example at 13.202-05 below, which complicates this picture).
16 This claim greatly exaggerates Hector’s own threat of corpse abuse through decapitation, and we ought to
consider the possibility that Iris’ reported speech is ‘calculated to rouse [Achilles] from grief-stricken
immobility to vigorous action’ (Edwards [1991]: ad 18.178-9).
(unfulfilled) decapitation at the hands of Achilles. Most savagely, Achilles, becoming the human embodiment of a ravening dog, will threaten to eat Hector raw (22.345-7).\textsuperscript{17} His threat is doubled by Hecuba, who will express the desire to gnaw Achilles’ liver, in retaliation for his treatment of her son Hector, at 24.212-14.\textsuperscript{18}

Fear of corpse mutilation recurs throughout the last third of the poem as well. Achilles fears Patroclus’ body will be infested with maggots and worms and made foul and rotten (19.23-7), Hecuba fears Hector’s corpse will lie on the shore as food for the dogs (22.88-9), as does Andromache, with the addition of worms devouring the bits of Hector that the dogs discard (22.508-09). Priam fears his own corpse will be left for his dogs to maul and devour (22.66-71),\textsuperscript{19} and further fears\textsuperscript{20} Hector has been hacked to pieces and thrown to the dogs (24.406-09): he questions Hermes, disguised as a young horseman:

\begin{verbatim}
ei μὲν δὴ θεράπων Πηληϊάδεω Αχιλῆος εῖς, ἂνε δὴ μοι πᾶσαν ὀληθήνυν κατάλεξον, ἃ ἔτι πάρ νῆσσαν ἐμὸς πᾶς, ἢ μω ἢδη ἤσι κυσίν μελείστα ταμὼν προὐθηκεν Ἀχιλλεύς.
\end{verbatim}

If then you are henchman to Peleus’ son Achilles come, tell me the entire truth, and whether my son lies still beside the ships, or whether by now he has been hewn limb from limb and thrown before the dogs by Achilles.

\begin{footnotes}
18 Zeus elsewhere describes Hera and her wrath as ‘cannibalistic’ toward Priam and his sons at 4.34-6: with Richardson (1993): \textit{ad} 22.344-54.
19 Priam fears his corpse will suffer the same treatment that Achilles plans for the abuse of Hector: so Anderson (1997): 34: ‘Like father, like son.’
20 As Richardson (1993): \textit{ad} 24.405-09 notes, Priam’s fear exaggerates Achilles’ threat of abuse, as his expectations stretch to the worst of possible outcomes.
\end{footnotes}
Achilles and Priam fear that their loved ones, through mutilation and decomposition, will become unrecognizable and less than human.\textsuperscript{21} This fear is reflected in and inspired by the physical treatment of Sarpedon’s and Hector’s corpses, who both lose their sense of self and being through the disfiguring abuse they receive.\textsuperscript{22}

Despite the energy lavished on the theme of corpse abuse, the acts, threats and fears are all ultimately unfulfilled or unsuccessful. Everywhere the gods intervene: Zeus (sending along Apollo) rescues Sarpedon’s corpse, and Sleep and Death deliver the body to his family for proper burial (16.667-75);\textsuperscript{23} Apollo preserves Sarpedon’s body from decay with the application of ambrosia (16.670, 680). Thetis assures Achilles that Patroclus’ flesh will remain fresh, better than before, even if it lies on the ground for a full year (19.33), and she infuses ambrosia and nectar into his nostrils so he remains intact (19.38-9). Aphrodite drives beasts away from Hector’s corpse, night and day, and she anoints him with oil (23.184-7), and Apollo blocks the sun from drying out his body with a thick cloud and shields him with his golden aegis (23.190-1, 24.18-21).\textsuperscript{24} Hermes reassures Priam that his son is unharmed, untouched by maggots, his wounds have been closed up (those delivered by the Greek army in book 22 after he has been killed) and he is under the protection of the gods (24.411-23). His body, quite suddenly,\textsuperscript{25} is returned to Priam for burial (24.599-601).\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{22} Clarke (1999): 157-215 discusses the dead body’s identity as still tied to its physical substance in the \textit{Iliad}, which may provide some indication of the horror the threats of mutilation cause in the audience and their (our) fears that loved ones could suffer such a fate.
\textsuperscript{23} Note here the famous Euphronius krater (late 6\textsuperscript{th} century BC), a red-figure bowl from Cerveteri, now in the Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia in Rome, which depicts the scene of Sarpedon’s removal from the battlefield (for proper burial) by the brothers Sleep and Death.
\textsuperscript{26} Morrison (1992): chap. 6, discusses the ‘thematic misdirection’ Homer presents concerning Achilles’
All threats of corpses being tossed to dogs and birds are also unfulfilled. The closest the poem comes to an example of a corpse being consumed by animals is that of Asteropaeus at 21.201-04. He is one of Achilles’ many victims thrown into the Scamander, and his body is torn and chewed by fish and eels.\(^{27}\) This actualizes the threat Achilles makes to Lycaon at 21.122-7. The corpse of Asteropaeus is clearly abused, in the unusual context of a watery venue. But even here the abuse is only allowed to go so far.\(^{28}\) The episode ends with the make-shift pyre/holocaust of all the Trojan dead killed by Achilles—the corpses in the river are all explicitly tossed upon the bank by Scamander (21.235-6)—after Hephaestus torches the plain and the river at Hera’s command (21.333-55), restoring purity and saving the dead from lasting abuse.\(^{29}\) Homer provides a catalogue of trees burnt up by Hephaestus’ fire on the shore (350-2), which burn together with the corpses (and the scavenging fish and eels, 353-5), cremating them in a sort of deconstructed tree-felling and pyre burning ritual. The watery venue for the slaughter itself functions as a further purifying agent. Sarpedon (16.667-9), Patroclus (18.343-51), Hector (24.582), and the anonymous corpses from both sides gathered for cremation (7.425) are all washed with water to cleanse them of impurity before their funeral rites, and here we have ostensibly the same procedure: washing of the corpses before treatment of Hector’s corpse. He argues we are led to believe (by various clues/cues) that Achilles will feed Hector’s corpse to dogs, instead of what actually happens when Hector is returned to Priam for burial.\(^{27}\) For fish as scavengers of the sea in Homer, see Vermeule (1979): 180-6. Cf. the cruel quip of the Prussian officer in Guy de Maupassant’s *Deux Amis*, after tossing the corpses of the two fishermen in the river: ‘C’est le tour des poissons maintenant’.

\(^{28}\) See Whitehorne (1983): 133-4 on the moral lesson we ought to take away from the personified Scamander’s rising up against Achilles’ glutting of the water with corpses: ‘nature itself will refuse to have anything to do with the dead who are unburied’.

\(^{29}\) See Redfield (1975): 250-1 n.15 on the purifying and cleansing properties in the scene of both fire and water, and further on the less horrific nature of the abuses (compared to corpse consumption by birds and dogs), as a result of their occurring under water and thus, ‘out of human sight’. See also Whitehorne (1983): 134; Jones (2005): 23-4. The spreading of the fire is pervasive, expressed in the repetitions of images of burning, from trees to the eels deep in the river-bed: with Richardson (1993): *ad* 21.343-56.
the application of cleansing fire. The waters, once polluted and stained red with blood, again ‘flow pure’ after Hephaestus’ quasi-ritualistic conflagration (21.382).

The _Iliad_ also places a great deal of emphasis on proper burial practice. Andromache reveals the respect Achilles showed to the corpse of her father Eëtion (6.416-20), which we are meant to remember when he rejects Hector’s proposition that the winner of their duel return the body of the slain to his family (22.256-9). Hector offers a similar proposition to the ‘best of the Achaeans’ whom he challenges in single combat at 7.76-91. Telamonian Ajax comes forward after being selected by lot, but the words look ahead to his fatal duel with Achilles in book 22. The crucial lines concerning the proper respect the victor should pay to the loser’s corpse are repeated by Hector when he is on his knees at the mercy of Achilles’ sword (7.78-9 = 22.342-3). We are meant similarly to contrast Hector’s words in book 7 with his later threat to leave the same Ajax’s corpse to the birds and dogs to devour (13.824-32), and with his aim to decapitate and impale Patroclus’ head, leaving the trunk, unburied, to the dogs (17.125-7; 18.175-7). Achilles’ boast that he will leave Hector’s body to be devoured by dogs is directly contrasted with the burial the Achaeans will provide for

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32 Hector is the only warrior in the poem (i.e., not including the elderly Priam’s fears that dogs will eat his corpse) who expresses direct fear that his corpse will be mutilated, and he does so twice, in Books 7 and 22. Perhaps this reflects the framework of impending doom that hangs over Hector from early on in the poem, that his death is assured (e.g. Andromache’s prediction of his death at _Il._ 6.407-13). He himself is allowed rare insight into _Zeus’ boule_, though too late, at 22.301-3; his death and Achilles’ attempted abuse of his corpse are made all the more tragic as a result. See Schadewaldt (1956): 14-17 on the looming death that hangs over Hector in the poem like a cloud of ‘schwermütige Sorge’.

33 See e.g. Mirto (2012): 134.
Patroclus (22.335-6).\textsuperscript{34} But for all of Achilles’ (attempted) mistreatment of Hector’s corpse the Trojan prince is preserved and eventually handed over to his family to be buried in the end. Sarpedon and Patroclus likewise receive the same treatment, though it takes the intervention of Patroclus’ unburied ghost in a dream to ‘remind’ Achilles of the immediacy of putting his body to proper rest (23.59-110).\textsuperscript{35}

The poem ends with the funeral of Hector, and the penultimate book (23) is dedicated almost entirely to the funeral and games in honor of Patroclus. Achilles’ withholding of burial from Hector is indicative of his understanding of the horror this act would cause the Trojan’s family and his shade. Achilles himself feared his own body would be lost in the Scamander, unburied and unhonored at 21.281.\textsuperscript{36} Zeus, finally, indicates just how far beyond the limits of acceptable battlefield behavior the withholding of burial rites is as he laments Achilles’ ‘mad’ treatment of Hector (24.114-15): \textit{φρευδαὶ μανωμένησιν \textbackslash ἔκτει \textbackslash παρὰ \textbackslash νησοὶ κορωνίσιν \textbackslash αἰδὴ ὀπέλυσεν}, ‘in his heart’s madness | he holds Hector beside the curved ships and did not give him | back’.\textsuperscript{37} Zeus follows Apollo’s reasoning that Achilles has gone far enough. Apollo calls Achilles ‘destructive’ (24.39: \textit{ὅλῳ Ἀχιλῆ}) in his treatment of Hector’s corpse. This will be the end of that destructiveness that characterized Achilles and the poem as a whole, and the gods agree Hector needs to be honored like a human, not a thing. Whatever uneasiness we as an audience and the characters within the text felt at the accumulation of attempts, threats, and fears of corpse abuse and the withholding of proper

\textsuperscript{34} See Schein (1984): 188.
\textsuperscript{35} See Burck (1981): 442-3.
\textsuperscript{36} The line is a double of \textit{Od.} 5.312. There Odysseus expresses his own fear of being lost at sea.
burial rites, ultimately the poet and his heroes learn to respect the bodies of the dead, to restore a proper moral code.  

Jasper Griffin and others have demonstrated that among Archaic Greek epics, the *Iliad* stands out for its ‘selective suppression’ of the fantastic, superstitious, excessively grim, and grotesque, and there is at least some indication that this is the result of a process of subsequent expurgation by later generations of ‘Homers’ and editors who found these features unbecoming of Homeric heroic expression. But the poem retains hints of these sorts of ‘fantastical’ elements that are otherwise attested in the mythic/Cyclic tradition: Achilles’ talking horse Xanthus (19.404-17), his tutelage by the centaur Chiron (11.828-32), an invisibility hat (5.844-5), and so on. So too the *Iliad* at times crosses the boundary between the suggestion of corpse abuse and actual abuse.

The closest the *Iliad* comes to overt corpse mutilation occurs during a rash of revenge killings in the gruesome fighting of book 13. Locrian Ajax, in revenge for Hector’s killing

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38 Vermeule (1979): 112.
39 These conclusions come by way of comparison with what we have of the Cyclic poets: see Griffin (1977); Davies (1989): 9; Burgess (2001): esp. 132-71.
40 E.g. Murray (1934): 120-45.
41 The scenes of Agamemnon’s grisly slaying of Hippolochus (11.145-7) and Peneleus’ slaying of Ilioneus (14.496-500) are candidates as well (see van Wees [1992]: 366-67 n.131), but the evidence for technical corpse abuse is less strong in each than in the treatment of Imbrius. Hippolochus is not obviously dead when Agamemnon cuts his arms and head off, and the scene occurs in the heat of battle with no premeditation; Ilioneus’ arms rise in an attempted supplication after he’s struck by Peneleus’ spear in the eye (he is certainly dying but not clearly dead when he is decapitated). As Segal (1971): 23 notes, his head’s impaling on the spear is incidental—it was already in his eye at the time of decapitation—and does not match the brutality of Hector’s threat to impale Patroclus’ head on a pike after decapitation (18.175-7), though the former certainly anticipates the (never fulfilled) latter.
42 Hector had aimed his spear cast at Teucer, but hit Amphimachus; Ajax decapitates Imbrius in retaliation for Hector’s slaying of Amphimachus. On this relatively common Homeric motif of striking a lesser opponent when aiming for a greater one (*alienum uulnus*), see Fenik (1968): 57, 126-8.
of Amphimachus, severs the head of Imbrius’ corpse—killed moments before by ‘the son of Telamon”—and tosses the head like a ball at the feet of Hector\(^43\) (13.201-05):

\[
\textit{ὥς ρᾳ τὸν ὑψόν ἔχοντε δόῳ Διαντε κορυστὰ}
\textit{τεῖχεα συλῆτην κεφαλὴν δ’ ἀπαλῆς ἀπὸ δειρῆς}
\textit{κόψεν Ὄιλιάδης κεχολωμένος Ἀμφιμάχοιο,
ήκε δὲ μιν σφαιρηδὸν ἐλιξάμενος δὲ ὧμιλον,
"Εκτορὶ δὲ προπάροιθε ποδῶν πέσεν ἐν κονίησι.}
\]

so the lordly
two Aiantes lifted Imbrius high and stripped him
of his armour, and the son of Oïleus, in anger
for Amphimachus, hewed away his head from the soft neck
and threw it spinning like a ball through the throng of fighters
until it came to a rest in the dust at the feet of Hector.

The decapitation happens in the heat of battle, and thus lacks the sort of premeditation we
find in the threats and boasts that are ultimately unfulfilled elsewhere in the poem. But the
brutality of the scene and its blurring of the lines between battlefield aggression and post
mortem mutilation deserve a bit more consideration than scholarship has granted.\(^44\)

Locrian Ajax is a ‘nasty character’,\(^45\) who provokes the wrath of Pallas and Poseidon
for boastfulness and impiety and is ultimately drowned at sea attempting his nostos (e.g. Od.
4.499-510; \textit{Iliou Persis} arg. 3 West). His first appearance in the \textit{Iliad} is signaled by a notice
that he is ‘far lesser’ than his namesake Telamonic Ajax (2.527-9), and his foolishness is
attested by his meaningless quarrel with Idomeneus during Patroclus’ funeral games (23.473-

\(^{43}\) There has been some debate concerning the presence of Locrian Ajax in this scene, the exact meaning of
\textit{Διαντε} here, and whether it is Teucer or Ajax (both ‘sons of Telamon’) who kills Imbrius: see Page (1963):
\(^{44}\) Among the works which directly treat corpse abuse in the \textit{Iliad}, the scene is relegated to a footnote in Segal
(1971): 23 n.1; Griffin (1980): 132 mentions the scene, but only as it applies to expressions of \textit{pathos}, no
mention of its implications for corpse abuse; Vernant (1991): 71 identifies it as a form of \textit{aikia}, but goes on to
argue that ‘whenever threats of disfigurement are specified and abuse is committed, it involves a warrior whose
body is ultimately saved’ (73), presumably placing Imbrius’ beheading outside the strictures of direct corpse
maltreatment. No mention of the scene in Redfield (1975) or Vermeule (1979). See more helpfully van Wees
98). In the subsequent foot-race he falls face-first in a pile of dung, prompting universal
delight and laughter (23.773-84). Moreover, his (accused or attempted\(^{46}\)) rape of Cassandra
and defilement of Athena’s temple following the sack of Troy is recounted in the \textit{Iliou Persis}
and was mythic material known to Homer and his audience. Athena’s direct intervention
against Ajax in the foot-race (causing him to trip and fall: see \textit{Il.} 23.774, 782) anticipates the
subsequent conflict between the two in the larger mythic story;\(^{47}\) the background myth
provides texture for his characterization in the \textit{Iliad}.
\(^{48}\) We should, then, probably not be
surprised at his participation in the cruel treatment of Imbrius here. That Poseidon considers
Imbrius’ decapitation of insufficient retaliatory value, and supplies his own revenge for the
killing of his grandson Amphimachus by driving Idomeneus into a frenzy and spurring on the
Achaean (13.206-45), should provide some indication that Imbrius’ abuse does not fall
under precisely the same category of corpse abuse that Achilles’ treatment of Hector does,
which incites the disgust and wrath of the gods, prompting Zeus’ intervention (24.113-16).
However we interpret the decapitation, the scene is singularly conspicuous for its brutality.

The scene, I argue, serves as a nightmarish anticipation of the potential for Hector’s
own corpse abuse by Achilles. Imbrius stands as a surrogate for Hector in the scene itself, as
Homer tells us Locrian Ajax decapitates Imbrius in retaliation for Hector’s killing of
Amphimachus. The revenge abuse is indirect (Ajax mutilates Imbrius, not Hector, for
Hector’s slaying of Amphimachus), since Hector must ultimately fall by Achilles’ hand, but
the beheading represents the exact abuse with which Achilles will threaten Hector, in direct

\(^{46}\) See Gantz (1993): 651-5 for details.
retaliation for his slaying of Patroclus (18.333-5). Imbrius is also something of a Hector-like stand-out or double in other ways: having married Priam’s illegitimate daughter Medesicaste (the only nothê in the poem), he lives in Priam’s home, and Priam ‘honoured him as he did his own children’ (13.176: ὁ δὲ μὴν Ἰαον τέκεσσι). His preeminence among the Trojans is highlighted (13.175) and his fall is equated with the collapse of an ash tree on a high mountain (178-80), indicating ‘his high honour at Troy’ and prompting Hector’s own response and a skirmish over Imbrius’ corpse. He falls, ‘and about him rang his armor inlaid with bronze’ (181: ἀμφὶ δὲ οἱ βράχε τεῦχεα ποικίλα χαλκῷ).

The same pattern of tree simile and clattering fall accompanies Hector’s near-death in the following book (14.409-20). Telamonian Ajax strikes Hector with a stone, he falls like an oak struck by lightning, and his bronze-inlaid armor clatters around him (14.420: ἀμφὶ δὲ οἱ βράχε τεῦχεα ποικίλα χαλκῷ). Line-doubles are common and usually tell us very little in Homeric poetry, but this particular line appears only elsewhere at 12.396, and there it is not joined to a tree-falling simile. Hector’s fall here has all the symptoms of a ‘death-scene’, looking back to the parallel scene of Imbrius’ death, and looking forward to his own death in book 22. Hector falls ‘in the dust’ (ἐν κονίῃσι, 14.418), like Imbrius’ head which rolls to Hector’s feet in the dust (13.205: ἐν κονίῃσι). Imbrius’ head is sent rolling ‘like a ball’ (13.205: σφαιρηδόν), while Hector is struck and made to spin ‘like a top’ (14.413: στρόμβον) before crashing into the dust. The references to playful, unwarlike games add an element of almost whimsical grotesquerie to each scene. Like other heroes, a fall in the dust is a sure

50 See Krischer (1971); Janko (1992): ad 14.414-17; Neal (2006a): 118. All other tree-falling similes accompany a warrior who has died.
indicator of death, as it will be for Hector himself at 22.330, 402. Hector vomits black blood and black night covers his eyes (14.436-9), and again we sense that his death is imminent.

The death and decapitation of Imbrius occur just after the poem’s mid-point of the close of book 12, a point marked by a shift from the end of book 12 and the Trojans’ military successes, to Poseidon’s intervention, Zeus’ averting his gaze, and a sharp reversal of fortunes that builds until the return of Zeus’ attention in book 15, and the devastating loss of Patroclus in 16. That this scene occurs just after the poem’s midpoint has some larger structural and poetic interest. In a brief and excellent article, David Elmer has discussed the importance of a simile at Iliad 12.421-23 comparing the struggle between the Achaeans and Trojans around the Achaean ships to farmers competing for position along the middle-point of a field (like a turf-war), which he convincingly posits contains a pointed reference to the ancient ball game episkuros/epikoinos. He argues that this referent applies to the structure of

\[51\] Mackay (2002): 63-4 notes the motif, but is wrong to stress that the image of a hero lying in the dust ‘occurs only in death contexts’ [sic]. Hector will eventually lie in the dust like other dead heroes (22.397-403: see above), but he escapes that fate in this instance, in a scene that anticipates his inevitable demise.

\[52\] Issues related to oral performance and performative pause-periods, or divisions have inspired vigorous scholarly debate, though ultimately we can only speculate on how these poems were performed and received. But note the enticing arguments of Davison (1965), Thornton (1984): 46-63, and Frame (2009): 561-75 for a six-day performance period, dividing poetic material into six units of four books each. This structure for performance would put material from book 12 at the conclusion of the third day of recitation, with day four beginning with the action of book 13, making the gap between these books the ‘middle’ of the overall performance period. West (2011): 75-6 prefers to divide the performance material into four units of six books each, which, again, would leave the end of book 12 as a mid-point of performance. Taplin (1992): 11-31 and others argue for a three-part ‘movement’, corresponding largely to the period before, during, and after Hector’s major victories. While individual book lengths vary enormously, the line numbers corresponding to the six four-book units are very close in length and thus, reasonably, provide equal space for performance time (see the charts at Davison [1965]: 24, a stab at possible performance times for recitation of these four-book units). I cite from Frame (2009): 557 n.134: ‘The total lines for the six segments of the Iliad are as follows: Books 1–4: 2493; Books 5–8: 2485; Books 9–12: 2611; Books 13–16: 2972; Books 17–20: 2305; Books 21–24: 2827’.

the poem and the point of ‘intense equilibrium’ as the battle wavers on a fine line around the Achaean ships, like the ball game in which two teams contend for position in a common field marked by a center line of stones (the *skuros*).\(^{54}\) He argues that the similes’s occurrence at the poem’s midpoint (the end of book 12) marks out both the state of battle and the architecture of the poem as if ‘on the point of a balance beam’.\(^{55}\) The reference to Imbrius’ head being thrown and rolling ‘like a ball’ strengthens the argument about the implicit allusion to the ball-game in the simile from book 12, and adds another layer of the grotesque to the scene as the ‘ball’ comes to a stop at Hector’s feet at the beginning of the next book.

The details of the game are not entirely clear,\(^{56}\) but we do know that it was played with a ball while teams battle for position on an evenly marked-out field. Possession was determined by acquiring the ball in an initial struggle at midfield, and the team that gained possession threw the ball back at the opponents’ end of the field. The winning team was the one that drove the other team all the way across the field, to the baseline (thus acquiring control of the entire game space). The game hinged upon the strength of each team’s arms, and their ability to throw the ball a considerable distance down field. With the Achaeans gaining the upper-hand after Zeus averts his attentions, the ‘ball’ (Imbrius’ head in simile) seems to fall onto Hector’s side of the field, at the prince’s feet, after the Achaeans win the skirmish over the two corpses (Amphimachus and Imbrius); the Trojans are losing their tactical advantage and the ‘game’ of battle at this decisive moment in the war and the poem.

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\(^{54}\) Elmer (2008). Thanks to Alex Forte for providing the reference to Elmer’s article, *per litteras.*

\(^{55}\) Elmer (2008): 422. This image finds a double in the simile immediately following which compares the equilibrium of battle to equal portions of wool weighed out by a weaver (12.433-6).

\(^{56}\) I am following the summary at Elmer (2008): 414, citing Poll. 9.103-07.
Zeus’ absence as all of this is unfolding is key, I think, and it paves the way for the potential for Hector’s death, out of his sight, and the rest of the action up until he shifts his attention back to the war at the beginning of book 15. At the opening of book 8, Zeus calls an assembly of the gods. He informs them of his plan to engineer short-term Trojan victory, in accordance with Thetis’ request (1.508-10) that the Trojans take the upperhand in the war and thus ensure her son Achilles recompense and respect from the Achaeans once they are required to call upon his aid (8.5-17). Zeus demands compliance, and warns the gods against interfering. And through book 12, the scenario envisioned by Zeus has been playing out accordingly, as the Trojans take the upperhand in battle and Hector establishes himself as the singularly exceptional Trojan hero whom Achilles will eventually slay, sealing his kleos.

Yet as Book 13 opens, Zeus suddenly turns his gaze northward, to the Thracians, Mysians, and Scythians (13.1-9). The pro-Achaean Poseidon covertly enters the fray and inspires a string of Achaean military successes, acting directly against the will of Zeus after the king of the gods diverts his attention. As the narrator indicates, Poseidon’s actions here constitute a true threat to Zeus’ plan to establish a short-term Trojan victory (13.676-8), as Poseidon steers the poem back toward Achaean dominance. The Achaean successes following Poseidon’s intervention embolden the pro-Achaean Hera to further action and a further stifling of Zeus’ plans. She formulates a hilarious ruse, seducing her husband—this is the so-called Dios apatê, the ‘Beguiling of Zeus’—and again draws his attentions away from the battlefield. Zeus’ absence leaves the Trojans and Hector in a state of distress, as book 15 opens as 14 had ended, with Hector gasping for air and spewing black blood. He is apparently about to die.
By Zeus’ (partially inadvertent) averting of his directorial gaze, the poem toys with the idea that ‘fate’ (i.e., poetic tradition) might be derailed, that the story might end too soon or end out of step with Zeus’ plan. Specifically, we are bombarded with the possibility of contemplating a mythic alternative to the traditional outlines of the Trojan tale, which dictates that Achilles return to battle and kill Hector himself in retaliation for Hector’s slaying of Patroclus. The return of Zeus’ focus resets the trajectory of the plot—he ‘revives’ Hector, in a way that points to a retrieval from death, 14.242, 251-2, 15.286-93—and he summarizes or prophesies the events that will take place during the rest of the poem up to Achilles’ slaying of Hector (and even to events beyond the scope of the poem, to the eventual fall of Troy, and the long-view of the mythic tradition: 15.59-68), as if to remind the audience, in metapoetic play, of mythological and narratorial necessity. He effectively

57 The meaning, function, and parameters of the Dios boulê (Il. 1.5, and its implementation throughout the poem) and its association with ‘fate’ and the divine plan that controls the plot of the Iliad are fraught and highly ambiguous. Most scholars follow Aristarchus (A and D scholia ad Il. 1.5-6) in confining the ‘will of Zeus’ to the narrative present of the Iliad and the poem’s plot to bring glory to Achilles, fulfilling the request of Thetis. This view distinguishes the Dios boulê from the larger mythic structure of the Cypria (fr. 1.7 Bernabé) and events outside the confines of the poem. Zeus, however, does refer in his prophecy at Il. 15.59-71 to the fated fall of Troy, and so scholars have sought to define a middle-ground in terms of the scope of Zeus’ ‘plan’ that goes just beyond the end of the Iliad’s narrative structure: see esp. Clay (1999) and, concisely, Elmer (2013): 156-9. The ambiguities in meaning are doubled intratextually by Zeus’ own (often) confusion over the parameters of this ‘plan’: at Il. 1.512-17 he hesitates over the decision of whether to grant Thetis’ request that he provide short-term victory to the Trojans; at 4.5-19 he opens discussion with the gods about the possibility of ending the war peacefully and prematurely, eschewing Troy’s ‘fated’ destruction entirely; at 16.433-8 he contemplates reversing Sarpedon’s ‘destined’ death; and at 22.168-76 he considers exempting Hector from his own ‘preordained’ doom. These ambiguities and hesitations leave room for narrative ‘misdirection’ (following Morrison [1992]) and a metapoetic toying with audience expectations concerning mythic structure and poetic tradition (see note below).

58 This narrative technique in the Iliad of ‘misdirection’ and the creation of false or counter expectations in the audience (based on the audience’s knowledge of mythic tradition) has been detailed extensively by Morrison (1992). See also Elmer (2013): esp. chapters 7 and 9 (see notes below).

59 So Elmer (2013): 161: ‘Poseidon’s designs actually take over the plot in the next book, when Hera temporarily nullifies the Dios boulê by seducing Zeus and casting him into a deep sleep. On waking, Zeus must restore events to the course dictated by his will; now that the intransigence of the pro-Achaean party has been laid bare, he must rely even more directly on the threat of raw force, which he deploys against both Hera and Poseidon (Il 15.16-33, 162-65)’.

60 Elmer (2013): 146-73 lays out the metapoetics at play in the Iliad linking the gods with the extratextual real-
reminds the audiences—intra- and extra-textual audiences; the gods and the real-world
listeners (later, ‘readers’)—of ‘fate’, which amounts to poetic tradition. In his absence and
with Poseidon and Hera pulling the strings counter to Zeus’ and fate’s plan, it seems ‘un-
Homeric’ things like corpse abuse, farce (in the whimsical Dios apatê), and false-endings
manage dangerously to seep into a narrative that has momentarily lost its way.

The death and abuse of Imbrius in book 13 looks ahead to the death and abuse of
Hector, the last victim of the poem, when the focus shifts finally to Hector’s corpse and its
attempted abuse by Achilles. Tellingly, Imbrius’ head rolls to a stop at Hector’s feet, and
Homer’s silence in elaborating Hector’s reaction to the severed head of his brother-in-law—
matching the silence from Ajax himself—echoes through book 24 until he is himself finally
returned to Priam, unmutilated, and given proper burial. Locrian Ajax embodies the ‘worst of
the Achaeans’, and, through his cruel treatment of Imbrius, I argue, stands as a frightening
anticipation for the dark side of Achilles’ character in the final books of the Iliad. Hector
escapes the fate of Imbrius thanks to the gods, Priam, and Achilles’ return to humanity, but
the fear that he too might lose his head has its resonating origins here, making the only clear
scene of corpse abuse in the poem all the more significant.

It is clear that the Iliad articulates a definable limit on the imposition of violence in
war. We see repeatedly examples of boasts, fears, and attempts aimed at breaking through
that limit, only to have the poet pull back from allowing these expressions of violence to

world audience of the poem. This relationship, he argues, is especially and intricately structured around the
gods’ and the extratextual audiences’ knowledge of poetic tradition, hypostasized as ‘fate’, and the metapoetic
play in the poem of contemplating possible mythic alternatives to the traditional plot.

61 Elsewhere Zeus leads the charge in keeping corpses safe from mutilation, cf. esp. 24.113-16.
62 For Poseidon’s and Hera’s usurpation of Zeus’ plan, and of the disruption of action in Books 13 and 14, see
63 See Janko (1992): ad 13.195-205: the tossing of Imbrius’ head at Hector is ‘equivalent to a taunting-speech’.
reach fruition. This overarching system concerning the appropriate treatment of the dead makes the case of Imbrius singularly conspicuous in the poem. I have argued that this scene plays a structural and metapoetic role in the *Iliad*, and that it has implications for our reading of the end of the poem and Achilles’ attempted yet unfulfilled abuse of Hector’ corpse. I argue that these features make the scene meaningful to issues related to the treatment of the dead in the poem, that the scene demands contemplation. If nothing else, I have sought to bring to the forefront a powerful scene in the poem that has been grossly under analyzed—even in studies that target corpse maltreatment in the poem—in an attempt to test its merits and apply it to the larger themes of abuse in the *Iliad*. However we decide to read and interpret Ajax’s treatment of Imbrius’ corpse, it is importantly anomalous in the poem, it is exceptional to the picture the poet paints of epic violence and cruelty. Homer’s heroes kill and are killed and ultimately (*almost* universally) the poet provides for their corpses a peaceful repose.

### 2.2. Deadtime Stories 2: Virgil on the Treatment of the Dead in the *Aeneid*

*But Virgil had the Gift of expressing much in little, and sometimes in silence...*
—*John Dryden, dedication to Examen Poeticum*

*A corpse is never completely silent...*
—*Diana Fuss, Dying Modern: A Meditation on Elegy*

My discussion of the *Aeneid* is something of an argument out of silence. By that, I mean that it is my aim to coax some meaning out of moments in the *Aeneid* that Virgil willfully writes out of his narrative, that he refuses to narrate. Specifically, I will consider scenes of corpse maltreatment and abuse that we know take place during the course of the poem, but which Virgil does not articulate explicitly. Analysis of silence is inherently slippery, and little can
be offered here in terms of certainty, but it is precisely this uncertainty and confusion that I think Virgil is exploiting enigmatically as a means of challenging his readers and of eliciting multifaceted readings out of cruxes he leaves unresolved. Our knowledge of the Homeric corpus (especially the *Iliad*)\textsuperscript{64} and of references in the *Aeneid* itself provide integral insight into framing Virgil’s silences. We know that Virgil includes corpse abuse in his epic because we see repeatedly the aftermath of the abuse: Priam’s headless corpse washed in the surf, the heads of Nisus and Euryalus fixed to pikes, Mezentius’ perforated breastplate, the heads of Amycus and Diores hanging as trophies from Turnus’ chariot. But nowhere does the poet include physical detail of *post mortem* violence. My analysis takes root from in number of studies that address Virgilian silence, in particular a brief but important article by Robert Edgeworth published posthumously in *Vergilius*, whose methodological framework I will lean on heavily in this discussion: ‘…I am speaking primarily of occasions when [Virgil’s] use of specific elements from the literary tradition creates certain expectations in the minds of the audience, but the poet does not tell us whether these expectations are fulfilled’. This argumentation is more fully fleshed-out (and anticipated) by Thomas Hubbard, who also discusses the filling of narrative gaps through Virgil’s engagement with earlier poetic models in his *Eclogues*, but importantly supplements this poetic engagement with a consideration of political and socio-historical factors that further ‘inform’ the narrative silences.\textsuperscript{65}

\textsuperscript{64} A well-worn but invaluable path for Virgilian poetic analysis, esp. since Knauer (1964), though my project falls more in line with Barchiesi (1984), whose influence is everywhere here (I am aware of the English translation of Barchiesi [1984] that has just come out in 2015, but I have not yet had a chance to look at it). See also recently Dekel (2012).

\textsuperscript{65} Hubbard (1995), who relies on the reader-response criticism of Wolfgang Iser, particularly his ‘theory of “blanks” or loci of indeterminacy between the text and reader’; Edgeworth (2005): 3. See also, Heinze (1993): 165, 187 n.41 on Virgil’s silence in elaborating death scenes and his leaving elaboration of the events to the imagination of the reader; cf. Farron (1985): 28. This view gives Virgil little credit for his depiction of graphic violence, however (see more on this below). Also of note is Quinn (1968): 339-49 on Virgil’s use of ‘implicit
Virgil takes the lead from Homer in sharing a particular interest in themes of corpse treatment and burial rites. Virgil builds on the Iliadic model, going even further than Homer by allowing the abuse that is nearly entirely denied in the Iliad to seep into his poem, while still distancing himself from that abuse by refusing to narrate it. As in Homer’s poem, the focus of the motif of corpse mutilation in the Aeneid falls upon the bodies of dead heroes. We can see seven times in the Aeneid where Virgil invites the audience to imagine details of corpse mutilation, but the poet himself does not describe those details. I begin (1) with the abuse of Nisus’ and Euryalus’ corpses after they are captured during the climax of the night raid in book 9. Next (2) I analyze the death and treatment of Mezentius spanning the end of book 10 and the beginning of book 11. After a review of the building theme in the poem of proper burial rites, I examine Aeneas’ murder and boast over the corpse of Tarquitus (3), and Turnus’ post mortem decapitation of Amycus and Diores (4), before moving on to Pyrrhus’ murder of Priam and the image of the king’s headless trunk on the Trojan shore (5). The analysis of Virgil’s handling of these scenes will then provide some framework for a brief consideration of Dido’s curse moments before she kills herself (6), and of Aeneas’ treatment of Turnus at the close of the epic (7). I am interested, specifically, in Virgil’s narrative silence in depicting these scenes of corpse abuse, his avoidance of the clinical details of corpse mutilation, and the ways in which his engagement with Homer and clues from elsewhere in the Aeneid provide a framework for filling these narrative gaps.

Comment.

66 Minor or unnamed characters occupy little narrative space with regard to their treatment or burial, though both poets do provide descriptions of the collective burial rites of mostly insignificant fighters on either side, after a cease-fire allows for proper obsequies in each poem: Il. 7.421-32, 433-41. cf. 323-43, 375-7, 394-7; Aen. 11.100-21, 133-8, 182-212; cf. 11.22-6: with Horsfall (2003): ad locc. See Bureck (1981): 446-55 for a full discussion of the burial rites that begin Aen. 11 and Virgil’s appropriation of Iliadic material.
The scene of Nisus’ and Euryalus’ night raid is modeled on that of Diomedes’ and Odysseus’ sortie into enemy territory in the tenth book of the *Iliad*, the so-called ‘Doloneia’. While the Achaean pair provides an obvious initial parallel for Virgil’s two Trojans, Virgil complicates the Iliadic model by having his pair die in the Rutulian camp, thus conflating the success of Homer’s Diomedes and Odysseus with the failed mission of the Trojan scout, Dolon. Virgil has Nisus and Euryalus play the role of both Greeks and Trojans in this intertext, but they die (appropriately) as Trojans. The deaths are described in detail (9.431-45): Euryalus is pierced through the ribs and chest and dies, neck drooping, like poppies wet with rain (434-7); Nisus rushes to avenge the death and dies *confossus* (445: ‘pierced’), falling on top of Euryalus’ corpse. Virgil’s memorable epitaph for the dead heroes that immediately proceeds (446-9) is followed by the grisly description of their severed heads pierced on pikes and paraded at the front of Turnus’ battleline (465-7):

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quin ipsa arrectis (uisu miserabile) in hastis
praefigunt capita et multo clamore sequuntur
Euryali et Nisi.
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Further (and it was a piteous sight) they hoisted on spear-points
Heads they’d impaled. When they lined up behind, cheering loudly, one’s eyesight Met Nisus, Euryalus.68

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68 This scene replays the image of Cacus’ foul cave site, where he similarly displays heads transfixed and dripping gore (8.196-7): *foribusque adfixa superbis | ora uirum tristi pendebant pallida tabo*, ‘and nailed with pride at the entrance | Hung human heads, each face decomposing grimly to greyness’, with 9.471-2: *simul ora uirum praefixa mouebant | nota nimi miseris atroque fluentia tabo*, ‘The impaled heads moved them deeply with sorrow: | Faces they recognized only too well oozed gory putrescence’. Noted by Hardie (1994): ad 9.471-2. By allowing the heads of Nisus and Euryalus to be severed and impaled like this, Virgil equates Turnus and the Rutulians with the monster Cacus.
The image here conflates two scenes in Homer: that of Achilles’ attempted mutilation of Hector’s corpse at *Iliad* 22.405-515 before the Trojan walls (the horror of Aeneas and his men at the decapitated heads of their comrades followed by the grief of Euryalus’ mother mirror the reactions of Priam, Hecuba, and Andromache at Achilles’ parade of Hector’s corpse); and Iris’ report to Achilles (in a dream) of what Hector ‘intended’ to do to Patroclus’ head (*Il*. 18.176-7: κεφαλὴν δὲ ἐ θημός ἀνώγε | πῆξαν ἀνὰ σκολόπεσσι ταμῶνθ ἀπαλῆς ἀπὸ δειρῆς, ‘since the anger within him is urgent | to cut the head from the soft neck and set it on sharp stakes’). The latter intertext is especially intriguing since the impaling of decapitated heads actualizes the sort of corpse abuse only ever attempted, threatened, and feared in the *Iliad*. Virgil carries out the most brutal threat of abuse uttered in Homer’s poem, but the actual act of mutilation is entirely left out of Virgil’s narrative. Nisus and Euryalus die in a bloody embrace followed by Virgil’s narrative interjection and images of Rutulian mourning and blood-soaked soil. But then we have a change of scenery: Dawn appears and scatters her light upon the earth, revealing Turnus, his troops, and, now, the heads of Nisus and Euryalus (9.459-67). What Virgil leaves hidden in the darkness before dawn is the decapitation of the two heroes; it is as if the scene of abuse has been expurgated from the text.

Nisus and Euryalus receive treatment similar to their unfortunate Iliadic model Dolon, who has his head cut off at *Iliad* 10.457, in one of the more brutally descriptive

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70 Dolon is not dead when he loses his head, of course.
death scenes in Homeric poetry. Dolon’s pleading with Diomedes is literally cut short, and his head hits the dust still mumbling (454-7):

\[
\text{ἦ, καὶ δὴ μὲν μὲν ἐξελλε γενείου ἕχειη παχεῖη}
\text{ἀμφαένος λύσεοθαι, δὲ δ᾽ ἄμχενα μέσσον ἐλασσο}
\text{φασγάνω ἄμχας, ἀπὸ δ᾽ ἄμφοι κέρσε τένοντε·}
\text{φθεγγομένου δ᾽ ἀρα τοῦ γε κάρη κονήσω ἐμίχθη.}
\]

He spoke, and the man was trying to reach his chin with his strong hand and cling, and supplicate him, but he struck the middle of his neck with a sweep of the sword, and slashed clean through both tendons, and Dolon’s head still speaking dropped in the dust.

Virgil’s night raid is modelled so pointedly as a set-piece on the Iliadic Doloneia that actions from the model text can and should be read against Virgil’s staging in the Aeneid. Virgil’s audience is expected to have this scene from the Doloneia in mind almost as a ‘script’ Virgil is repurposing and expanding, so our expectations for violent decapitation might reasonably be met by our knowledge of the decapitation of Dolon in Homer.\(^{71}\)

But Virgil does not typically shy away from brutality (despite a tendency among scholars to ignore the poet’s interest in violence\(^{72}\)), and he may be providing a glimpse of what this scene of corpse abuse might have looked like at 9.331-3, during the more successful stretch of the night raid. As he cuts his way through the drunk and sleeping Rutulian host, Nisus slays three attendants of Turnus’ favorite augur Rhamnes by lopping off their ‘drooping necks’ (331: *pendentia colla*), before he attacks their master himself (332-3):

\(^{71}\) For this type of intertextual *aemulatio* in Virgil’s engagement with his Homeric (Iliadic) model, see the programmatic discussion in Barchiesi (1984): chap. 4.

\(^{72}\) The classic case for Virgil’s ‘squeamishness’ in articulating Iliadic-style violence is Heinze (1993): 163-6. See, more soberly, Heuzé (1985): 116; Harrison (1988); Horsfall (1995): 174; Feeney (1999): 180: ‘Commentators on the later books of the *Aeneid* will often helpfully direct you to the Homeric prototypes for particular physical catastrophes, as if such precedent were sufficient explanation’. Farron (1985) and (1986) accepts Virgil’s interest in gore but only as it applies to his agenda of casting Aeneas as an uncouth monster (*passim*).
tum caput ipsi aufert domino truncumque relinquit | sanguine singultantem, ‘Then it’s their master whose head he lops off, whom he leaves a truncated | Torso pulsing blood’.

The phrase *pendentia colla* prepares us for Euryalus’ own drooping neck (434: *ceruix conlapsa*), weighed down like wet poppies, which ‘lower their heads when their slender | Stems grow tired’ (436-7: *lassoue papauera collo | demisere caput*). He is like a purple flower severed by the plow (435-6), an image which itself teases at bodily decapitation (*OLD s.v. collum* 1-4, and *OLD s.v. caput* 1-8, 13-14, are resoundingly ‘corporeal’ words), but veils the repugnance of the future act through a *pathos*-rich floral metaphor. By offering the image 100 lines earlier of the dangling necks of Rhamnes and his acolytes severed with brutal detail, Virgil offers us the opportunity to read in these described decapitations the non-narrated mutilation of Nisus and Euryalus. Moreover, drunk, sleeping, helpless victims are not all that dissimilar to corpses: neither can offer resistance, neither open their eyes. When we couple this with the ‘decapitated’ flower heads, Virgil further articulates the details of corpse abuse, while still keeping a safe distance from the act.

By narrating the decapitations of separate but crucially related ‘victims’, Virgil is able to provide his audience with the graphic detail they relished, while simultaneously distancing himself from directly describing the abuse of corpses. The narrative silence

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73 In his description of Euryalus’ death, Virgil is elaborating on the death of Gorgythion at *Il.* 8.306-08 whose head droops like a poppy heavy with its yield and spring rain, and Heracles’ wounding of Geryon in Stesichorus (*Geryoneis* S15 col. 2: 12-17), when one head (of three) dips like a damaged poppy. Sappho 105c *PLF* and Catullus 11.22-4 are also models: see Fowler (1987): 189-90. That Geryon had three heads and Nisus slices the necks of three attendants of Rhamnes in quick succession is probably not coincidental, and further links the two scenes in Virgil through the shared imagery with their Greek models.


75 Virgil’s periphrasis of the details is rounded off in his description of the presentation of the heads on pikes: the interjection *uisu miserabile* (465) betrays his disgust, and the image ends with one of Virgil’s most poignant half-lines (467: *Euryali et Nisi*), grimly doubling (inadvertently?) the severing of the pair’s heads. Virgil’s interjected disgust at the corpse abuse here goes against earlier epic conventions. Homer avoids judgment in
stimulates reader participation. We have cribs, if we need something to follow, but the actual corpse mutilations are left to the imagination of the reader.

This narrative of silence is not a one-off. At the end of book 10, Aeneas kills Mezentius with a blow to the neck that splatters blood over his breastplate (10.907-08).

Mezentius’ armor is the focus of the beginning of book 11, as Aeneas sets up a tropaeum of the spoils, presumably to Mars (11.7-8: magne...bellipotens, ‘Lord of War’), but here, the breastplate is described as pierced 12 times (9-10: bis sex thoraca petitum | perfossumque locis), a feature not mentioned during the fighting by Virgil and thus presumably meted out after Mezentius’ death.

What do we make of this? While Virgil casts a silence over the gap separating books 10 and 11, there is much we are obliged or tempted to read into the mutilation. The 12 holes in the breastplate, as Servius first understood it, may represent the 12 allied cities of Etruria, formerly under the sway of the brutal king, sharing in the abuse of Mezentius’ corpse.

This form of communal corpse abuse evokes the scene of the Achaeans’ group-stabbing of cases of violence (though see de Jong [2012]: ad 22.395, on Achilles’ ‘foul deeds’), and in the only example of corpse abuse in Ap. Rhod. Argon. (Jason’s post mortem dismembering of Medea’s brother Apsyrtus at 4.477-81), Apollonius passes over the brutal apotropaic expiatory mutilation with what amounts to casual disinterest. Cf. 10.541-2: arma Serestus | lecta refert umeris tibi, rex Gradiue, tropaeum, ‘Stripping his armour Serestus | Shouldered it up as a trophy for you, Mars, Lord of the Soldier’.

Nisus falls from repeated blows, also expressed in a compound of fodio (9.445: confossus: see above). These are spear or sword blows (Virgil does not specify), and we can extrapolate in Mezentius’ case post mortem perforations through his breastplate into his chest similarly via the compound perfodio.


Whether we take Servius’ claim literally or not, the argument, nevertheless, for some form of post mortem abuse seems clear, as does, by Iliadic association, an evocation of Hector’s treatment by the Achaeans.
Hector’s corpse at Iliad 22.369-75,\(^8\) as each hesitatingly pierces the flesh while sharing in some aspect of the ‘killing’.\(^{81}\) Mezentius’ blood-splattered breastplate and his crests dripping with blood (11.8: \textit{rorantis sanguine cristas}) recall Hector’s ‘bloodstained arms’ (\textit{τεύχε...| aἰματοεντ’}) at Iliad 22.368-9. Though Hector’s wounds are all closed by the gods (\textit{Il.} 24.420-3) and his corpse preserved, Mezentius, the \textit{contemptor diuum}, ‘scorner of the gods’ (7.648; cf. also 8.7: \textit{contemptorque deum}), will not enjoy the same divine treatment.

Whatever the fate of Mezentius’ actual corpse, he is reduced to a bloody shell of himself, a \textit{truncus} bearing bloody arms (11.16): \textit{manibusque meis Mezentius hic est}, ‘Here is the artwork my hands have created! Behold him, Mezentius!’\(^{82}\)

The fate of Mezentius’ corpse is especially intriguing since the themes of burial and treatment of the dead at this point in the epic have been building steadily.\(^{83}\) Lycian Orontes is thrown overboard, the first casualty of the poem (1.113-17), and he reappears in the underworld among the host of unburied dead, along with the helmsman Palinurus, another

\(^{80}\) So Servius \textit{ad loc.}: \textit{moris autem fuit ut interemptos duces omnis vulneraret exercitus, sicut etiam de Hectore Homerus commemorat...}, ‘moreover it was customary for the whole army to wound dead leaders, as Homer even records in the case of Hector’; Knauer (1964): 420 \textit{ad 11.9}.

\(^{81}\) The image of a ‘tyrant’ repeatedly and symbolically stabbed by his former allies also calls to mind Julius Caesar, whose death at the hands of the conspirators left his body riddled with wounds. Nicolaus of Damascus (our earliest source), in particular, notes that the conspirators added what appear to be \textit{post mortem} blows to Caesar’s corpse, as evidence of their ‘sharing in the deed’ (\textit{FGrH} 90 F 130.24.90); Nicolaus’ source may have been an eyewitness. Virgil may be toying with the allusion here, as similarly Priam’s death recalls Pompey and Cicero (see below).

\(^{82}\) Because all we know of Mezentius’ remains are transformed into what is ostensibly a cultic monument, Virgil has therefore reduced the fallen king into an ironic embodiment of his own godlessness. The \textit{tropaeum} functioned initially as a ‘tomb’ to house demonic war spirits; later it was associated with commemorating the victory (owed to the gods) of a military leader possessing singular \textit{virtus}. These two functions were never mutually exclusive. This double-useage seems to be at play here too: Aeneas offers a propitiatory offering to Mars in thanks for granting him victory, and concomitantly enchains Mezentius’ \textit{furo-rious manes}. On \textit{tropaeum} in Greece and Rome, see Picard (1957); Hölscher (2006). On \textit{tropaeum} in the \textit{Aen.}, see Nielson (1983); Dyson (2001): 146-7, 184-94; Putnam (2011): 32-3. For the \textit{tropaeum as truncus}, see \textit{Aen.} 11.81-4. Virgil uses the noun \textit{truncus} to refer to both a tree set with an enemy’s arms and a headless human body (see Narducci in \textit{EV} [1990]: 305-06; Dyson [2001]: 184-92); here (with Dyson) Virgil may be playing with the idea that the mutilation of Mezentius’ corpse included \textit{post mortem} decapitation through the pregnant phrase \textit{telaque trunca uiri} (11.9) and Aeneas’ own association of the man Mezentius with his armor (11.16).

\(^{83}\) See James (1995): 627-33 with notes, on the pervasive theme of burial or non-burial in the poem.
casualty of the deep, destined to lie naked on an unknown land (5.871: he is killed on the shore): both are unable to cross the Styx (6.333-9). Sychaeus’ appearance to Dido as an unburied ghost occurs midway through book 1 (353-6). Priam’s headless corpse, lying on the shore, leaves the issue of burial for the fallen king unaddressed (2.550-8). Polydorus’ corpse is appeased and offered fresh funeral rites (3.41-68). Though Hector is buried at Troy, Andromache sets up a cenotaph for him (and Astyanax) at Buthrotum, and calls his spirit to occupy the empty tomb (3.304). Aeneas cannot enter the underworld until he has buried Misenus, whose neglected corpse (another lying on the beach, 6.162-3) is polluting the fleet (6.149-52, 171-4). Aeneas goes as far as raising, on the shore, a cenotaph for Deiphobus, whose body he was unable to locate after Troy’s fall (6.505-08). He also buries his father, Anchises (followed by elaborate funeral games) in book 5, and his nurse Caieta at the beginning of book 7; along with Pallas, these are the only characters in the poem to receive anything resembling a proper funeral.

Nisus had anticipated his own demise and abuse before the night raid and tried to take measures to ensure his body was dealt with appropriately (9.213-15):

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sit qui me raptum pugna pretioue redemptum
mandet humo, solita aut si qua id Fortuna uetabit,
absenti ferat inferias decoretque sepulcro.
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I need a person who’d snatch up my body from battle or pay out Ransom, then bury me, that’s what I need. Or if Fortune, as often, Doesn’t allow this, he’d build me a cenotaph and, in my absence, Give me my rites.

The prayer will fall on deaf ears and his corpse, along with Euryalus’, will be mutilated. Euryalus’ mother’s mourning over her son is expressed largely in terms of unfulfilled burial rites (9.486-9). She fears his corpse, mangled, dismembered (490-1), is already the property
of scavenging dogs and birds (485-6: *heu, terra ignota canibus data praeda Latinis*
| *alitibusque iaces!*, ‘Now, dear lord, here you lie in an unknown land, feeding Latium’s |
| Carrion birds and its dogs’), bringing us within the realm of Homeric fears of corpse mutilation.\(^84\) Nisus’ fears for his own corpse have been actualized for both him and Euryalus.

The issues related to burial continue into book 10. While Aeneas (with care and pity: 10.821-32) and Turnus (mockingly: 10.491-5) hand over the bodies of Pallas and Lausus, respectively, for burial, Aeneas, in one brutal *post mortem* boast, paraphrases a slew of Homeric typological threats of corpse abuse after decapitating the supplicating Tarquitus (*Aen*. 10.554-60):\(^85\)

\begin{verbatim}
tum caput orantis nequiquam et multa parantis
dicere deturbat terrae, truncumque tepentem
prouoluens super haec inimico pectore fatur:
‘istic nunc, metuende, iace. non te optima mater
condet humi patrioque onerabit\(^86\) membr a sepulcro:
alitibus linquere feris, aut gurgite mersum
unda feret piscesque impasti uulne lambent’.
\end{verbatim}

As the man begged in vain and prepared to keep pleading, Aeneas Slashed off his head. When it fell to the ground, he rolled over the headless, Still warm trunk with his feet and said this, with a heart full of hatred:
‘Figure of terror, now lie where you are. Your wonderful mother
Won’t ever bury your limbs in the family tomb. You’ll be either

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\(^84\) The theme of corpse mutilation by birds and/or dogs appears everywhere in the *Iliad*: e.g. 1.1-4; 2.393; 8.379-80; 13.831-2; 17.241; 22.335, 354; 24.412, etc., as we have seen (2.1, above).

\(^86\) Smith (2011): 161-4 notes that the text is problematic here in the manuscripts, and proposes *paterue honorabit* (*for patrioque onerabit*, printed above from Mynors), which would include mention of both of Tarquitus’ parents. If this is what Virgil intended, it is likely, as Smith argues, that he had in mind Achilles’ rage-filled threat to Hector at *II*. 22.345-54, where he too singles out both of his victim’s parents as a way of ‘heighten[ing] the pathos of Hector’s situation’ (163). Cf. Servius *ad locc.*
Left here as food for the carrion birds or flung to the surging
Seas where your wounds will be nibbled by starving fish as your corpse drifts’.

Virgil does not tell us the ultimate fate of Tarquitos’ corpse, but the taunt/threat of corpse
abuse via scavenging birds, and a mother deprived of the ability to perform burial rites
echoes the fear of Euryalus’ mother in the previous book (and also, of the most obvious
Homeric models, Achilles’ boast to Lycaon at *Il.* 21.122-7, and Asteropaeus being
consumed by fish at 21.203-04). Moreover, Aeneas kills Tarquitos by decapitating him,
which recalls the corpse abuse of Nisus and Euryalus, whose heads, we have seen, are
removed and stuck on pikes. Aeneas’ threat is the most brutal in the poem, and by alluding
to the language of Euryalus’ mother’s fear and the actual abuse dealt to Nisus’ and Euryalus’
corpses, the boast becomes more visceral.

When we arrive at Aeneas’ treatment of Mezentius, we have to reconcile his boasting
of corpse abuse with his inversely *pius* treatment of Mezentius’ own son, Lausus, whom
Aeneas contrastingly allows to keep his armor and returns for burial (10.827). Mezentius’
final words echo Hector’s request to Achilles to ensure he receives proper burial (*Il.* 22.2338-
43); further, he fears the Etruscans will abuse him if he is left unburied (Aen. 10.903-06).
Whether he is included in the mass burial offered by Aeneas at 11.100-19 is unstated, but that
Aeneas refuses to grant the wish that his corpse escape abuse is confirmed by the puncture

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87 See e.g. Macrob. *Sat.* 5.2.17: ...*insultatio Achillis in ipsum Lycaonem iam peremptum in Tarquitiun a
Marone transfrertur*, ‘Achilles’ boast to Lycaon is now taken up and transferred by Virgil to Tarquitus’. Knauer
(1964): 417 *ad locc.*
ἐξενάρξε, σεβάσσατο γὰρ τὸ γε θυμῷ, | ἀλλ’ ὥσ πα κατέκηκε σίκ ἐντεσα δαδαλέοισιν | ὡς ὕπια σῆμι ἔχειν,
‘He killed Eëtion | but did not strip his armor, for his heart respected the dead man, | but burned the body in all
its elaborate war-gear, | and piled a grave mound over it’: with Harrison (1991): *ad loc.*
wounds in Mezentius’ breastplate. This linkage, *pre* and *post mortem*, with Hector in the *Iliad*\(^{92}\) is significant for our understanding of the imagery Virgil was evoking implicitly for his audience, and it may go some way toward filling the narrative gap Virgil places between Mezentius’ death and the *tropaeum* Aeneas sets up. But again, though our recognition of the source adds vividness to Virgil’s silence, these ‘traccie del modello’\(^{93}\) do not actually answer anything for us directly. We do not know whether Aeneas treated father like son, and despite our knowledge of Mezentius’ corpse abuse, Virgil again distances himself from describing it.

Mezentius’ treatment is set in sharp contrast with the elaborate burial rites for Pallas that directly follow the *tropaeum* scene (11.26-99): Virgil’s silence in treating acts of abuse, is set against his sympathetic elaboration of the funeral for one of his favorites. Virgil’s depiction of Pallas’ funeral pomp is modeled on the scene from Patroclus’ funeral in *Iliad* 23, and Pallas represents the figure in the *Aeneid* whose role most closely resembles that of Patroclus.\(^{94}\) Coupled with Achilles’ return of Hector’s corpse to Priam in book 24, the *Iliad* closes with a definitive end to the bestial theme of corpse abuse and burial abnegation, and brings heroic action back into the sphere of human codes of morality.\(^{95}\) We might expect the same progression here after the funeral of Pallas and Aeneas’ granting both sides the ability

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\(^{92}\) *Pace* Horsfall (2003): *ad* 11.9-10: ‘Had V. also used recognizable elements of Hector in his portrayal of Mez., just as we will see that there are traces of Achilles in Aen. here, then the mutilation of Hector’s body by the Achaeans might have been cited in favour of a (suppressed and not on internal grounds alone compulsory) mutilation here’ [sic]. See further his note *ad* 11.14-28. Despite considerable efforts, these points are, to me, largely unconvincing.

\(^{93}\) From Barchiesi (1984).

\(^{94}\) Virgil responds to the Homeric model by offering two funereal sequences that reflect the full treatment of Patroclus’ funeral (which include both games and cremation of the corpse) in separate episodes: his funeral games for Anchises in book 5 and the cremation of Pallas in book 11. The tree-felling topos for the construction of Patroclus’ pyre at *II*. 23.114-26 is picked up by Ennius to describe the preparations after the battle of Heraclea for the cremation of those killed in battle (*Ann.* 175-9 Skutsch), and this in turn is developed by Virgil for the important burials of Misenus (*Aen*. 6.179-82) and Pallas (11.134-8): see e.g. Goldberg (1995): 83-4.

\(^{95}\) E.g. Segal (1971): 70-1; Redfield (1975): 218-23.
to gather and bury their dead, actions which, in effect, would right the wrongs inflicted on
corpse's earlier in the poem. Right away, we have some confirmation of this in the divinely
promised burial treatment Camilla will receive at the end of book 11: her body will be
delivered, unspoiled, to her homeland to be buried along with her armor (11.593-4: *post ego
nube caua miserandae corpus et arma | inspoliata feram tumulo patriaequreponam*,
‘Afterwards, I’ll bear the piteous maiden’s corpse and her armour | Undespoiled in a hollow
cloud to her homeland for burial’), as Diana says.

But this momentum falters. The fighting resumes after a second botched truce
(12.311-28), at which point Turnus orchestrates perhaps the most gruesome evidence of
corpse abuse in the poem (12.509-12):

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Turnus equo deiectum Amycum fratremque Dioren,
congressus pedes, hunc uenientem cuspmide longa,
hunc mucrone ferit, curruque abscisa duorum
suspendit capita et rorantia sanguine portat.
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Turnus, advancing on foot, strikes Amycus, thrown by his stallion,
Also his brother, Diores: the one who attacks gets a long spear’s
Point, and the other a sword’s. He decapitates both and attaches
Both men’s heads, still gushing with blood, to his chariot-siding.

The brothers’ heads hang from Turnus’ chariot like trophies, and remind us immediately of
the severed heads of Nisus and Euryalus, which were paraded around as such by Turnus’
army on pikes. The phrase *rorantia sanguine* evokes *atroque Fluentia tabo*, ‘dripping with
dark gore’ (9.472) of Nisus and Euryalus’ heads and lexically the blood stains on Mezentius’
helmet (11.8: *rorantis sanguine*: more latent clues of Mezentius’ possible decapitation?\(^{96}\)).

We get an indication of this sort of headhunting by Turnus a few lines earlier when he ‘takes

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\(^{96}\) See Dyson (2001): 185, who also notices *sparsi rorabant sanguine uepres*, ‘and the brambles were damp with
the dew of the bloodshed’ (8.645) of Mettius Fufetius ('Fufius’ is a typo), the blood of whose dismembered
limbs drips on bushes.
away’ (abstulit) Phegeus’ head and leaves his body lying on the sand (12.380-2).\textsuperscript{97} The scene of Amycus and Diores’ death is modeled on Achilles’ slaying of the brothers Laogonus and Dardanus at \textit{Iliad} 20.460-2,\textsuperscript{98} but adds the grim feature of \textit{post mortem} decapitation. The separation of \textit{abscisa} from its noun draws out our anticipation over the line break of what will be suspended,\textsuperscript{99} with \textit{suspendit} cleverly doing double-duty as we too are ‘hanging’ in a state of expectancy for three long syllables. Yet still, true to the pattern of corpse abuse that Virgil does allow into his narrative, the act of mutilation is again not elaborated. Amycus and Diores are killed, one by spear, the other by sword, and then suddenly, Turnus is riding around with their heads dangling from his chariot. Ahl’s translation above is an attempt to elide the awkward narrative gap, adding direct action (‘He decapitates both…’) where Virgil avoids it. What must have taken Turnus a fair amount of time—leaping from the chariot, cutting off the heads, affixing them, and riding off again—is expurgated from the account.\textsuperscript{100}

Despite the edit for graphic content, scholars have viewed this as the climax of barbarism (via \textit{post mortem} decapitation) associated with pre-Trojan Italy, as something specific to Italic peoples in the poem.\textsuperscript{101} There is some good reason to think this. Cacus, the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[\textsuperscript{97}] Tarrant (2012): \textit{ad loc.}, is correct that the verb here could simply mean ‘removed’, euphemistically, for ‘decapitated’, but the double meaning functions proleptically when we see the same action results in Turnus \textit{actually} taking away the heads of Amycus and Diores as battlefield trophies moments later. The effect here is similar to the way in which the decapitations of Rhamnes’ acolytes anticipate the unnarrated corpse abuse of Nisos and Euryalus (see above).
\item[\textsuperscript{98}] Knauer (1964): 429 \textit{ad loc.}; Tarrant (2012): \textit{ad loc.}
\item[\textsuperscript{99}] I owe this insight to Toph Marshall, \textit{per litteras}.
\item[\textsuperscript{100}] So Harrison (1988): 58: ‘only “rorantia sanguine” is explicitly gory, and the act of decapitation is swiftly passed over’.
\item[\textsuperscript{101}] See e.g. Williams (1973): \textit{ad} 12.500f, 511-12: Turnus’ ‘barbarity’ degenerates his character from that of Aeneas; Perret (1980): 144 n.1: ‘Caractérisation des moeurs sauvages de l’Italie pré-troyenne, plutôt qu’illustration de la fureur de Turnus’; Schenk (1984): 284 n.175: ‘Doch darf der unterschiedliche Ursprung und die verschiedene Natur der beiden \textit{furores} nicht verkannt werden, wie an dieser Stelle kurz zuvor die Kampfesweise der beiden Helden gegeneinander abgesetzt wurde: Während der Troer seine \textit{Gegner qua facta celerrima} (12,507) tötet, macht sich Turnus ein Fest daraus, die Köpfe der erschlagenen Feinde an seinen
\end{enumerate}
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poem’s embodiment of uncouth, uncivilized savagery (8.194: *semihominis*; 8.267: *semiferi*), has the entrance to his cave decorated with the heads of men on pikes (8.195-7). 102 It is Turnus who oversaw the Rutulians’ decapitating and impaling of Nisus’ and Euryalus’ heads, directly recalling the impaled heads lining Cacus’ cave. And the Etruscan Mezentius, to vindicate his son’s death, hopes to decapitate Aeneas and carry around his head (on his horse, 10.862-5):

> aut hodie uictor spolia illa cruenta\(^{103}\)  
> et caput Aeneae referes Lausique dolorum  
> ulti eris mecum, aut, aperit si nulla uiam uis,\(^{104}\)  
> occumbes pariter…

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Today you will either bring back, in your triumph, Aeneas’ Bloodstained spoils and his head and, together with me, avenge Lausus’ Suffering and pain, or you’ll die with me here if our foray just cannot Force a path open.
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But this form of corpse abuse is not limited to Italic peoples in the poem. The theme, in fact, begins before Aeneas and his band of Trojans reach Italian shores, before they leave Troy.\(^{105}\) Aeneas recounts the fate of Priam to Dido and her coterie (2.550-8). Pyrrhus:

> hoc dicens altaria ad ipsa trementem  
> traxit et in multo lapsantem sanguine nati,  
> implicuitque comam laeua, dextraque coruscum  
> extulit ac lateri capulo tenus abdidit ensem.  
> haec finis Priami fatorum, hic exitus illum

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\(^{102}\) Galinsky (1966): 35 links this grimly decorative feature with the dripping heads of Amycus and Diores on Turnus’ chariot, as part of a larger body of evidence comparing Cacus and Turnus in the poem. Cf. Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* wherein the monstrous character Kurtz lines the entrance to his house with severed heads impaled on stakes.  
\(^{103}\) Mynors prints *cruenti*; *cruenta* clearly better here.  
\(^{104}\) The monosyllabic line ending is jarring here, and causes us to pause over the brutality of Mezentius’ words. Force found a way for Pyrrhus’ entry into Priam’s halls (2.494: *fit uia ui*), leading to the king’s death and decapitation, the same form of abuse Mezentius hopes to complete here.  
\(^{105}\) Mazzocchini (2000): 282 n.17 notes this as well, as an argument against violence of this sort as exclusively the purview of Italic peoples in the poem.
While he was speaking, he pounced on the quivering Priam, Dragged the king, slipping in pools of his own son’s blood, to the altar, Grabbed his hair, yanked back his head with his left, with his right drew his gleaming Sword which he then buried up to the hilt in the flank of the old king. So ended Priam’s role, as prescribed by the fates. His allotted Exit made him a spectator at Troy’s Fires, Pergamum’s Ruin, This man once in command of so many countries and peoples, Ruler of Asia! He’s now a huge trunk lying dead on the seashore, Head torn away from his shoulders, a thing without name, a cadaver.

Virgil is putting Priam’s own fears at *Iliad* 22.59-71 into action.\(^{106}\) The horror of the Homeric Priam’s death his Virgilian equivalent metapoetically knows,\(^ {107}\) and we learn through the imagery of ‘headlessness’, stands as synecdoche for the ultimate fall of Troy in the *Aeneid*.\(^ {108}\)

Still, Pyrrhus’ actual actions are not very easy to follow. He grabs Priam’s hair with his left hand—presumably to pull the head back and expose the neck—only to deliver the death blow


\(^{108}\) In the *Iliad*, the death of Hector symbolized the death of Troy, proleptically cast outside the confines of Homer’s actual poem (see esp. *Il.* 22.410-11, 506-07: with de Jong [2012]: *ad locc.*), but here Virgil reframes slightly the angle of synecdochic death by actualizing Priam’s fears of being the ‘last’ (*Il.* 22.66) of his people to die before Troy finally collapses. Caviglia (1988): 265 is right that Priam’s death ‘looms’ over the *Iliad*, but the poem itself places overwhelming emphasis on Hector’s death and the associative fall of Troy. See Heinze (1993): 23-4 with n.62 on Virgil’s innovation in aligning the death of Priam with the fall of Troy. Virgil may simply be following the Greco-Roman iconographic tradition, which often depicts Priam’s death with Troy’s collapse: with Neils in *LIMC* 7.1.521. Hector’s ghost in *Aen.* 2 bears the scars of a Troy being ripped apart by Greeks and gods (see Hershkowitz [1998]: 86-7), but Priam’s is the final deathblow that brings the city to her knees: also, e.g. Quinn (1968): 5; Mills (1978): 164-5; Lee (1979): 40; Caviglia (1988): 267; Bowie (1990): 470-3; Sklenář (1990): 73-4; Horsfall (2010): 245; Scafoglio (2012): 666, etc. Ovid understood Virgil’s intent in depicting Troy’s fall with Priam’s death (*Met.* 13.404): *Troia simul Priamusque cadunt*, ‘Troy and Priam fall together’. For the monarch’s head as the rational/pivotal driving force of the ‘body politic’, see e.g. Sen. *Clem.* 1.5.1, 2.2.1; *Tae. Ann.* 1.13; Flor. 2.14.5: see OLD s.v. *caput* 14a. See Ash (1997): 196-200, on the topic generally.
to the king’s ribs. The language sets up a dramatic scene of decapitation only to eschew it awkwardly for a blow to the heart. We then, in Priam’s famous epitaph (554-8), hear of his headless trunk lying on the shore. Virgil is not averse to narrating scenes of battle specific decapitation (cf. 9.331-3, 9.770-1, 10.394, 10.552-5, 12.382), so it is telling that he avoids describing such action here and reserves the beheading for an unnarrated scene of corpse abuse.

The elision in Virgil’s depiction of the action is jarring: Priam is killed by Pyrrhus at the altar in the middle of the palace, and then he is lying on the shore without a head. How Priam gets to the shore and who does the post mortem decapitating is not specified. Virgil seems to be blending various accounts of Priam’s death into one scene. The Greek tradition largely agrees that Priam was killed by Neoptolemus (Pyrrhus) at the altar of Zeus Herceus

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109 See Horsfall (2008): ad 2.552 and (2010): 244: ‘To pull back the head, only to plunge the sword into the king’s side is really rather odd. And surely meant to be odd’. The awkwardness of Virgil’s handling of the death-blow may be answered by the iconographic tradition, which commonly portrays Neoptolemus/Pyrrhus seizing Priam by his hair while he thrusts (or prepares to thrust) his sword into the aged king’s ribs: e.g. Apulian rf. London, BM F 278; Boston MFA 1904.15 (marble relief); Attic Lekythos, St. Petersburg, Hermitage II 1829.1 (relief vase); Megarian bowls: (a) Berlin, Staatl. Mus. 3371, (b) Athens, Nat. Mus. 2105, (c) Paris, Louvre CA 1441 (relief vases); Naples, Mus. Naz. 5673, a bronze helmet from Pompeii depicting Ilioupersis scenes, including the killing of Priam (complete with hair-pulling). For the iconography, see Neils in LIMC 7.1 ‘Priamos’. The proliferation and standardization of this scene is great enough (and timely enough) that we should strongly consider the influence it likely had on Virgil, pace Horsfall (2008): ad loc.

110 Some effort has been made to link the description of Priam’s death here with the murder of M. Marius Gratidianus (attributed to Catiline) in Q. Cicero Comment. pet. 10.2-7: qui hominem carissimum populo Romano, M. Marium, inspectante populo Romano uitibus per totam urbem ceciderit, ad bustum egerit, ibi omni cruciatu lacerarit, uiiuo stanti collum gladio sua dextera secuerit, cum sinistra capillum eius a vertice teneret, caput sua manu tulerit, cum inter digitos eius riui sanguinis fluuerint, ‘[Catiline], who lashed the Roman peoples’ dearest, Marcus Marius, with stripes through the whole town while the people watched, led him to the tomb, mangled him there with every sort of torture, and with him standing alive, slashed his neck with the sword in his right hand, held the hair of his head in his left, and carried the head in his hand, while streams of blood flowed between his fingers’: with Austin (1964): ad loc; Horsfall (2008): ad loc. and (2010): 244; Delvio (2013): 38-9. Whether Virgil had this scene in mind or not, any explicit detail of decapitation in the historical source has been removed in his poem.
or near it. But Servius (ad Aen. 2.506) refers to another version of Priam’s death, employed by Pacuvius in an unidentified play.

alii dicunt quod a Pyrrho in domo quidem sua captus est (Priamus), sed ad tumulum Achillis tractus occisusque est iuxta Sigeum promunturium: nam in Rhoeteo Aiax sepultus est: tunc eius caput conto fixum Pyrrhus circumtulit.

Some say that Priam was indeed captured in his home by Pyrrhus, but was dragged to the tomb of Achilles and killed close to Cape Sigeum, for Ajax is buried at the promontory of Rhoeteum; and then Pyrrhus stuck his head on a spike and carried it around.

The ‘some’ refers to (at least) Pacuvius, which we know from another Servian note ad Aen. 2.557. We must assume Pyrrhus is doing the decapitating, and that the reference to the shore reminds us of Achilles’ tomb at Cape Sigeum. Hecuba in the Iliad fears that Hector will lie on the shore by the Greek ships, mutilated by dogs (Il. 22.82-9), and this fear for her son may be bleeding into Virgil’s picture of her husband’s end. The image in Pacuvius of Pyrrhus impaling Priam’s head on a stake and parading it around reminds us of Hector’s (reported) threat to Patroclus in the Iliad. This also marks the actualization of Achilles’ threat

111 Cf. Paus. 10.27.2 (citing Lesches MI frag. 16 Bernabé); Procl. Chrest. (Iliupersis argumentum); Pindar Pae. 6.1.12-15; Eur. Hec. 21-4; Eur. Tro. 16.17, 481-3; [ps.]Apollod. Epit. 5.21, etc. See e.g. Caviglia (1988): 265; Anderson (1997): 28-9; Scafoglio (2012): 666 with notes. The iconographic tradition is more disturbing: the killing of Astyanax is linked with Priam’s death, first tangentially (the child is dashed to the ground while his grandparents look on behind the altar), later directly, as Priam’s corpse is beaten by Neoptolemus, who wields Astyanax like a club (with Austin [1964]: ad 2.506-58; Gantz [1993]: 655-7; Neils in LIMC 7.1.518-21; Anderson [1997]: index s.v. ‘Astyanax, in art’). As Heinze (1993): 25 notes, Virgil is the first extant source to link Polites with Priam in death, replacing the traditional role the grandson Astyanax held. He may simply be following a Hellenistic tradition, the evidence of which escapes us. On Virgil’s possible appropriation of material from the epic cycle poems, see Horsfall (2003): 467-72.


113 Serv. ad Aen. 2.557: IACET INGENS LITORE TRUNCUS Pompei tangit historiam...quod autem dicit LITORE, illud, ut supra diximus, respicit, quod in Pacuviui tragedia continetur, “he lies, a huge trunk on the shore” touches on the history of Pompey...And the fact that he says “on the shore”, as I said above, recalls what is found in Pacuvius’ tragedy’. Horsfall (2008): ad 2.557 and (2010): 244 n.49 cites Fraenkel (1964): 2.370 as providing evidence that disassociates the details of Priam’s head fastened to a spike from being Pacuvian in origin, because of the organization of Servius’ note; but this is far from conclusive, and Fraenkel says nothing one way or the other about the source of the impaling.

114 See Bowie (1990): 471.
to decapitate Hector’s corpse at *Iliad* 18.333-5 neatly (and gruesomely) completed by the warrior’s son, but transferred to the father of the initially intended victim.\(^{115}\)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{νῦν δὲ ἐπεὶ οὖν Πάτροκλε σεῦ ὁστερος εἰμι ὑπὸ γαῖαν, \\
oὐ σε πρὶν κτεριῶ πρὶν γ᾽ Ἐκτορος ἐνθάδε ἐνείκαι \\
τεύχεα καὶ κεφαλῆν μεγαθύμου σοῦ φονῆσ
\end{align*}
\]

But seeing that it is I, Patroclus, who follow you underground, I will not bury you till I bring to this place the armour and the head of Hector, since he was your great-hearted murderer.

Priam even recalls Hector’s corpse and the proper treatment he (eventually) received when Achilles returned the warrior to his father (*Aen.* 2.540-3), as a point of contrast to *degener Neoptolemus*: Priam will not be so fortunate.\(^{116}\) As far as allusion within the *Aeneid*, we think of the heads of Nisus and Euryalus and Amycus and Diores, all cut off and displayed/paraded as trophies. If Virgil is alluding to the alternate mythic account in Pacuvius (as seems likely), Priam’s headless trunk with head impaled and paraded by Pyrrhus (extrapoetically) is the complement to—and precedent for—the trunkless heads that suffer similar abuse elsewhere in the poem. Similarly, his trunk prepares us for Mezentius’ corpse-*tropaeum*, which functions essentially as a headless husk of a man.

Despite the variety of (self-/extra-) referential allusions this scene unveils, the doubling of mythic traditions and the narrative confusion has proven to be troublesome. Scholars have focused on the issue of narrative points of view and the broader issues of perspective during Aeneas’ story, specifically how often Virgil imposes his own or a Greek perspective on this


\(^{116}\) As Dekel (2012): 68-9 notes, the scene crudely replays the final 3 books of the *Iliad*, as Pyrrhus (the ‘new’ Achilles) chases down a son of Priam (here Polites, standing for Hector), kills him, and addresses an aggrieved Priam. See already Bowie (1990): 470-2, who says the same thing; Mills (1978): 159 n.1, on Pyrrhus chasing down Polites (*Aen.* 2.258-9): ‘The line is reminiscent of the Homeric scene in which Achilles pursues Hector around the walls of Troy (*Iliad* 22.131ff)’.
and other scenes where it seems implausible that Aeneas had any ability of witnessing or knowing: e.g. how could Aeneas have been able to comment on Priam’s corpse lying on the shore, since it does not seem possible he would have seen it there? Without dwelling too much on these concerns, this is a larger feature of Virgil’s poetics, and not a one-off, and Aeneas the quasi-tragic messenger/narrator, looking back on events that for him have recently passed, should be allowed a bit more omniscience here. The scene, for many readers, is a ‘neglected oddity in V.’s narrative’; it is alleged that the inconsistency would have been fixed during the final edit, though it is nice to have a text that ‘manhandles common sense a bit’(!); the device of ‘narrative dislocation’, not uncommon in Imperial epic, ‘is not a feature of Virgil’, and thus stands out here; maybe litore should be emended to limine, so the body can remain at the palace, and so on.

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118 See Austin (1964): ad 2.506, Caviglia (1988): 265-6, Horsfall (2008): ad 2.499, 506-58, accurately, on Virgil’s toying with Aeneas’ role as something of a Greek tragic messenger. Sklenář (1990): 74-5 reaches similar conclusions regarding Aeneas’ role as an extension of Virgil the poet, though he does not articulate this through the role of a tragic messenger; cf. Dekel (2012): 73-4. Fratantuono (2007): 57 is certainly right: ‘It does not matter that the master poet compels the pedant to wonder how Aeneas knows about the headless corpse on the beach and to wonder when and if he saw it’.
119 Horsfall (2008): ad 2.552, Heuzé (1985): 80: ‘…il faut se féliciter de disposer d’un texte qui malmène un peu le bon sens…’, Bowie (1990): 473 (respectively); and for the emendation: e.g. Edgeworth (1986): 150. Donatus—squelched rightly by Servius ad Aen. 2.557—had tried to gloss litus as the area in front of the altar, derived from litando. Much of Bowie’s piece on the relation between Priam’s and Pompey’s death here, and Virgil’s nod to Pollio’s (lost) account of Pompey’s death (building off of Camps [1969]: 97-8, Narducci [1973] and others, and ultimately deriving from Serv. ad loc.: Pompei tangit historiam) is excellent, but the claim that the ‘narrative dislocation’ (after the main caesura in 557) serves to highlight the allusion to Pompey, that by dramatically changing the location of the scene from palace to shore, we are made to recall the fallen Roman general more profoundly (note also Moles [1983] for similar points about the ‘narrative dislocation’ here) misses the larger point about Virgil’s narrative approach to corpse abuse (Rossi [2004]: 40 and Delvigo [2013]: 30 follow his cue here). While the allusion to Pompey is clear, the argument fails to recognize the function of narrative dislocation—or, ‘silence’—that Virgil employs in all such scenes of corpse maltreatment in the Aen.; as I have outlined, this is not a one-off, pace Bowie (1990): 473. Pompey’s presence here is confirmed with or without the narrative gap, but the narrative gap is an intrinsic feature of Virgil’s treatment of corpse abuse in his poem.
conflicting accounts of mythic stories into his narrative\footnote{Which may seem awkward, I suppose, in a genre that does not functionally allow the kind of authorial interjections comparing traditions as, say, historiography does. So Servius ad Aen. 1.382: \textit{hoc loco per transitum tangit historiam quam per legem artis poeticae aperte non potest ponere…quod autem diximus eum arte poética prohibere, ne aperte ponat historiam, certum est, ‘in this [Virgil] crosses obliquely into history, which, according to the laws of the poetic art, he cannot openly make use of…moreover, as I said that he is prohibited by poetic art not to openly include history, this is certain’. ‘tangere historiam’ (in various renderings) is formulaic in Servius for identifying Virgil’s implicit manipulation of history: see Horsfall (1991): 57 n.9; Delvigo (2013).} in a sort of Hellenistic-style encyclopedic stockpiling of sources, so the presence of two versions of Priam’s death should not strike us as some authorial conflict over which version he wanted to use here, or something he would have edited later.\footnote{See e.g. Horsfall (1991), who covers an exorbitant amount of Virgil’s source material and the ways in which the poet incorporates (or the ways we misinterpret his incorporation of) that material into his narrative; Casali (2008) focuses on just a few examples of Virgil’s allusions to mythic variants (in the case of the story of Dido and Anna) filtered through insights from Servius’ commentary, but sees a broader thematic scope at play; Dyson (2001): 87-9 examines Virgil’s doubling of mythic stories in the depiction of Palinurus’ death and Priam’s (her general conclusions are brilliant, if perhaps also a bit stretched, to my mind); Clausen (2002): 119-21 considers Virgil’s blending of traditions concerning the death of Deiphobus. See, most recently, O’Hara (2007): chap. 4, esp. 85-91: his discussion is excellent as are his notes and comments on earlier scholarship treating Virgilian ‘inconsistency’. Though even here he finds the conflated versions of Priam’s death ‘clearly challenging’: so ‘In the tradition, Priam was killed in two different places, but in a narrative that often (but perhaps not always) invites us to read it as realistic, should he not be killed in one place?’ (86).} Virgil is famously averse to univocal presentation and argumentation,\footnote{See e.g. Thomas (2000) on Virgil’s intricate ‘polysemous’ poetics.} pedantically adherent to and knowledgeable of literary tradition, and he wanted his audience to know it. Austin’s comment is telling: ‘Virgil appears to combine in his own way the two versions of Priam’s death...’.\footnote{Austin (1964): \textit{ad} 2.557. Cf. Scafoglio (2012): 665, who says essentially the same thing.} It’s the \textit{in his own way} that has ruffled so many feathers. We might look (as often helpfully) to Seneca for an early informed reading of Virgil’s merging of the two mythic traditions into one narrative, in his seamless recapitulation of Priam’s demise at \textit{Tro.} 140-1: \textit{magno…Ioui uictima caesus | Sigea premis litora truncus}, ‘slaughtered as a victim to great Jove, you press on the Sigean shore, a
The details of the events are even more ‘truncated’ here, but again the narrative is hardly compromised.

Virgil’s scene is striking because of the cinematic transportation the reader experiences, supplemented by our knowledge of the dual strands of myth the poet is tugging. But it is what Virgil does not narrate for us, I argue, that is the most striking image from the scene: the beheading and impaling. Instead, the poet presents a headless corpse. The intertext with Pacuvius informs us—if we choose to listen—of the head’s location. Far from being an oddity of Virgil’s narrative or something requiring emendation, the narrative gap fits perfectly the pattern of Virgilian silence we have seen regarding scenes of corpse abuse.

Virgil consistently avoids direct narration of mutilation and instead leaves a narrative gap that we are encouraged to fill with examples from his own or other sources that he guides us toward implicitly through inter- and/or intratextual cues. Virgil knows the Pacuvius source, he includes it, but again purposefully writes out the precise moment of mutilation. The two mythic accounts are merged into one extended scene, interrupted by Virgil’s characteristic silence in treating scenes of corpse abuse.

There are two other issues of silence related to death, burial, and corpse treatment that I want to consider briefly. The first concerns the ultimate fate of Aeneas (anticipated in Dido’s curse), the second is the death of Turnus that brings the poem to a close in book 12. Both of these examples reach beyond the end of the poem, and so are qualitatively different from the moments where Virgil omits gruesome details in his presentation of the narrative. Still, the self-effacement in these cases is comparable and instructive.

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124 See e.g. Austin (1964): ad 2.557; Speranza (1964): ad 2.513.
We have seen the images of bodies lying unburied on the sand or shore (Palinurus, Priam, Misenus, Phegeus, Tarquitus [via threat], Deiphobus [via cenotaph]), and Virgil provides another in the form of Dido’s curse directed at Aeneas (4.612-20):

si tangere portus
infandum caput ac terris adnare ncessae est,
et sic fata Iouis poscunt, hic terminus haeret,
at bello audacis populi uxatus et armis,
finibus extorris, complexu auulsus fuli
auxilium imploret uideatque indigna suorum
funera; nec, cum se sub leges pacis iniquae
tradiderit, regno aut optata luce fruatur,
sed cadat ante diem mediaque inhumatus harena.

If it must be that this indescribable person
Makes it to port, that he floats back to dry land, and if this is really
Jupiter’s last word on fate and he must reach the goal of his journey,
Let him be hammered in war by the armies of valiant people,
Forced from his borders, torn far away from Iulus’ embraces.
Let him beg help, let him watch as his men are disgracefully slaughtered!
When he surrenders himself to an unjust peace and its strict terms,
Grant him no joy in his realm or the light he so loves. Let him lie dead,
Well before his due day, halfway up a beach and unburied.

Most of Dido’s curse is played out accurately in the course of the poem, but the narrative ends before Aeneas dies. Her curse coincides generally with the sum of the myths relating to Aeneas’ death: after a battle next to the Numicus River, Aeneas is gone, after having fallen into the river, or rising into the heavens, with his body either found in the river or never recovered. The striking similarity between the language of Aeneas’ end in the curse and the fates of these other victims in the poem has led some to see in these described deaths a

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126 Outlined at O’Hara (1990): 105-06 n.34. See Servius ad Aen. 4.620.
foreshadowing of Aeneas’ own demise,¹²⁷ as the symbolic prefiguring of an ending outside of the scope of the epic, instigated by the amalgam of Jupiter’s (positive) prophecy (1.263-6, with the added prediction of apotheosis: 258-60) and Dido’s (negative) curse. The imagery is picked up by Venus in a moment of weakness, expressed by her willingness to allow Aeneas to be ‘tossed upon the sea’, a victim of fate—and bane of epic heroes¹²８—so long as it ensures the protection of Ascanius (10.48-9), and, more generally, the proto-Roman line.

Virgil, again, is teasing different strands of the Aeneas myth to complicate our picture of a future outside of his poem. Because the Aeneid does not cover this episode, Virgil adds imagery predictive of Aeneas’ death in the surrogate deaths of other characters ‘unburied on the shore’.

Similarly, the fate of Turnus’ corpse is left outside the scope of Virgil’s narrative, but predictive imagery elsewhere in the poem and in the allusions to the Iliad gives us some grounds for filling the silence. Mezentius’ death and corpse abuse, as we have seen, is paralleled in many ways by the death of Hector in the Iliad. When Turnus is whisked away to Ardea by Juno, Mezentius represents a surrogate for and an anticipation of Aeneas’ ultimate slaying of Turnus, also modeled on Achilles’ slaying of Hector.¹²⁹ So Aeneas’ treatment of Mezentius can be read as a deliberate anticipation of what will happen to Turnus. The silence that Virgil casts over the mutilation of Mezentius (we know his corpse was abused, but we do

not see it happen) is expanded into an open-endedness in Turnus’ death. Like Mezentius, like Hector, Turnus’ dying words concern the treatment of his corpse (Aen 12.933-6). In Homer, Achilles is clear in his response (Il. 22.335-6, 345-54). In Virgil, in both cases, Aeneas is silent.

The beauty of the poem’s ending is its ambiguity, not just of course because Virgil does not tell us what happens to Turnus’ corpse, but because even the traces of literary cues are ambiguous here. As has been observed, Turnus’ words evoke not just Hector’s words to Achilles (Il. 22.338-43), but also, through the plea ‘by your father’, Priam’s to Achilles (Il. 24.486-506): the one rejected, the other successful. Likewise, within the Aeneid’s own narrative framework, though Aeneas (either directly, or by handing the body over to the Etruscans) is complicit in the abuse of Mezentius’ corpse, his treatment of Lausus (Mezentius’ son) moments before his duel with the father properly adheres to the codes of battlefield morality: Aeneas pities Lausus (who also invokes the relationship of sons and

130 See James (1995): 632-3 who also importantly links the silence of Mezentius’ corpse treatment with the silence at the end of the poem concerning Turnus.

131 Aeneas is literally silent in the case of Mezentius, who strangely gets the last word (see Conte [2007]: 56, 194). In response to Turnus’ request to live or at least be returned, a corpse, to his family, Aeneas says nothing: Fratantuono (2007): 396; Lyne (1990): 336: ‘Book 12 ends in an echoing silence’.

132 Priam recalls his earlier successful plea to Achilles in the Iliad during his unsuccessful confrontation with Achilles’ son in the successor poem (Aen. 2.540-3): at non ille, satum quo te mentiris, Achilles | tali in hoste fuit Priamo; sed iura fidemque | supplicis erubuit corpusque exsangue sepulcro | reddidit Hectoreum meque in mea regna remisit, ‘You are no child of Achilles, you liar. He never mistreated | Priam, his foe, like this! He blushed for shame, he respected | Rights that are granted a suppliant, he showed good faith by returning | Hector’s blood-drained corpse for interment, and me to my kingdom’: with note above on ‘narratological play’. Cf. Aen. 1.485-7, Aeneas viewing images of the Trojan War on Dido’s temple in Carthage: tum uero ingentem gemitum dat pectore ab imo, | ut spolia, ut currus, utque ipsum corpus amici | tendentemque manus Priamum conspexit inermis, ‘Hugh sighs welled from the depths of Aeneas’ heart as he noted | His friend’s plundered armour and chariot, his actual cadaver; | Priam too, whose unarmed hands stretched, pleading for Pity’.

fathers, 10.827) and hands him over for proper burial.\textsuperscript{134} Lausus, we might recall, is dubbed like Hector ‘tamer of horses’ (7.651: \textit{equum domitor}; from Homer’s \textit{hippodamos}), and Aeneas’ treatment of his corpse evokes directly Achilles’ handling of Hector’s corpse when he finally hands the Trojan prince over to his father at \textit{Iliad} 24.589.\textsuperscript{135} This doubling of corpse treatment response, spread between Mezentius and Lausus, reflects the extremes of Achilles’ treatment of Hector’s corpse, played out over the final 3 books of the \textit{Iliad},\textsuperscript{136} and serves as a further, comparative paradigm for our expectations of Aeneas’ treatment of Turnus.\textsuperscript{137}

While Achilles eventually handed the corpse of Hector over to Priam, the new-Achilles, Neoptolemus/Pyrhhus, was, as we have seen, less generous than his father in the treatment of Priam’s corpse. Michael Putnam and others have noticed a variety of references linking Aeneas after the death of Pallas with the Pyrrhus of book 2 at Troy.\textsuperscript{138} This idea that Aeneas takes over the more sinister elements of Achilles embodied in/by Pyrrhus is a good one—they are both, as it were, Achilles \textit{rediuiuus}, and so linked\textsuperscript{139}—though it is usually employed as a means of casting blanket aspersions on Aeneas’ character. I think the association simply adds another layer to the complexity Virgil has created that blurs our view

\textsuperscript{134} Earlier in the same book, as I have discussed, Aeneas had boasted over the corpse of Tarquitus with violent savagery and threats of burial denial (10:557-60: see above). Here, Aeneas speaks almost lovingly over the corpse of Lausus, and hands him over for burial (10.825-30). The contrast is sharp.
\textsuperscript{136} Though the sequence of events is inverted in the \textit{Iliad}: abuse of the corpse followed by pity and the return of the body.
\textsuperscript{137} The doubling of our expectations reflects, more generally, Virgil’s interest in the ‘doubleness’ of his heroes’ characterizations: Aeneas, Turnus, Mezentius are all at once inherently contradictory figures, embodying features of both monster and man. These issues are addressed most successfully and with larger implications for how we ought to read the end of the poem by Conte (2007): 150-69. Cf. Hardie (1986): esp. 143-56.
\textsuperscript{139} Though, we might be tempted to read Aeneas as more directly taking the mantle \textit{from} Pyrrhus as opposed to being linked parallel to him as an Achilles successor when we consider he literally takes Pyrrhus’ armor as a gift from Helenus (3.469): \textit{arma Neoptolemi}. 71
of the poem’s close, particularly with regard to what we imagine Aeneas will do with
Turnus’ corpse.

The deaths of Priam and Turnus are linked structurally, as Priam’s death seals the fate
doing Turnus’ death the fate of Italians and Trojans, and closes that war and the poem.¹⁴⁰ Both die ‘sacrificially’: Priam is dragged through his
son’s blood to an altar, Turnus is sacrificed to the shade of Pallas (but also, sort of, by Pallas
at 12.948-9: Pallas te...Pallas | immolat¹⁴¹, ‘Pallas gives you this death-stroke, yes Pallas...’).
The formulaic hoc dicens precedes each death-stroke.¹⁴² Aeneas as narrator tells us that (in all
likelihood) Pyrrhus left Priam headless and unburied. Will Aeneas leave Turnus similarly a
truncus, as Evander had wishfully hoped Pallas (whom Aeneas also channels with his death-
big) would accomplish (11.173-5: tu quoque nunc stares immanis truncus in armis,¹⁴³ |
esset par aetas et idem si robur ab annis, | Turne, ‘And you’d stand among them now, a huge
tree-trunk in armour, | Turnus, if you’d been his age, and you’d both, for your years, had the
same strength’)?¹⁴⁴ Of course, we can but wonder. But the mise en abyme linking the
‘ending’ of Priam with the death of Turnus and the silence of the poem’s close is poignant.¹⁴⁵

Importantly, Aeneas’ battlefield actions are everywhere circumstantial, and we cannot
impose a diathetic assumption here or anywhere where Virgil leaves the issue unresolved.
Our recollection of these strings of paired contradictory allusions at the end of the poem

¹⁴⁰ Bowie (1990): 472-3 notices a link between the destruction of the Trojan tower (2.460-8) and the tower built
by Turnus (12.672-5), anticipating the deaths of each
¹⁴¹ Servius glosses Aen. 12.949: ‘tamquam hostiam’, catching the sacrificial overtones of the scene and of
immolat in particular.
¹⁴³ See Horsfall (2003): ad 11.173, for armis preferred to a common but unnecessary emendation of aruis.
¹⁴⁴ The word truncus here is ostensibly a reference to another tropaeum, like the one Aeneas set up of
creates in the reader a two-fold expectation of what Aeneas’ treatment of Turnus’s corpse will be, and this makes the poem’s end so fundamentally mystifying. Even the verb Virgil chooses to finish off Turnus teases at this concluding crux he blankets in silence: Aeneas ‘buries’ his sword in Turnus’ breast, but will he ‘bury’ (or allow to be buried) his victim’s corpse (12.949: condit)? Virgil poignantly avoids the sort of resolution book 24 provides for the Iliad, and this is perhaps his greatest silence of all.

In these last two examples, Virgil’s narrative silence is compounded to reach beyond the textual confines of his poem, but as elsewhere he employs implicit imagery as a means of filling and/or complicating the narrative gap. Virgil’s silences are provocative. They offer us considerable room to negotiate our own interests in the scenes of abuse and denial of burial that he refuses to engage directly. Homer reveals the possibility of corpse abuse, only to snatch it away as something ultimately outside the rational order of his heroic cosmos: heroes can boast, threaten, even attempt to mutilate a corpse, but rarely successfully, as the gods and the poet eventually intervene. Virgil is more elusive. While he outstrips Homer in allowing his heroes a larger range of post mortem abuse, his silence in revealing the action of that abuse betrays the limits of his willingness to inject overt corpse maltreatment into his narrative. Virgil’s allegiance to Homeric poetics only allowed him to go so far: while the Iliad expresses a moral horror of carrying out the mutilation of corpses, there is in the Aeneid a moral horror of describing the abuses that we know have happened, even though Virgil is

146 The ‘truth’, as so often, is woven in obscurity (Aen. 6.100: obscuris uera inuoluens).
147 See James’ (1995) perceptive article detailing the semantic range of condere in the Aen. as it shifts in meaning from the burying of bodies to the burying of a sword in an enemy’s body. She argues that at the end of the poem we have been conditioned to read in condere the multiplicity of burial (or non-burial) and foundation articulated through the disturbing lens of civil war. Her conclusions share many sentiments with my own, but, I think, require further development and context (see below).
prepared to concede that corpse abuse actually does occur. As Dryden said: ‘Virgil had the Gift of expressing much in little, and sometimes in silence’, and it will be this silence, bursting with the potential for explicit—not implied—narrative horror, that his epic successors will powerfully exploit.

I could end my discussion of Virgil at this point on textual considerations alone, yet I believe it is worth trying to account for Virgil’s silence by reminding ourselves of the particular historical moment at which he was writing, and by doing so we can supplement Virgil’s elaboration of a Homeric poetic motif with issues that powerfully resonated with Virgil and his readers. In this way I am aiming for something of a balance between a philological and cultural-historical ‘reading’ of Virgil’s poetic silences related to corpse maltreatment.

Corpse abuse was emblematic of the civil wars in Rome’s and Virgil’s own recent history. Both in the proscriptions visited upon Rome by Sulla in the 80s BCE, and later renewed by the triumvirate of Antony, Lepidus, and Octavian in 43-2 BCE, Rome, and the Forum in particular, became a horrific trophy case for mutilated bodies. Historical records are littered with examples from this time of post mortem decapitations, severed heads

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148 See the epigraph at the start of this chapter section.
149 The abuse and display of Roman corpses seems to have begun en masse with Cinna and Marius in the early 80s BCE, though Voisin (1984) notes some earlier examples (e.g. C. Gracchus and M. Fulvius Flaccus: Plut. C. Gracch. 17.3-4). The most thorough treatment of the proscriptions is Hinard (1985). Note also Hinard (1984) which condenses the material related to corpse abuses. See also Voisin (1984) on the gruesome practice of ‘head-hunting’, charting in rich detail its progression from the early Rep. and the decapitation and display of foreigners, to the hunting of Roman heads by other Romans; Richlin (1999) ostensibly a discussion of Cicero’s death and abuse, but oh so much more; Kyle (1998): passim; Hope (2000): esp. 112-20 on corpse abuse and burial denial; Osgood (2006): esp. 62-81 on the second round of proscriptions under the later triumvirate.
150 Both here and in the notes that follow, I offer a healthy sample of the evidence detailing abuses from roughly 87 BCE to 42 BCE: cf. Cic. De or. 3.10; Q. Cicero Comment. Pet. 10.1-7; Vell. Pat. 2.19.1; Sen. Suas. 6.17, 6.26 (quoting Cornelius Severus); Sen. Prov. 3.7-8; Plut. Ant. 20.2, Cic. 48-9, Pomp. 80; Sull. 32.2; Suet. Aug. 13.1; App. B Civ. 1.71-3. 2.105, 4.21.
impaled on pikes and paraded,\textsuperscript{151} bodies left unburied to rot or for wild animals to consume,\textsuperscript{152} or tossed into the Tiber.\textsuperscript{153}

It is not until some time later that we have full accounts of the atrocities committed during the time of civil wars in the 40 or so years before Virgil began writing the \textit{Aeneid} (in 29 BCE), and the relative literary silence, \textit{inter alia}, probably reflects a fear of the sort of abuse that people like Cicero, most famously, incurred for conspicuous dissension from political upheaval (via his verbal haymakers aimed at Antony in the \textit{Philippics}; e.g. Plut. 
\textit{Cic.} 48-9, App. \textit{B Civ.} 19-20).\textsuperscript{154} The political landscape at the time of Virgil’s writing made overt references to the brutality that ushered in political change, if nothing else, complicated. That said, Virgil appears to project into mytho-historic past the hopes and fears of his present, and always with an eye to the uncertain future. The psychological trauma the civil wars caused implanted itself in Rome’s collective consciousness, and nods to the historical violence bleed through Virgil’s text.\textsuperscript{155}

The corpse abuse, denial of burial, threats, and fears of mutilation that Virgil weaves into his narrative all have points of contact with the horrors that helped rip the Republic to pieces, and his contemporary readers would have recognized these allusions in his poem. One cannot help but see Pompey, Cicero, or Marius Gratidianus in the depiction of Priam’s mutilated corpse; or the heads of Gratidianus, Damasippus, C. Carrinas and others paraded

\begin{footnotes}
\item[151] Cic. \textit{Phil.} 11.5; Vell. Pat. 2.27.3; Luc. 2.160, 8.681-4, 9.136-9; Plut. \textit{Caes.} 26.4; Suet. \textit{Iul.} 85-6; App. \textit{B Civ.} 1.71; Flor. \textit{Epit.} 2.19.7.
\item[152] Vell. Pat. 2.21.4; Plut. \textit{Mar.} 44.6, \textit{Pomp.} 1.2; Seut. \textit{Aug.} 13.2; App. \textit{B Civ.} 1.71, 73.
\item[153] Cic. \textit{Leg.} 2.57, \textit{Sest.} 77, \textit{Phil.} 1.5; Livy \textit{Per.} 86, \textit{Epit.} 116; Vell. Pat. 2.77; App. \textit{B Civ.} 1.104-5, 6.68.
\item[154] I should at least single out Asinius Pollio for addressing difficult contemporary political topics (cf. Hor. \textit{Carm.} 2.1.1-8, 17-28), but his work too is lost to us.
\end{footnotes}
on pikes around the walls of Praeneste in the parading of Nisus’ and Euryalus’ impaled heads; or the proliferation of heads on display in the forum in the heads of Amycus and Diores which Turnus displays on his chariot and those that line Cacus’ cave; or corpses floating down the Tiber, or left to rot, or for animals to consume, in Aeneas’ taunting over Tarquitos’ corpse, and so on. Homer offered Virgil a powerful epic theme in issues related to corpse treatment, but his own and his readers’ life experiences added enormous emotional weight to the poetic dialogue: Virgil provocatively brings the corpse abuse of his Rome into his poetic heroic universe, but he had no need to provide his Roman audience detailed articulation of those abuses since their own wounds had not fully healed. I suggest that by remaining conspicuously silent, Virgil draws his audience in more closely to these moments where the narrative stops suddenly and encourages them to fill the silence with the horrors he refrains from articulating.

We can tease this out a bit further. The Aeneid functioned immediately as the major poetic monument of what was still an evolving Augustan regime by Virgil’s death in 19 BCE. Where it falls in the ideological chronology is debated (was it a formulated product of or a visionary stimulus for Augustan ideology?), but it certainly resonated and was meant to resonate in roughly the same way that the Mausoleum Augusti, the Temple of Apollo Palatinus, Mars Ultor, Arch of Augustus, Ara Pacis, among many other physical monuments, did, as growing ideological emblems of the embryonic principate—^not to mention the import of Virgil’s own Georgics (esp. the proem of G. 3), Horace’s Odes, and the litany of public ceremonies, which became part of the validation of the new system. These other

\[\text{156 See esp. Zanker (1988) on the monuments.}\]
monuments, all glorifying and recalling a link to the Republican past but promoting a new Imperial future, actively avoided direct memorialization of Rome’s, particularly Augustus’ own, involvement in the civil wars that led to this socio-political present. Octavian destroyed documents relating to the triumvirs’ actions in 36 BCE (App. B Civ. 5.132). He later avoided any direct reference to or elaboration of the bloody civil wars in his Res Gestae, and Suetonius tells us that Claudius was schooled by his mother Antonia and grandmother Livia not to offer a ‘true and free account’ of the time period between Caesar’s murder and the end of the civil wars in his history of Augustus’ reign (Suet. Claud. 41.2). It is only with Caligula’s rise to power that various histories from the end of the republic and early empire—suppressed on account of their criticisms of Julius Caesar and his successors—were stripped of their censorship and granted universal exposure (Suet. Calig. 16.1). There was, it is clear, a concerted effort to expurgate much unsavoriness.

The Aeneid too is calculating, expurgating. The scope of Virgil’s poetic project allowed him to eschew direct focus on the current political and institutional structure, only addressing these elements obliquely: we have nothing overtly resembling an Augustan panegyric here, but so too the elements of civil war in the poem’s second half only glance allussively toward the real life civil wars in Rome’s recent past. The mythological narrative and generic epic superstructure, as well as helping to reveal so much that is hidden in the narrative by way of poetic engagement, at the same time form something like a shroud through which the political content is purposefully muddled. It is for the audience to negotiate this allusive space between history and literary history. Despite this careful distancing, the period’s
protagonist, Augustus, is everywhere in the *Aeneid*, and he is particularly present in Virgil’s *pius Aeneas*; we just have to dig a bit to find him.\(^{157}\)

The associations Virgil constructs between his Aeneas and the historical Augustus present a number of issues when read in particular against the silence of the final scene of the poem and Aeneas’ treatment of Turnus. We might remember that according to Suetonius, Octavian had famously raged against the corpse of Brutus after Philippi, decapitating him and shipping his head to Rome for public display at the foot of Caesar’s statue (Suet. *Aug.* 13; cf. Dio 47.49.2 for the head lost in transit). He also, Suetonius continues, denied burial to Brutus’ comrades by promising that carrion birds would see to their corpses (Suet. *Aug.* 13: *iam istam uolucrum fore potestatem*).\(^{158}\) These acts/boasts have reasonably been viewed as evocative of Homeric battle rage, and Appian even records that after Julius Caesar’s death, a furious Octavian claimed he was determined to avenge the murdered Caesar like Achilles avenged Patroclus (App. *B Civ.* 3.13). But because Octavian is said to have actually carried out these abuses makes the acts decidedly un-Homeric; if anything, Homer sets a clear limit to battle rage related specifically to corpse treatment, and his heroes are not typically granted the freedom to debase themselves by crossing too far into inhumanity, despite often their best

\(^{157}\) The connections are woven throughout the poem: e.g. Augustus’ appearance on Aeneas’ shield at 8.680 standing on high stern at Actium, applied to Aeneas holding that shield on high stern at 10.261-2; the importance of the *gens Iulia* at 1.288 and 7.789-90; the Trojans’ trip to Actium at 3.278-93, Aeneas’ promise to erect a temple to Apollo at 6.69-70, Aeneas’ relationship with Anchises in books 2 and 3 conjure up issues related to succession in ways reflective of Octavian’s succession of Julius Caesar; they are linked via their shared associations with Hercules in book 8, etc. Even the ‘four virtues’ listed on the golden shield gifted to Augustus in 27 BCE (*Res Gestae*, 34.2), *virtus, clementia, iustitia*, and *pietas*, are emblematic of Virgil’s Aeneas.

\(^{158}\) Whether or not the details are historical does not really matter. The stories persisted and became part of the life of Octavian that Augustus never could quite shake, and their influence on Virgil, his audience, and subsequent audiences cannot have been insignificant: see Sen. *Clem.* 1.11.1: *haec Augustus senex aut iam in senectutem annis uergentibus; in adolescentia caluit, arsit ira, multa fecit, ad quae inuitus oculos retorquebat.* ‘such was Augustus as an old man, or just growing into old age [i.e. kind, restrained, forgiving]; in his youth he was hot tempered and burned with anger, and did many things which he later did not want to recall’; cf. Dio 56.44.1; Stat. *Silv.* 4.1.32.
efforts. What Octavian does evoke is of course very much Roman, and Roman in the very real context of the civil wars that ultimately brought Octavian into position as Rome’s First Citizen, Augustus. The rage and abuse (however much justified or at least mitigated by the context of revenge and pietas towards his adoptive father) mirrors uncomfortably some of the more unsavory actions of Aeneas, particularly his treatment of Tarquitus and his involvement in the abuse of Mezentius, and these images should color our reading of the end of the poem.

Virgil’s Aeneas is not a Homeric epic hero. Much of Virgil’s innovation in reconfiguring Homeric epic is his intricate balancing/layering of mythic, historic, and contemporary time, and the (deliberately) resulting tensions inherent in this chronological interplay create historicizing moments that bubble up to the epic’s surface. Where Homer rejected corpse abuse, Virgil retrojects the corpse abuse emblematic of Rome’s civil wars into proto-Roman mytho-history, though shielding his audience somewhat from its visceral horrors by refusing to narrate the details: we ‘narrate’ them by filling the gaps, the ‘hermeneutic space’, as Hubbard has it. Virgil is attempting to establish a heroic code based on pietas through Aeneas, but will this new code and its hero resemble the amoral horrors of civil war violence and the abuses earlier in the poem, or will they fall more in line with the prior epic aretē/timē Homeric value code that placed a limit on abuse? Do we read Aeneas in the end as a rash young Octavian capable of the overkill he displayed in his abuse of Brutus and his companions, or an older, maturing, composed Augustus averse to such savagery? The answers fall along this entire spectrum, as both Aeneas and Augustus are

\[159\] Hubbard (1995).
heroes ‘unfulfilled’ by 19 BCE.\textsuperscript{160} Virgil’s silence is deliberate and significant. It allows his readers to involve themselves as productive participants in the creation of Augustan ideology by permitting them to supplement the poet with whatever memories, emotions, and aspirations they hold.

\footnote{\textsuperscript{160}This is Nisbet’s (1978-80): 59 description of \textit{Aeneas imperator}.}
CHAPTER 3

HORRORS OF A MALFORMED PEN: DECAPITATION IN LUCAN’S
BELLUM CIVILE, STATIUS’ THEBAID, AND SILIUS’ PUNICA

...part of the horror is that a severed head is so captivating. The dead human face is a siren: dangerous but irresistible.
—Frances Larson, Severed

Smithers, dismember the corpse and send his widow a corsage.
Mr. Burns in The Simpsons: 5.3 ‘Homer Goes to College’

Lucan’s Bellum Civile explodes the silences and narrative gaps concerning the treatment of the dead that Virgil leaves tantalizingly and wilfully unexplored in the Aeneid. Statius and Silius, whose epics are completed some 25 or 30 years after Lucan’s poem,¹ address Virgilian silence in their own unique ways, but very often (unavoidably) through the lens of Lucan’s redefinition of the epic landscape (though many other influences abound, as I hope to demonstrate). The exploration of Virgilian silence in terms of corpse treatment and the re-writing of the rules of conduct set by Homer and Virgil governing the treatment of the epic dead are violently distorted in all of these Imperial epics. It is the aim of this chapter to analyze some of the ways in which these three post-Augustan epicists appropriate and manipulate their epic models by examining three scenes.

¹ Lucan died with his poem incomplete in 65 CE (contra Masters [1992]: 216-59, following Haftner [1957], cf. Henderson (1998): 170-1, on the poem as ‘completed’). Silius and Statius were contemporaries working during the reign of Domitian, but the exact dates and the interplay between their poems have been points of scholarly debate. See Wistrand (1956) for the dating of the Punic as encompassing the period of Statius’ Thebaid composition which we believe to have been 79-91 CE. Silius began the Punic around 81 CE and composed at a rate of roughly a book a year, putting his completion date around 96 or 97 CE: see further Bassett (1963); Juhnke (1972): 12-13; McDermott and Orentzel (1977); Laudizi (1989): 29-54; Dewar (1991): xxxi-xxxv; Smolenaars (1994): xvi-xvii; Littlewood (2011): lvi-lix. The most recent compilation on Flavian epic poetry by Manuwald and Voigt, eds. (2013) explores a variety of influences from each direction, or as simply general contact between the Punic and Thebaid outside of chronological strictures. Wilson (2013) argues that Silius’ poem should not be read as a purely Flavian epic, even if it was largely a Domitianic composition.
One example from each epic (Lucan’s *Bellum Civile*, Statius’ *Thebaid*, and Silius Italicus’ *Punica*) will demonstrate how each poet most dramatically deviates from the Homeric and Virgilian norm of epic corpse treatment: Pompey’s death and decapitation in BC 8; Tydeus’ cannibalism of Melanippus’ severed head in *Thebaid*, followed by Tydeus’ own abuse by the Thebans in book 9; finally, Theron’s mutilation of Asbyte’s corpse, followed by his own corpse abuse at the hands of Hannibal and Asbyte’s Numidian coterie in *Punica* 2. These are all scenes that involve decapitation and further abuse aimed at a severed head and so they represent the actualization and elaboration of the most grisly abuses found in earlier martial epic; the chapter offers a synoptic view of the three epicists’ engagement with this particular motif. Although I present close readings of a specific moment in each poem, these particular scenes also function crucially as emblematic of major themes that permeate each work, and I will expand upon these points as I work through the material, as a means of foregrounding further discussion in subsequent sections.

### 3.1. Hack Job: The Death and Abuse of Pompey in Lucan’s *Bellum Civile*

*I get eaten by the worms*  
*and weird fishes*  
*picked over by the worms*  
*and weird fishes*  
*weird fishes*  
*weird fishes*  
—Radiohead, ‘Weird Fishes/Arpeggi’

Lucan’s *Bellum Civile* is a poem born out of Virgilian silence. Lucan stages, over the course of 10 books, Anchises’ elliptical fears of future civil bloodshed conveyed to Aeneas in the
underworld (Aen. 6.826-35).² While it is obvious to Virgil’s reader that Anchises is speaking of the civil war between Caesar and Pompey, his language is ambiguous and couched in terms of negation (he never even mentions Caesar or Pompey by name).³ Neither Virgil nor Anchises has any desire to elaborate the horrors of civil war. Lucan, we are promised, will be more than clear, more than elaborate (plus quam...⁴ Luc. 1.1-2).⁵ His play of joining subject matter with the horrida bella, ‘grim wars’ (Aen. 7.41, anticipated by the Sibyl at 6.86-7) of the Aeneid’s Iliadic⁶ second half, articulated in BC’s proem,⁷ further magnifies his exploration of Virgil’s narrative silence. This macrocosmic treatment in Lucan’s epic design, his über-amplification⁸ of Virgil’s ambiguous silences and unease, is expressed everywhere in the BC as the surgical probing of Virgil’s texts unlocks for him new and unexplored poetic paths. Lucan’s exploitation of Virgil’s silence occurs perhaps most dramatically at the microscopic level in his handling of the treatment of the dead. What Virgil omitted from his epic is everywhere in the BC a point of departure and a source of poetic inspiration.

³ Casali (2011): 86.
⁴ See Henderson (1998): 165-211, whose challenging (Narducci’s [1999]: 51-5 vitriol is not unfounded) but brilliant piece is in many ways an explication of the potential and the implications of Lucan’s poetics of plus quam.
⁵ Lucan is in fact incapable of silence as demonstrated by the praeteritio of 7.552-7, followed by a lengthy description of the horrors of Pharsalus he promises to leave unsaid. Cf. Vell. Pat. 2.52.3 who refuses to give details related to the same battle.
⁶ I will discuss points of contact between Lucan and Homer (esp. the Iliad) directly as well—more so in later chapters—though my emphasis here will be a major intertext with Aen. 2. For work on Lucan’s engagement with Homer, see esp. Metger (1957) and (1970); Albrecht (1970); Lausberg (1985); Green (1991); Hutchinson (2013): 329-32, 347-9. Note also Conte (2010) on the proems of BC and the Iliad.
The masterstroke of epic corpse mutilation in the poem is Lucan’s depiction of the elaborate death and abuse of Pompey in BC 8. The scene, or more specifically one allusion in the scene (8.698-711), has been championed as the most famous of intertextual references in the poem, as Pompey’s headless corpse battered by the waves recalls Virgil’s scene of Priam’s corpse in *Aeneid* 2. The allusion is doubly striking since Virgil’s scene had already posited a correspondence between Priam and Pompey, so Lucan is effectively reactivating/rehistoricizing the model by acknowledging Virgil’s nod to the corpse of Pompey in his depiction of Priam. It is a dazzling play on Virgil’s meta-historical moment in the *Aeneid* that has deservedly received attention among commentators. My interest however is in the details Lucan lavishes on the scene that lead to the intertext with Virgil, which function as an explication of Virgil’s silence concerning Priam’s—and by allusion, Pompey’s—corpse abuse. In this way, I add to the discussions of Lucan’s engagement with the Virgilian scene by focusing on the details of abuse ignored by scholars whose interests typically stop with the mirrored epitaphs of each poem’s headless victim.

First, the scene itself. In terms of technical action, the Egyptian Achillas stabs Pompey in a small boat off the coast of Egypt (618-19), and Septimius, a Roman mercenary,
subsequently saws his head off (667-73). Around the simple details of the murder Lucan lavishes an astonishing amount of ‘extra’ material that serves to lengthen Pompey’s death scene into something almost ‘operatic’. The scene is introduced and interrupted by apostrophic asides (scornfully: to the gods 542-50, Ptolemy 550-60, Fortuna 599-604; mournfully: to Pompey 606-08), brief speeches by Pompey (579-82) and his wife Cornelia (583-9), and descriptions of the anguish of Cornelia and Pompey’s fleet (589-95) at his impending doom. Then the stabbing is followed by Pompey’s stoic obmutescence and internal monologue (622-35), and Cornelia’s ‘pitiable words’ (639-62), which further delay the action. Cornelia’s request that Pompey see her face before he dies (645-6) seems to suggest to Septimius a more gruesome way of extending the murder: the actual head that will be the focus of attention is of course Pompey’s, which Septimius hacks from the dying man’s shoulders. This repeated fragmenting of narrative action through authorial asides and intratextual audience reaction mimics the physical mutilation of Pompey, pulling the audience in an array of disparate focalized directions as the leader himself is torn apart.

We are transported from the ever-swooning Cornelia (cf. 5.799, 8.59, 8.662) to Pompey’s tiny death-boat, where Septimius grabs his still-breathing head (8.667-73):

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11 Lucan’s authorial interjections function most often as something like an indignant, occasionally convoluted, moral compass in an epic world otherwise completely devoid of the stability of ethic values. See esp. Behr (2007); Bartsch (2012).
14 Note the similarity here to the description of severed heads ‘almost breathing’ in the epic fragment of Cornelius Severus (Res Romanae?) on the death of Cicero, contained in Seneca’s Suas. 6.26: _oraque magnanimum spirantia paene uiorum_ | _in rostris iacuere suis, sed enim abstulit omnis, tamquam sola foret, rapti Ciceronis imago, and the faces of great men, almost breathing, lay on their own Rostra. But the _imago_ of Cicero, removed, outstrips all of them, as if he alone exists_ (lines 1-3). _magnanimum_ – _Magni_ is particularly
nam saeuus in ipso
Septimius sceleris maius scelus inuenit actu,
ac retegit sacros scisso uelamine uoltus
semanimis Magni spirantiaque occupat ora
collique in obliquo ponit languentia transtro.
tunc nerus uenasque secat nodosaque frangit
ossa diu: nondum artis erat caput ense rotare.

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
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.¹⁵

The ‘apology’ for his description of the gruesome crushing of the knotty neck bones as a
result of some sort of transitional period between decapitation by ax and sword¹⁶ ooze rueful
mannerism,¹⁷ only adding to the horror of the decapitation which Lucan describes with
morbid enthusiasm.¹⁸ Septimius himself is characterized as sub-human, an animal (8.599-
600): *immanis uiolentus atrox nullaque ferarum | mitior in caedes*, ‘brutal, savage, cruel and

striking, along with obviously the lexical double of *ora spirantia*. The fragment goes on to lambast Antony for
his villainy in depriving Rome of its *egregium…patris caput* (13: focus is squarely on Cicero’s disembodied
head, 10-19); similarly, Lucan will articulate Pompey’s role as the ‘head’, now severed, of the Republic.
Pompey’s *ora* stands for the people, Cicero’s is ‘preeminent’ among them. Conte (1994): 430 notes the
‘generic’ influence of Severus on Lucan, as far as modernizing historical epic; here, perhaps, do we have a more

¹⁵ Cf. Plutarch *Pomp.* 80.1: τοῦ δὲ Πομπήιου τὴν μὲν κεφαλὴν ἀποτέμνοντι, τὸ δὲ ἄλλο σώμα γαμμὴν
ἐκβαλόντες ἀπὸ τῆς ἁλίαδος τῶν δειμένων τοιοῦτοι θεάματι άπέλιπον, ‘But they cut off Pompey’s head,
tossed his naked trunk out of the boat and left it there for those interested in such a spectacle’. Is Plutarch
pointing implicitly to Lucan’s ‘spectacular’ elaboration of the death scene and abuse?


¹⁷ On the Neronian (and Flavian) penchant for an ‘aesthetics of deviation’ (Ästhetik der Verkehrung), often
manifesting in the disruption of a serious and emotional scene/description through a clever or perverse
witticism, see esp. Burck (1971); Hutchinson (1993); Bartsch (1997); Maes (2008), expanded in Maes (2013).

no less fierce for bloodshed than any wild beast’. The graphic details continue for another 18 lines, as the head attempts to speak and move its eyes (682-3: *dum uiuunt uoltus atque os in murmura pulsant* | *singultus animae, dum lumina nuda rigescunt*, ‘while features are alive and sobs of breath impel | the mouth to murmur, while unclosed eyes are stiffening’), before eventually being thrust on a pike (684: *suffixum caput est*). The image evokes the impaled heads of Nisus and Euryalus in *Aeneid* 9 (466: *praefigunt capita*). Virgil remained silent on the physical action of the decapitation and impaling of the two warriors, the silence (perhaps unintentionally, yet powerfully) symbolized and marked by a rare half-line leaving their names before the gap (9.467: *Euryali et Nisi*…). Lucan takes his cue from this silence, picking up where Virgil left off.

In Lucan’s scene the text itself is broken apart syntactically, with the spear separated (by hyperbaton) from its function as the head-holding trophy pole, by three agonizing lines (681-4: *Pharioque ueruto...suffixum caput est*, ‘on a Pharian spear | ...the head is fixed’). Lucan’s play on the ridiculousness of this extended death scene finds another syntactical twist with the delayed *diu* in his haptic description of the sawing of Pompey’s neck: how long will this horror go on? Pompey’s decapitated head is transfixed like Nisus and Euryalus’ heads, but, as it is cut off, it also sobs blood like the sleeping victims of Nisus and Euryalus during their moment of glory (*Aen.* 9.332-3: *tum caput ipsi aufert domino truncumque reliquit | sanguine singulantem*, ‘Then it’s their master whose head he lops, whom he leaves

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19 Septimius is an ‘unmenschliche Bestie’ (Rieks [1967]: 193). Themes of bestial human behavior, and the blurring of the lines between man and beast, will recur in the scenes examined in this chapter. The horror of the scene is elevated by the fact that Septimius served under Pompey against the pirates (Caesar *B.C.* 3.104).

a truncated | Torso pulsing blood’; with BC 8.682-3, quoted above).\(^{21}\) This scene of the night-raid victims’ decapitation anticipated Nisus and Euryalus’ own ending, and here Lucan seems to lump both images into Pompey’s extended murder scene.

Lucan is still not finished. Pompey’s head is then embalmed in order that ‘proof of the guilt’ remain for Ptolemy, and ultimately Caesar, as we shall see (688-91):

\[
\text{tunc arte nefanda}
\summota est capiti tabes, raptoque cerebro
adsiccata cutis, putrisque effluxit ab alto
umor, et infuso facies solidata ueneno est. \\
\]

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 within, and the features were solidified by drugs instilled.

The embalming continues the corpse mutilation and also places the scene within the realm of the dark and morally suspect arts (688: \textit{arte nefanda}) of Erichtho, whose treatment of corpses in \textit{BC} 6 finds a counterpart here.\(^{22}\) The scene of embalming echoes Lucan’s description of Erichtho’s mutilation of a corpse’s head (6.565-9). Whatever reference Lucan is making to the burgeoning practices of necromancy and Egyptian-style embalming at Rome,\(^{23}\) he is more specifically and poignantly pushing epic beyond conventional limits.\(^{24}\) Perhaps there is a sinister play on what scholars have long recognized as a reference to Egyptian style embalming practices in the \textit{Iliad} itself, in the preservation via ‘ambrosial oils’ of Hector’s,

\(^{21}\) Noted by Moretti (1985): 138. She includes also an intertext with Lucr. 3.654-56: \textit{et caput abscisum calido uiiuenteque trunco | seruat humi vultum uitalem oculosque patentis, | donec reliquias animai reddidit omnes}, ‘and the head hacked from the hot and living trunk preserves the appearance of life on the ground and its eyes staring, until it gave up all that remains of its vitality’.
\(^{24}\) Hutchinson (1993): 324-6; Seo (2011): 215: ‘...the indignities heaped upon Pompey’s mortal flesh prolong the death scene nearly to the point of bathos’.
Sarpedon’s, and Patroclus’ corpses by Apollo, Aphrodite, and Thetis. Pompey is definitively the Homeric-style vanquished hero in Lucan’s poem, an epic ‘defeated’. While the Iliad’s defeated corpses are protected/preserved from abuse by Homer’s gods, Pompey’s corpse (his caput) is preserved in its abuse off the shores of Egypt.

It is here that we find the intertext with Virgil’s Aeneid and the headless corpse of Priam on the shore (BC 8.698-9, 708-11):²⁶

li**tor**a Pompeium feriunt, tr**unc**usque uadosis
huc illuc iactatur aquis...
   pulsatur harenis,  
carpitur in scopulis hausto per uolnera fluctu,  
ludibrium pelagi, nullaque manente figura
una nota est Ma**gno capi**tis iactura reuolsi.

the shores strike Pompey, and his headless corpse is tossed this way and that by shallow waters...

   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  
the single mark of Magnus is the absence of the torn-off head.

In the Aeneid passage, Priam, we recall (Aen. 2.557-8)

i**acet** ingens li**tore truncus,**
au**uls**umque ueris caput et sine nomine corpus…

He’s now a huge trunk lying dead on the seashore,  
Head torn away from his shoulders, a thing without name, a cadaver.

References to this intertext have been building since the matrona’s prophecy at BC 1.685-6, where she recognizes (agnosco: the future Pompey and the past Priam) a headless deformed trunk lying in the sand: hunc ego, fluminea deformis truncus harena | qui iacet, agnosco,

²⁶ Romans, by the time of Lucan’s writing, had long since linked the deaths and destinies of Priam and Pompey, as evidenced by Cicero’s musings on happiness and prosperity: Cic. Tusc. 1.85-6; Div. 2.22, and the ref. in Virg. Aen. 2, with more discussion below. The trend will continue after Lucan: cf. Juv. 10.258-72, 283-6.
‘him I recognize, lying on the river sands, | an unsightly headless corpse’; and later at 2.171-3, as the elderly survivor of the earlier civil war between Marius and Sulla recalls how he struggled to match his brother’s decapitated head to the necks of countless trunks, Antonius’ decapitated head is carried by a soldier by its white hair (121-4), and the mass of headless bodies beaten by waves against the shore (189). He also recalls Roman leaders’ heads paraded on pikes and dumped in piles in the Forum (160-1). In book 8 alone, Pompey weighs the relative value of his own and Caesar’s ‘severed necks’ (8.8-12); Lentulus, delivering a polemic against Pompey, evokes imagery of mutilated headless Roman generals (436-37); and Pompey demands his wife and son test the faith of Ptolemy by his own (i.e. Pompey’s) neck (581-2).

We might expect the allusions to end here, with each corpse (Virgil’s Priam and Lucan’s Pompey) lying on the shore, but again Lucan goes further than Virgil. Virgil had let Priam’s corpse remain a pathetic symbol of Troy’s fall, with the silence of the corpse’s final fate (will he be consumed by birds and dogs according to [threatened] Iliadic custom?) ringing emblematic of the smoldering buildings in the scene’s backdrop. Lucan however devotes another 160 lines to the makeshift burial of what remains of Pompey (8.712-872), in a whimsical display of his taste for gore. Lucan’s scene is full of pathos as well, but of a wholly new and perverse sort: it is overindulgent and bursting at the seams (here too Lucan

27 See Estèves (2010) for more on Lucan’s development of the theme of decapitation.
28 See e.g. 8.777-8: carpitur et lentum Magnus destillat in ignem | tabe fouens bustum, ‘Magnus is consumed and into the slow fire he drips, | feeding pyre with melting flesh’; 786-8: Cordus: semusta rapit resolutaque nondum ossa | satis neruis et inustis plena medullis | aequorea restinguit aqua, ‘He grabs the bones, half-burnt and not yet | separated enough from the muscles and full of scorched marrow; | he quenches them in sea-water'.

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cannot contain his apostrophic madness, asides, and delays), in direct engagement with Virgil’s *pathos* of silence.\(^{29}\)

Pompey’s trunk on the shore in *BC* 8 is not simply an allusion to the death of Priam in *Aeneid* 2: the entire scene of Pompey’s death and mutilation serves as an explication of Virgil’s silence concerning the similar fate of Priam who, by allusion in the *Aeneid* itself, is a stand-in for Pompey. Lucan provides explicit and shocking details of the removal of Pompey’s head and its further mutilation.\(^{30}\) Where Virgil offered the death of Priam, then a narrative gap followed by a headless corpse, Lucan tells us what happened between the lines in clinical details.\(^{31}\)

Lucan’s text (catching Virgil’s allusion) also follows the Pacuvian model of Priam’s head cut off and transfixed by a pike and paraded (*Serv. ad Aen.* 2.557):

IACET INGENS LITORE TRUNCUS Pompei tangit historiam…quod autem dicit LITORE, illud, ut supra diximus, respicit, quod in Pacuuii tragoedia continetur

‘he lies, a huge trunk on the shore’ touches on the history/fate of Pompey...And the fact that he says ‘on the shore’, as I said above, recalls what is found in Pacuvius’ tragedy.

A second note completes the image (*ad* 2.506):

alii dicunt quod a Pyrrho in domo quidem sua captus est (Priamus), sed ad tumulum Achillis tractus occisusque est iuxta Sigeum promunturium…tunc eius caput conto fixum Pyrrhus circumtulit.

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\(^{29}\) I will consider the quasi-cremation and burial of Pompey in more detail in chapter 4.2.

\(^{30}\) Mayer’s notes on the limited brutality in this scene because Lucan does not supply copious blood are difficult to understand: ‘The indignities the head endures are not so vividly set forth (no blood), and its abuse is moral, so to say, rather than physical. Lucan seeks pathos, not nausea’ ([1981]: *ad* 8.663-91). See his introduction to lines 577-711. Is Goya’s etching series *Les désastres de la guerre* less horrific and brutal because it is printed in black and white?

Some say that Priam was indeed captured in his home by Pyrrhus, but was dragged to the tomb of Achilles and killed close to Cape Sigeum...and then Pyrrhus stuck his head on a pike and carried it around.

We see the initial impaling immediately after Pompey’s head is removed (8.679-84), but the full reference comes in book 9 when we return to the scene of the crime, as Pompey’s death and mutilation are described again but this time from the perspective of Pompey’s son Sextus (9.133-43):

\[ uid\ i\ ego\ magnanimi\ lacerantes\ pectora\ patris, \]
\[ nec\ credens\ Pharium\ tantum\ potuisse\ tyrannum\]
\[ litore\ Niliao\ socerum\ iam\ stare\ putaui. \]
\[ sed\ me\ nec\ sanguis\ nec\ tantum\ uolnera\ nostri\]
\[ adfecere\ senis,\ quantum\ gestata\ per\ urbem\]
\[ ora\ ducis,\ quae\ transfixo\ sublimia\ pilo\]
\[ uidimus:\ haec\ fama\ est\ oculis\ uictoris\ iniqui\]
\[ seruari,\ scelerisque\ fidem\ quaesisse\ tyrannum. \]
\[ nam\ corpus\ Phariae\ canes\ avidaeque\ uolucres\]
\[ distulerint,\ an\ furtius,\ quem\ uidimus,\ ignis\]
\[ soluerit,\ ignoro. \]

Myself I saw them tearing at our great-hearted father’s breast, and not believing that a Pharian tyrant could have so much power, I thought his father-in-law already stood on the Nile’s shore. 135
But I was not affected so much by our aged father’s blood and wounds as by the leader’s head paraded through the city, which we saw held high with javelin driven through; it is said that this is kept for the eyes of the cruel conqueror, that the tyrant wanted proof of his crime. 140
But whether dogs of Pharos or the ravenous birds tore his body apart or the stealthy fire which we saw disposed of it, I know not.

This is Lucan at his finest, bridging the gap completely now between Priam and Pompey (literary/historical) by reactivating the implicit Pacuvian allusion which he had teased earlier and which Virgil teased elliptically. 32 Sextus Pompey’s description effectively re-stages the

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32 Note also the prolepsis at BC 2.160-1, recalled during the elderly veteran’s speech: *colla ducum pilo trepidam gestata per urbem | et medio congesta foro*, ‘leaders’ heads are carried on javelins through terrified Rome | and
horror of the murder, complementing the perspective/reaction of Cornelia in the previous book. By readdressing the scene, Lucan provides a further continuation of Pompey’s already exaggerated death through an immediate flashback of a scene narrated only 300 lines earlier.

Sextus’ description, however, is full of narrative inconsistency, as has been noted by Emanuele Narducci. In sum: Sextus could not have seen the head impaled and paraded around Pelusium because, as we know from the account of book 8, the Pompeians’ ship flees directly after Achillas stabs Pompey but before Septimius decapitates him (8.661-2); moreover, it is difficult to imagine how Sextus, or any other of Pompey’s crew, could have been able to enter the town safely to witness the head being paraded. For Narducci, Lucan sacrificed narrative plausibility for the effect of enargeia. This explanation is akin to Richard Heinze’s description of Virgil’s sacrificing of ‘narrative coherence’ in Aeneas’ description of the death of Priam: Virgil eschews the coherency of Aeneas’ first person narrative for ‘a higher artistic economy of the work’. The focus on ‘vividness’, then, can be seen to justify the narrative impossibility of Aeneas’ viewing of Priam’s trunk lying on the shore. This is not coincidental. Lucan is toying with the narrative of Virgil’s scene. As Aeneas describes heaped up in the middle of the Forum’.  

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36 While Horsfall (2008): ad 506-58 is certainly correct that too much has been made of the narrative confusion of Aeneas-as-narrator here (is he not simply the all-seeing all-hearing tragic messenger? See, e.g. Wick [2004]: ad 9.1079 and 1092, on epic/tragic protagonists’ ‘Mitwisserschaft’ of events and details that should be unknown to them), Lucan’s play on the inconsistency in a scene built directly and explicitly on Virgil’s staging of Priam’s death is not simply a narrative trope.
the fate of the *truncus* he could not possibly have seen, Sextus describes the fate of the/its head he too could not possibly have seen.

Aeneas’ visual certainty in his description of slaughter wrought by Neoptolemus/Pyrrhus in Priam’s palace (2.499: *uidi ipse*, ‘I myself saw’; 501: *uidi*, ‘I saw’) is initially matched by Sextus’ description of the scene of his father’s death (9.133: *uidi ego*). But Lucan amplifies the play on perspective with a crescendo of optical opacity in the series of verbs Sextus uses to describe the events surrounding his father’s death and abuse: *uidi, non credens, putai, uidimus, haec fama est, ignoro*. Sextus’ ‘ignorance’ of the final fate of his father’s headless corpse contradicts Cornelia’s confidence that the fire and smoke they see as they sail away represent the pyre of Pompey’s ‘improper burial’ (9.54, 62-3, 73-6).

Sextus’ building uncertainty gives Lucan the space to suggest the possibility that Pompey has been consumed by dogs and birds (141-3), the traditional fear of the epic hero as well the fate of Pompey’s soldiers at Pharsalus in the previous book (7.825-46), and that of Curio at 4.809-10, whose death functions largely as an anticipatory surrogate for Pompey in the poem.³⁷ Pompey’s death is recast moments after the narrative of his actual death, and the varying accounts of the fate of his corpse, as well as that of previous victims in the poem, allow his mutilation to take multiple forms, all concurrent with the worst imaginable abuses in prior epic literature (and coupled with the embalming, something unseen before).³⁸ Lucan kills and mutilates Pompey repeatedly, but from different angles and perspectives, and this repetition intensifies and highlights the climactic scene of his death.


³⁸ On the multiplicity of evocations of Pompey’s mutilated body, see e.g. Loupiac (1998): 167-8; Galtier (2010).
The deeper narratorial allusion between the scenes intensifies Lucan’s explication of Virgil’s silence through repeated allusion to and redefinition of Virgil’s poetic program. Whether narrative possibility ‘allowed’ it or not, Lucan put into Sextus’ account a description of horrific corpse abuse, concurrent with the account in Pacuvius that Virgil alludes to—by having Priam’s headless corpse appear on the Sigean shore—but the details of which he excises from his narrative. Pompey’s mutilation actualizes the unfulfilled threat of Hector (via Iris’ paraphrasing to Achilles in a dream, Il. 18.175-7) to impale Patroclus’ severed head on a pike, and the presence of Achillas evokes the Iliad’s Achilles, who likewise threatened to decapitate Hector at Iliad 18.333-5.

The latter allusion has deeper resonances here since Lucan implicitly aligns Pompey with Hector, as Narducci has shown, through their similar expressions of doomed fate before their respective ‘duels’: Hector’s duel with Achilles, and Pompey’s with Caesar (Il. 22.296-305; BC 7.85-6). Pompey, I might add, has been implicitly aligned with the dead and abused Hector from Aeneid 2 since the beginning of BC 8 when, returning from Pharsalus, he meets Cornelia bearing a striking resemblance to the ghost of Hector who appears to Aeneas in his dream in Virgil’s poem. Compare BC 8.56-7: deformem pallore ducem uoltusque prementem | canitiem atque atro squalentis puluere uestes, ‘the general disfigured by pallor, the white hair covering | his face, his clothing dirtied by black dust’, with Aen. 2.272-3, 277

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39 Lausberg (1985): 1596 notes, among others, the structural correspondence between Patroclus’ death (book 16 of 24) and Pompey’s death (book 8 of 12), though, admittedly, he knows this depends on our confidence that Lucan had planned his epic in 12 books.

40 So Hardie (1993): 38 ‘Firstly note that Pompey like Turnus, has found his Achilles in the Egyptian Achillas. In the Bellum Civile the Achillean role is played by Caesar; Achillas is thus a more appropriate murderer than he can know...’ Achillas is, however, present in the literary tradition recording Pompey’s death, pre- and post-Lucan: Caesar, Appian, Dio, and Plutarch all contain the presence of an ‘Achillas’, exhibiting varying levels of perfidy. Lucan seems to be toying with historical irony.

41 Narducci (2002): 303. Caesar will in the end come face to face with his adversary’s severed head (9.1032-6: see chapter 4.3).
(of Hector’s ghost): *raptatus bigis ut quondam, aterque cruento | puluere perque pedes
traiectus lora tumentis…squalentem barbam et concretos sanguine crinis…*, ‘Blackened
with gore-clotted dust, as he was that day when the chariot | Dragged him by straps threading
gashes slashed in his still swelling insteps…| Filth now covered his beard and his clumped
hair, matted and blood-caked…’ Pompey’s eventual death and abuse are assured here via
his association with Hector, another ‘synecdochic’ epic loser, and his continued existence
post-Pharsalus is implicitly articulated (through the allusion to Hector’s ghost) as a ‘living-
death’. While history did not allow Caesar to be the one to kill/abuse Pompey like Achilles
kills/abuses Hector, a surrogate, ‘Achillas’, in this intertextual game, actualizes Achilles’
decapitation threat from *Iliad* 18 against the defeated Hector-Pompey. Pompey rather
poignantly resembles the blending of the threatened corpse abuse of an Achaeans (Patroclus)
and Trojan (Hector) warrior.

Moreover, Sextus’ description of the head being paraded through Pelusium recalls the
heads of Nisus and Euryalus, of Amycus and Diores, and those that line Cacus’ cave in the
*Aeneid*, all trophies meant to be displayed. But where Virgil completely removed the details
of *post mortem* decapitation and impaling, and Homer left the threats unfulfilled, Lucan is
not lacking in clinical specificity. Lucan’s allusion to Virgil’s depiction of Priam’s/ Pompey’s
death is not simply allusion for the sake of allusion, but it is a central feature of his poetics of
excess. Priam’s death occupies the same thematically climactic location of Virgil’s *Iliou*

42 This adds another layer to Lucan’s casting of Pompey as a ‘shadow/shade’ of a great name (1.135: *stat magni nominis umbra*).
43 The term is Philip Hardie’s ([1993]: 4). I develop this idea in more detail below, and in later chapters more
generally.
44 Esposito (1996): 105-06 notes the connection between the scenes of Nisus and Euryalus and Amycus and
Diores, and the description of Pompey’s death in Lucan.
persis as Pompey’s death occupies in the framework of Lucan’s whole poem: both symbolic of the destruction of bodily integrity as akin to the decapitation of civic identity, the severing of the caput orbis/mundi, as Pompey’s son articulates for us after the fact (9.123-5): stat summa caputque | orbis, an occidimus Romanaque Magnus ad umbras | abstulit?, ‘is the crown and head of the world | still standing or are we felled—has Magnus taken to the shades | the Roman destiny?’ The pun is perhaps ‘tasteless’, but so typical of Lucan’s modus operandi. The Roman State/Republic as a shattered, mutilated ‘body’ is a leitmotif in Lucan’s poem (e.g. 1.2-3; 2.141-3; 5.36-7, 252; 7.293-4, 576-9, 721-2; 10.416-17; etc.), and Pompey’s corpus/truncus is the ultimate ‘embodiment’ of that State. Where Virgil could evoke this image of the fall of Troy in/as the death and decapitation of Priam in the epitaphic brevity of a few words, Lucan logorrheically rends the ‘body politic’ piece by piece, word by word.


As well as recapitulating the climax of destruction in *Aeneid* 2, so Pompey’s death, as Philip Hardie has shown, also echoes the climactic close of Virgil’s poem, as Pompey’s reaction to his death-blow refashions the vocabulary of the final line of the *Aeneid* (*Aen.* 12.952):\(^{48}\) *uitaque cum gemitu fugit indignata sub umbras*, ‘Life flutters off on a groan, under protest, down among shadows’; with *BC* 8.619: *nullo gemitu consensit ad ictum*, ‘with not a groan did he acknowledge | the blow’. Coupled with Pompey *indignatus*, ‘disdaining’, at 8.614, Lucan has presented the reader with a Stoic refashioning (*nullo gemitu*) of Turnus’ death at the hands of Aeneas, a new ‘reading’ of the end of the *Aeneid*. Achillas not Caesar kills Pompey, but Caesar is omnipresent. No matter his killer, Pompey assures himself he dies only by Caesar’s hand (8.627-9). The silence concerning Turnus’ possible corpse abuse in Virgil is in Lucan a point of poetic departure. Pompey’s suppression of his groan is only the beginning, and what follows is the sort of abuse most feared by heroic losers. In death, Pompey recalls Priam and Turnus, Patroclus and Hector, and a host of other abused (or potentially abused) corpses woven together in a web of complex intertextual engagement; these are model epic victims. But unlike his poetic predecessors, Lucan does not omit the brutal details.

It is not just the description of Pompey’s death and mutilation that is blown out of proportion, but also the lengths to which Lucan allows the process of death and dying to occur. I examine this Lucanian aesthetic feature in more detail at chapter 4.4 and 4.5, but it deserves some mention here. Pompey shows signs of life after he is stabbed repeatedly, and even after his head is removed and placed on the pike (670-1, 682-4). The process of his

quasi-cremation is hurried but its description is granted copious space for grisly detail, and 
the retelling of his murder through Sextus’ variant description allows the scene of death and 
corpse abuse further narrative life. Most disturbingly, Pompey is granted a further afterlife at 
the end of book 9, when his head is presented to Caesar by one of Ptolemy’s minions 
(9.1032-4): opertum | detexit tenuitque caput. iam languida morte | effigies habitum noti 
mutauerat oris, ‘[he] exposed | and held aloft the covered head. Already his appearance, 
drooping | in death, had altered the form of the familiar face’. The head is decaying, drooping 
with death, which alone is not surprising, but considering the initial description of the 
mummification that solidified his features and, looking to the future, for those who saw the 
severed head, death changed nothing of Pompey’s countenance and face (8.665-7, 691), this 
further detail of his changed expression adds another sardonic twist in the impossibly 
extended process of dying. Shades of Ovidian metamorphoses shine through here and 
elsewhere in BC but the change is still more perverse than anything even Ovid might have 
imagined. In a sort of ‘Death with Interruptions’, 49 the living body eventually becomes a 
corpse, but—as we shall see again and again—in the drawn-out process of dying and being 
dead (being something ‘deader’ than dead), Lucan and his epic successors find space for 
further bizarre transformations. 50

49 To borrow from José Saramago’s (2005) As Intermitências da Morte. Or maybe to borrow from Saramago’s 
borrowing (?) of Freud’s ‘death-drive’ and the ‘Umwege zum Tode’.
50 See Bartsch (1997): 17-47 for a challenging but excellent discussion of Lucan’s blurring of animate and 
inanimate, bodily/societal/syntactical integrity, and related themes. See Hömke (2010): 98-104 on the 
’aestheticization’ of the process of dying in Lucan’s Scaeva episode; Dinter (2010), repr. in Dinter (2012): 37-
49 on the automatism of severed limbs (mostly looking at Ovidian influence on Lucan).
3.2. Cannibal Corpse: Tydeus’ Rise and Fall in Statius’ *Thebaid*

*I put my hand on the Bible
swear to God if I lie, then I’ll probably die tomorrow,
tell my momma don’t feel sorrow ’cause her son was a gunner,
they found my corpse with a rapper’s head in my stomach
—Kendrick Lamar, ‘Best Rapper Under 25’

flies are buzzing around my head
vultures circling the dead
picking up every last crumb
the big fish eat the little ones
the big fish eat the little ones
not my problem give me some
—Radiohead, ‘Optimistic’

Statius’ depiction of Tydeus’ death and his cannibalism of his victim-killer Melanippus’ head at *Theb.* 8.716-65 is the most gruesome scene of corpse abuse in an epic obsessed with the treatment of the dead.\(^{51}\) The scene and its building narrative encompassing Tydeus’ linked *aristeiai* in books 2 and 8 is also a *tour de force* of Statius’ complex engagement with his epic predecessors.\(^{52}\) As in my discussion of Pompey’s death and abuse, I am interested here mostly in Statius’ exploitation of Homeric and Virgilian silence and/or avoidance of corpse maltreatment, and the larger effect of this exploitation on Statius’ poetic program. But Statius’ borrowings from a larger poetic sphere, particularly Ovid’s depiction of the Calydonian boar hunt from *Metamorphoses* 8, are clearly present here too, and they help to further define the bestial nature of Tydeus’ character.\(^{53}\) I analyze Tydeus’ abuse of

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\(^{52}\) For a useful example of Statius’ rich fabric of intertextual engagement, see Smolenaars’ (2004) study of *Theb.* 2.496-523, which shows convincingly Statius’ skill of ‘imitazione combinatoria’ (modelled from Hardie’s [1989] categorization of intertextual associations). Also Smolenaars (1994): xxvi-xxv. I will have more to say about post-Augustan intertextuality at the close of this chapter.

\(^{53}\) Lovatt (2010a): 71-6 has looked at the scene in light of Livy 22.51.9, an unnamed Roman’s cannibalizing of a Numidian, which was also adapted by Silius (6.41-54: see Bassett [1959]). Whether Statius was also responding
Melanippus’ corpse before looking at the abuse of Tydeus’ own corpse by the Theban soldiers who recover his body in a skirmish at the beginning of book 9.

At the close of Tydeus’ *aristeia* in book 8 he is struck and doubled-over by a spear hurled by Melanippus, who is hesitant to take credit for his actions (8.716-21). Tydeus responds by striking back at Melanippus, and as a last request, demands his companions bring to him the body (specifically the *caput*) of his victim-killer (735-44). Capaneus is quick to action. Book 8 closes with a flourish of horror (751-66):

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erigitur Tydeus uultuque occurrit et amens
laetitiaque iraque, ut singultantia uidit
ora trucesque oculos seseque agnouit in illo,
imperat abscisum porgi, laeuaque receptum
spectat atrox hostile caput, gliscitque tepentis
lumina torua uidens et adhuc dubitantia figi.
inflex contentus erat: plus exigit ultrix
Tisiphone; iamque inflexo Tritonia patre
uenerat et misero decus inmortale ferebat,
atque illum effracti perfusum tabe cerebri
aspicit et uiuo scelerantem sanguine fauces
(nec comites auferre ualent): stetit aspera Gorgon
crinibus emissis rectique ante ora cerastae
uelauere deam; fugit auersata iacentem,
hec prius astra subit quam mystica lampas et insons
Ilissos multa purgauit lumina lympha.
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Struggling to rise, Tydeus raced with his gaze to meet him: mad with joy and rage when he saw that face gasping for air, saw those fierce eyes, and in the sight perceived himself, he insisted they cut off his enemy’s head and bring it to him. Seizing it left-handed, he gazed, savage and bloated, seeing the hot eyes glaring yet hesitant to meet his own. Luckless, he was content.

Vindictive Tisiphonê drove him one step further.

to Silius’ scene (or vice versa) is part of a more general problem of the dating of the two poets; there are signs of mutual influence: see note above. In any case, Statius’ scene here is a complex web of intertextual engagement.

54 Hill (1983) prints *trucique* here, but *truces* gives a better sense.
Her father swayed, Tritonia by now had returned, 
bringing the wretch immortal glory, but—!

When she saw 

him, sluiced with the foul gush of a brain smashed into gobbets, his jaws evilly stained with living blood, as companions strove to wrest the thing from him, her harsh Gorgon stood, snake-hackles rising, crests upreared before her face, shielding the Goddess. She turned from the fallen man and fled, nor did she ascend to the stars before the Mystic Lamp and the wide waters of blameless Elisos had purged her bright eyes.

It is a moment of captivating furor and horror whose combination serves as a microcosm of the thematic thrust of Statius’ whole poetic project. Capaneus removes the head of the still breathing, gurgling Melanippus (singultantia...ora), eyes hesitating to grow fixed, in an image reminiscent of Pompey’s decapitation at BC 8.682-3 (dum uiuunt uoltus atque os in murmura pulsant | singultus animae, dum lumina nuda rigescunt ‘while features are alive and sobs of breath impel | the mouth to murmur, while unclosed eyes are stiffening’), and of the decapitations of sleeping men during Nisus and Euryalus’ night-raid at Aen. 9.332-3 (sanguine singultantem). The head is still showing signs of life even when Tydeus grabs it as it hesitates to meet his eyes (Theb. 8.756). Tydeus is content simply to gaze at his enemy’s head, but Tisiphone demands more: she compels Tydeus to devour the brains of Melanippus, completing Dis’ injunction at 8.71-2 that someone ‘like a rabid beast, | gnaw his enemy’s head’ (sit, qui rabidarum more ferarum | mandat atrox hostile caput).

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56 Tacitus records a spectacular moment in 70 CE when one Curtius Montanus accused the delator M. Aquilius Regulus of biting the severed head of Galba’s heir Piso Licinianus (Hist. 4.42) during the horrors of the civil war in 69 CE. How much of this inspired Statius’ scene of Tydeus’ cannibalism is unknowable, but the poem as a whole is infected with the darkness, violence, and despair of civil wars on par with what plagued Rome from 68-69. It is not unreasonable that such a mythological scene would recall a similarly famous historical event. See Williams (1978): 221-2.
57 In her later recollection of the event, Tisiphone will use language directly evoking the heads of Nisus and Euryalus themselves, severed and on display, in her description of Tydeus’ gore-stained mouth. She asks
Statius offers a sardonic anticipation of Tydeus’ cannibalism through an allusion to Hippomedon’s relation (through Adrastus and Niobe) to Atreus. Into his plea that Hippomedon bring him the head of Melanippus we might feel tempted to read Atreus’ serving up Thyestes’ children for dinner (8.742-3): *i, precor, Atrei si quid tibi sanguinis umquam, *Hippomedon…, ‘Go, Hippomedon! if ever a drop of Atreus’ blood was | yours!’ Tydeus’ act is deemed so repulsive, such a display of bestial nefas that Athena, who had received divine sanction from Jupiter to bestow immortality on her favorite (759), flees from the sight to cleanse her eyes, contaminated by the spectacle (765-6), and allows Tydeus to die. The snake hairs on Athena’s gorgoneion raise up to shield the goddess’ eyes (762-4), and the scene as a whole recalls the earlier *ekphrasis* of Perseus carrying Medusa’s severed head, eyes still moving and face drooping, on the libation bowl that Adrastus shows to Tydeus and Polynices at *Thebaid* 1.543-7.\(^{58}\) In a frightening perversion of the earlier scene, Tydeus stares at Melanippus’ head with grim pleasure in the same way that he and we as an audience were earlier invited to take in the frightening but pleasurable images displayed on the libation bowl; here Tydeus has become a feature of *ekphrasis*,\(^ {59}\) whose horror both rejects viewer gaze (Pallas, and later Mars: 9.4-7) as well as draws it in (our own readerly gaze).

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\(^{58}\) Noted by Newlands (2012): 82.

\(^{59}\) For an overview of *ekphrasis* in the field of Classical Studies, see Goldhill (2007).
The scene as a whole borrows much from Pompey’s famous death-scene in BC 8.\textsuperscript{60} Both Pompey and Melanippus are mortally wounded and dying as their heads are removed. Pompey is stabbed at BC 8.618-19 before his eventual decapitation at 667; Melanippus is speared at Theb. 8.727, carried to Tydeus by Capaneus at 746-9, and then decapitated at 753-5. Both men are gasping for air (BC 8.670: spirantia...ora, 682-3: os...singultus; Theb. 8.752-3: singultantia...ora), and the eyes of each are still staring (BC 8.683: lumina nuda; Theb. 8.756: lumina torua...adhuc dubitantia figi). Statius may be looking back to Lucan’s own model here as well, in Virgil’s description of the decapitations of sleeping men during Nisus’ and Euryalus’ night-raid at Aeneid 9.332-3, itself recalling (probably intentionally) the ‘snorting corpses’ of decapitated victims described in the messenger speech of Euripides’ Rhesus (789: κλύω δ’ ἐπάρας κρᾶτα μυχθισμὸν νεκρῶν, ‘I hear the snorting of corpses as I raise my head’).\textsuperscript{61} But ultimately this is viewed through a Lucanian lens, and his elaboration of the scene.

Both heads receive further criminal assault after their separation from the body: Pompey’s head is fixed on a pike and embalmed (BC 8.688: arte nefanda), and Tydeus gnaws on Melanippus’ head, breaking the bounds of what is acknowledged as fas (his companions ‘complained he had broken the rules of engagement’: rupisse queruntur fas odii at Theb. 9.3-4). Tydeus’ staring competition with Melanippus’ head at Thebaid 8.751-6 evokes the confrontation between Caesar and Pompey’s severed head in Egypt at 9.1032-9, in Lucan’s extension of Pompey’s murder and death. The play of victor eyeing vanquished is compounded by Pompey’s imagining of his own death at the hands of Caesar at BC 8.628-9

\textsuperscript{60} I develop this more in McClellan (2010): 36-63.

(quacumque feriris, | crede manum socieri), though the authors of his demise are Septimius and Achillas, and in the end Caesar will hold his severed head. Capaneus in Statius’ poem orchestrates Melanippus’ decapitation, but it is Tydeus who holds and confronts his head. There is in sese...agnouit in illo a nod to Amphiaraus’ prophetic recognition of his own impending doom (Theb. 3.546-7: illum…| qui cadit, agnosco, ‘I well know | that one who is falling!’) which already engages the matrona’s prophecy of Pompey’s looming death, at BC 1.685-6 (hunc ego, fluminea deformis truncus harena | qui iacet, agnosco, ‘him I recognize, lying on the river sands, | an unsightly headless corpse’); Tydeus sees in his victim-killer his own approaching fate, as another epic corpse sprawled out in death: Theb. 9.2: iacentem; 9.17: et nunc ille iacet.62 There are further allusions in the Thebaid scene to the mythological excursus of Medusa’s decapitation by Perseus in BC 5, which itself evokes Pompey’s decapitation, especially with regard to the Gorgoneion on Pallas’ aegis (Theb. 8.763-5). With brimming ingenuity, Statius has channeled the extended death and abuse of Pompey in Lucan’s poem (over 2 books) into one breathless cinematic shot.

While there are significant debts to Statius’ most immediate epic predecessor in Lucan, actual accounts of Tydeus’ abuse of Melanippus’ corpse and his own death are rather scarce in the extant epic mythic record. In the wake of epic literary tradition, Tydeus’ cannibalism is fairly peripheral. Homer references Tydeus’ death at Iliad 14.114, but makes no mention of his meal. Tydeus in fact comes across rather favorably throughout the Iliad (e.g. 4.376-400; 5.800-08). Virgil also makes no reference to the anthropophagy in the

62 See Larson (2014): 8: ‘We cannot confront another person’s head without sharing an understanding: face to face, we are peering into ourselves’.
Aeneid. Statius’ source appears to have been the lost epic-cycle poem the Thebais. The scholium on Iliad 5.126 preserves the details of the scene from the Thebais:

Tydeús ὁ Οἰωνέως ἐν τῷ Θῆβαικῷ πολέμῳ ὑπὸ Μελανίππου τοῦ Ἀστάκου ἐτρόθη, Ἀμφιάραος δὲ κτέινας τὸν Μελανίππον τὴν κεφαλὴν ἐκόμισε, καὶ ἀνοίξας αὐτὴν ὁ Ῥυδεύς τὸν ἐγκέφαλον ἐρρόφει ἀπὸ θημοῦ. Ἀθηνᾶ δὲ κομίζουσα Τυδεί ἀθανασίαν, ἱδοῦσα τὸ μίασμα, ἀπεστράφη αὐτὸν.

Tydeus, son of Oeneus, was wounded by Melanippus, son of Astacus, in the Theban war. Amphiaraus killed Melanippus and brought his head, and Tydeus, opening up his skull, greedily gulped down his brain. Athena was bringing down immortality for Tydeus; but when she saw the miasma she turned away from him.

Even here the account is slightly different. Statius has Capaneus retrieve Melanippus’ body and sever his head whereas the scholium (and presumably the Thebais) attributes this to Amphiaraus, who is the traditional mortal enemy of Tydeus. The same details are found in the scholium to Pindar Nemean 10.12, Pausanias 9.18.1, and Apollodorus 3.6.8. While it is Tisiphone who ultimately pushes Tydeus over the edge to cannibalism (cf. her boast at Theb. 11.87-8: miserum insatiabilis edit | me tradente caput, ‘I gave him his wretched foe’s head, and he ate it!’), Statius’ rewriting of the myth whereby it is Tydeus who demands the head of Melanippus and not the influence of Amphiaraus is in line with the general beastliness of Tydeus’ character in the epic.

Oracular and prophetic allusions to Tydeus’ cannibalism remind us throughout the epic of his eventual animal savagery (1.41-2, 3.544-5, 8.71-2), as do the allusions, from the moment he enters the poem, that he is bloodstained with rage (1.408: rabiem cruentam; cf. 8.478-9, 530-1), and his exit makes literal this frightening epithet (9.1-2): rabies...cruenti | 63

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Tydeus. Statius also includes more subtle imagery that serves to anticipate the
dehumanizing of his character—the first in a series of heroic downfalls that highlight the
descent of the poem and its warriors into animalistic furor. It is his association with animals
and beasts that anticipates his transition from uir to fera, his descent into animal furor at the
moment of his death, which brings about his abuse of Melanippus’ corpse. I consider his
role as predator first, before moving onto his association with a hunted boar.

At the outset of his aristeia in book 8, Tydeus alludes to his defeat of the Theban
ambush from book 2 in a rather startling way (8.664-71):

quo terga datis? licet ecce peremptos
ulcisci socios maestamque rependere noctem.
ille ego inexpletis solus qui caedibus hausi
quinquaginta animas: totidem, totidem heia gregatim
ferte manus! nulline patres, nulline iacentum
unanimi fratres? quae tanta obliuio luctus?
quam pudet Inachias contentum abiisse Mycenas!
hine super Thebis?...

Why turn your backs? Look! here’s your chance to avenge
your slaughtered friends and pay me back for that grim night.
I’m the killer who—single-handed—took fifty lives!
And I want more! Bring me as many platoons—yes! platoons!
Lambs to slaughter! Have those dead men no fathers, no
loving brothers? Are you oblivious to a grief so great?
A shame I took off, content, for Inachian Mycenae!
Are these all Thebes has left?

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description of his son Diomedes, ‘bloodstained with gore’ at Aen. 1.471: Tydides multa uastabat caede
cruentus.
65 For a general discussion of the mechanism of dehumanization as illustrated by comparison to animals in the
act that dehumanizes him, see Lee (1965): 995; Rieks (1967): 214-16; Vessey (1973): 225-6, 292-4; Dewar
Tydeus did not just kill his attackers, he ‘devoured’ them (*hausi*), with insatiable slaughter (*inexpletis caedibus*) that is ever growing (*hine super Thebis*?). This same imagery of consumption occurs during his *aristeia* when the Theban army is *consumitum* around him alone (8.700-02): ‘expended’ or ‘used up’, but with the implicit echoes of consumption evoked in his earlier boast.66 Tydeus had been compared to a ravenous lion thirsting for a bull’s bloody neck (8.593-6), matching a simile at the end of his *aristeia* in book 2 of a lion who has gorged itself on blood (2.675-81).67 Both images underscore this linguistic image of bloodthirst, and also anticipate his literal desire for blood when he eats Melanippus’ brains.68

Tydeus’ descent into animal *furor* is doubled by the verbal ‘animality’ of his speech (8.664-71, quoted above), distorted in syntax, abandoning verbs, anaphoric in phrasing, and marked by a general incoherence. The language matches his physical exhaustion, but also points to his becoming less than human. He is further compared to a wolf chasing a wounded steer (8.691-4) and to a tigress devouring an entire flock (8.474-5). Neil Coffee has illustrated how Tydeus’ language of consumption in the above quoted boast to the Thebans also echoes Statius’ language in book 2 to describe the insatiable hunger of the Sphinx for human flesh (the monster’s belly is *inexpleta* at 2.518, with 8.666 of Tydeus).69 In his fight against the 50 Theban ambushers, Tydeus literally takes the old perch of the Sphinx to defend himself (2.555-6), becoming a stand-in for the ravenous bird-monster. By reactivating the imagery of the Sphinx by verbal allusions in book 8 to each character’s desire for blood (already implied in his initial *aristeia*), Statius paves the way for Tydeus’ actual consumption

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67 See Kytzler (1962): 150-3 on the savagery of lions in similes in the *Thebaid*.
69 Coffee (2009): 195-8 for this excellent discussion.
of human flesh, bringing graphically to life the world of metaphor and epic simile (lions, tigers, monsters), when Tydeus eats Melanippus’ decapitated head.

It is this jarring transformation from man to bizarre animal hybrid, through the actualization of metaphorical allusion to traditional forms of epic simile likening a warrior to an animal or monster, that Eteocles latches onto at the opening of the next book. Eteocles rages (9.12-20):

 quisquamne Pelasgis
mitis adhuc hominemque gerit? iam morsibus uncis (pro furor! usque adeo tela exsataiaimus?) artus
dilacerant. nonne Hyrcanis bellare putatis
tigribus, aut saeuos Libyae contra ire leones?
et nunc ille iacet (pulchra o solacia leti!)
ore tenens hostile caput, dulcique nefandus
inmoritur tabo; nos ferrum inmite facesque:
illis nuda odia, et feritas iam non eget armis.

Anyone still
soft on Pelasgi? feeling humane? They’re already tearing
our flesh with hooked fangs—the maniacs! Have we gorged our
weapons this way? You must think you’re fighting Hyrcanian
tigers or going up against Libya’s vicious lions!
He lies even now (ah! the beautiful comfort of death!),
gnawing his enemy’s skull, and dies, a man dishonored
by sweet pulp. On our side—humane swords and firebrands:
on theirs—naked hatred, ferocity needing no arms.

Tydeus and the Argives are no longer men, they are savage animals (feritas), fighting not with swords, but tooth and claw. Eteocles highlights two of the animals Tydeus was compared to in epic simile: a bloodthirsty lion and tiger. It will be to a lion, long sought after (diu) again that he is compared when the Thebans eventually capture his corpse at 9.189-

70 Homeric simile similarly compares warrior with ravenous beast as a means of articulating (often) the bestial nature of humans gripped by war, but again, this is never brought full circle in Homer’s poem. See e.g. Neal (2006a): 212-22, 231-4.
This perversion of epic simile brings about the fulfillment of Dis’ curse at the outset of book 8 when he demanded there be one who takes on the nature of a wild animal (8.71-2). Eteocles’ words directly recall Dis’ (hostile caput in the same metrical position). Tydeus has become so beastly (feram, again: 9.99) that even vultures, monstra, and fire will not dare to devour his corpse (9.102-03).

Tydeus’ cannibalism of Melanippus recalls Hecuba’s unfulfilled verbal abuse of Achilles as a ‘raw flesh eater’, a ‘beast’ (Il. 24.207: ὤμηστής). The scene accomplishes Achilles’ also unfulfilled threat to eat Hector raw after the latter is mortally wounded (22.346-7): αἰ γάρ πως αὐτόν με μένος καὶ θημὸς ἀνήη | ὀμ’ ἀποταμνόμενον κρέα ἔδμεναι, ‘I wish only that my spirit and fury would drive me | to hack your meat away and eat it raw’. The wrath and fury that Achilles wishes to muster are the very essence of Tydeus’ being: he is immodicum irae | Tydea, ‘Tydeus, | whose rage was boundless’ (1.41) from the moment he enters the epic stage, unbounded and limitless in excess as demonstrated by the enjambment that renders one verse ill-equipped to ‘contain’ him. He is a faulty Hercules, who abandons humanity at the cost of his own immortality (or at the cost of a more reputable immortality). But he is not simply a gluttonous offensive threat.

Tydeus, who wears a bristling boar-skin mantle, is cast from the outset of the epic metaphorically as a boar (1.397, 488-90), specifically a Calydonian boar, appropriate

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73 See Parkes (2011): 91.
considering his pedigree as the son of Oeneus from Calydon. This association becomes a

   crucial one for the dual aristeiai of Tydeus in books 2 and 8. After a failed emissary to

Eteocles, Tydeus storms off, as Statius describes in a simile, like Diana’s Calydonian boar,

hunted by the Pelopean band (2.469-75):

   Oeneae uindex sic ille Dianae
   erectus saetis et aduncae fulmine mala,
   cum premeret Pelopea phalanx, saxa obuia uoluens
   fractaque perfossis arbusta Acheloia ripis,
   iam Telamona solo, iam stratum Ixiona linquens
   te, Meleagre, subit: ibi demum cuspide lata
   haesit et obnixo ferrum laxauit in armo.

   Likewise, Oenean Diana’s avenging
   Boar: with bristles erect, tusks like lightning—though hard-pressed
   by the phalanx of Pelops who bowled stones across his path
   and splintered trunks uprooted from Acheloüs’ banks—
   still he left first Telamon sprawled on the ground, then Ixion,
   then you, Meleager; here at last a broad spear head
   stopped him cold; he worried the iron in his unyielding flank.

Eteocles immediately sends a troop of 50 men to hunt down Tydeus, in a perverse

reenactment of the famous Calydonian boar hunt.76 Only here the ‘boar’ wins. Tydeus

demolishes the troop, leaving one (Maeon) to report back to Eteocles of their failed mission.

Statius’ borrowings from Ovid’s77 scene of the boar hunt in Metamorphoses 8 are clear, as

Alison Keith has demonstrated: note in particular the description of Ovid’s boar (Met. 8.281-

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77 There has been some valuable recent work on post-Augustan epic’s debt to Ovid, largely ignored previously
in favor of studies focusing on Virgilian influence (notable exceptions include Bruère [1958] and [1959];
appropriation of Ovid’s Met; Tissot-Wheeler, eds. (2002=Arethusa 35) containing a wide range of material, esp.
Wheeler and Keith on Ovid’s use by Lucan and Statius, respectively; Wilson (2004) on Silius’ engagement with
Ovid; Newlands (2004) on landscapes in Ovid and Statius; Janan (2009) on Ovid’s Theban material and its
influence on Lucan, Valerius Flaccus, Silius, and Statius; Keith (2011) on Ovid and Lucan; Albrecht (1999)
devotes some space to these epicists’ (esp. Lucan’s) appropriation of Ovidian themes/motifs.
9) and Statius’ boar in simile, coupled with the description of Tydeus’ cloak (Theb. 1.489); the time of day and woodland setting of the respective ambushes (Met. 8.334-9; Theb. 2.2.496-504); initial ineffectual spear-casts (both spears lose their metal tips) which graze the boar and Tydeus’ boar-hide (Met. 8.345-57, 380-3; Theb. 2.535-46); the ferocitas that both boar and Tydeus exhibit at the initial attack (Met. 8.355-80; Theb. 2.544-6), and so on. 78

Contrastingly, however, while Meleager’s band had succeeded in bringing down their quarry, Tydeus lives to fight another day.

The ‘conclusion’ to Statius’ reenactment of Ovid’s boar hunt comes during Tydeus’ aristeia in book 8. What was for Ovid’s boar a moment of respite, as the beast ducked under thickets to catch its breath (Met. 8.377-8), is the point of separation between the two halves of Tydeus’ paired aristeiai in Statius’ poem, after roughly 5 books of delay and digression. At the resumption, this ‘boarish Calydonian’ 79 will not be so lucky. Tydeus himself links the two passages in his opening boast to the Theban army in book 8 when, as we have seen, he alludes to his ‘consumption’ of the 50 in book 2 (8.664-71). 80 Tydeus demands a rematch of his earlier fight with ‘as many and as many hands’ as he faced in the woods (8.667-8: totidem, totidem heia gregatim | ferte manus!). The literal monomachia/boar-hunt of book 2 is recast here as the whole Theban army (re-)focuses its efforts on him alone (8.701-02): unum acies circum consumitur, unum | omnia tela uouent, ‘Battle lines focused on him alone, aimed every | lance at him alone’. 81 In book 2 Tydeus had similarly announced his own

81 Cf. Aen. 8.447-8, of Aeneas’ lone shield matching more successfully ‘all the missiles’ of the Latins: unum omnia contra | tela Latinorum).
position as one vs. many\textsuperscript{82} (2.548-9: \textit{solus, solus in arma uoco}, ‘All alone, | alone I challenge you’). He piles up mounds of corpses and spoils that hem him in (700-01), and missiles puncture his boar-skin mantle (705-06). The \textit{ecce}, ‘look!’ at 8.716, directing our attention to an unidentified spear cast (Statius delays mention of Melanippus for effect), replays the same moment in book 2 which instigated the fighting between Tydeus and his ambushers at 2.538 (\textit{ecce autem...}). There, the weapon grazed Tydeus’ boar-skin and fell ineffectually. But in this instance, the weapon brings Tydeus down. This moment completes (or ‘corrects’) the ‘hunt’ for Tydeus begun in book 2 in a similar fashion as Meleager’s spear finally brings down the boar (\textit{Met.} 8.414-19) after the other hunters had failed (esp. \textit{Met.} 8.345-57).

After Meleager kills the boar, the other hunters rejoice, gather around the huge beast, hesitating to touch it, but all join in the ritual stabbing of its corpse (\textit{Met.} 8.420-4):

\begin{quote}
gaudia testantur socii clamore secundo
uietricemque petunt dextrae coniungere dextram
inmanemque \textit{ferum} multa tellure iacentem
mirantes spectant neque adhuc contingere tutum
esse putant, sed \textit{tela} tamen sua quisque \textit{cruentat}.
\end{quote}

The troop prove their joy with wild shouts of applause and seek to join the victor hand in hand. They stare marveling at the huge beast lying stretched over so much ground, and still figure it’s not safe to touch him. But each nevertheless bloodies a spear.

\textsuperscript{82} In a poem constructed around the often labyrinthine play on duality, duels, epitomized in the struggle between Polynices and Eteocles (see e.g. Korneeva [2011]), Tydeus stands out as a representative of earlier epic warriors who go it alone against whole armies. Tydeus is peerless and it takes an army to bring him down. Though in many ways he ‘doubles’ Polynices, it is not until he comes face to face with the severed head of Melanippus that he sees another ‘image of himself’ (8.752-3): \textit{ut singultantia uidit | ora trucesque oculos seseque agnuit in illo}.  

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Precisely the same scenario (with identical verbal cues) plays out in the Theban treatment of Tydeus’ corpse in book 9, after winning the *Leichenkampf* (*Theb. 9.177-8, 183-8*).\(^8\)

et Tyrii iam corpus habent, iam **gaudia** magnae testantur uoces…
...nusquam arma, manusque quiescunt;
nulla uiri **feritas**: iuuat ora rigientia leto
et formidatos impune lacessere uultus.
hic amor, hoc una timidi fortesque sequuntur
nobilitare manus, **infected** sanguine **tela**
coniugibus seruant paruisque ostendere natis.

And now Tyrians have the corpse, now their loud outcry proclaims their glee…
Now, no weapons, his hands idle,
heroic ferocity gone! Foes gloat as his face stiffens in death; unchecked, they hack at features they once had feared. This they desire, by this act timid and brave alike strive to make their handiwork noble. They’re keeping their blood-caked spears as souvenirs to show to their wives and children.

The savage boar-man is dead, and his victors (brave and timid alike) share in his killing. Both scenes derive ultimately from Homer’s depiction of the Achaeans’ abuse of Hector’s corpse at *Iliad 22.369-75*:\(^4\)

\begin{quote}
\textit{άλλοι δὲ περιδραμον ὕτε Ἀχαίων,}
oi καὶ θηρσαυτο φθαν καὶ εἰδος ἄγητον
"Εκτορος’ οὐδ’ ἄρα οἱ τις ἀνουητί γε παρέστη.
ὦ δὲ τίς εἴπεσκεν ὕδων ἐς πλησίον ἄλλον
‘ὡς πόποι, ἣ μᾶλα δὴ μαλακότερος ἀμφαφάσθαι
"Εκτωρ ἦ ὅτε νήσας ἐνέπρησεν πυρὶ κηλέω.
ὦς ἄρα τις εἴπεσκε καὶ οὐτήσασκε παραστάς.
\end{quote}

And the other sons of the Achaean came running about him, and gazed upon the stature and on the imposing beauty of Hector; and none stood beside him who did not stab him; and thus they would speak one to another, each looking at his neighbour: ‘See now, Hector is much softer to handle than he was

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\(^{83}\) Dewar (1991): *ad locc.* notes the verbal parallels but does not pursue a deeper association or analysis.

\(^{84}\) For Statius’ recollection of Hector’s corpse abuse, see Juhnke (1972): 136 and 358 (index 3 s.v. ‘Thebais’), and 131-7 on Homeric (and Virgilian) allusions in the death of Tydeus and the battle over his body.
when he set the ships ablaze with the burning firebrand'.
So as they stood beside him they would speak, and stab him.

Fear diminishes after the huge adversary is brought down, and the warriors ritually bloody their spear points. But while Hector’s body was protected and preserved by the gods for eventual burial at Troy, Tydeus’ divine protector Pallas flees and abandons her plan to provide Tydeus with immortality after witnessing his eating of Melanippus’ brains (8.758-66).

The scene also has some further epic resonances that similarly serve to heighten the horror of Tydeus’ death and corpse abuse. I highlight a few here, but I will ultimately focus on Tydeus’ similarities with Mezentius in the Aeneid, whose death and post mortem abuse open some important interpretative avenues that Statius exploits in his handling of Tydeus’ death and mutilation.

The most obvious epic antecedent is probably Turnus at the end of his aristeia at Aeneid 9.806-14, when, abandoned by Juno, he begins to feel his own strength slipping away. Lexical parallels link this scene with both of Tydeus’ aristeiai (2.668-81; 8.700-15).85 Turnus was ultimately saved by his close proximity to the Tiber, and he dives into the waters to escape the onslaught. Tydeus, in the first instance, survives the fight with the 50 ambushers despite his dwindling strength. In his final battle in book 8, the enemy keeps coming, and he is hemmed in by the mountain of corpses he’s accumulated, exposing himself to Melanippus’ spear-cast. Pallas’ absence opens the door for Tisiphone, who drives him to cannibalistic madness.

85 See Williams (1978): 203 for more details
The scene is also reminiscent of the death of Camilla in *Aeneid* 11.\(^{86}\) Like Tydeus, she is struck by a spear thrown by an enemy who fears to identify himself (his name is Arruns, *Aen.* 11.806). But the role of divinity separates the scenes: while Pallas abandons Tydeus at the moment of his death, Diana (Camilla’s protector) promises proper burial and a return to her homeland (*Aen.* 11.593-4) as well as death to her cowardly killer (11.845-9).

Scholars have further noted Statius’ debt to Lucan’s description of Scaeva,\(^{87}\) who is similarly pierced to the bone (cf. *BC* 6.195: *stantis in summis ossibus hastas*; *Theb.* 8.702: *summis haec ossibus haerent*), ‘forested’ with spears (*BC* 6.205: *densamque ferens in pectore siluam*; *Theb.* 8.704-05: *densis iam consitus hastis | ferratum quatit umbo nemus*), and singled out as the object of an all vs. one attack with the emphatic *illum...illum* (*BC* 6.189, with *Theb.* 8.694). The piercing of Scaeva’s eyeball by an anonymous flying arrow is marked by a deictic ‘*ecce*’ (*BC* 6.214), as Statius had similarly identified the anonymous spearcast that strikes and kills Tydeus (7.716: *ecce*). Scaeva offers an interesting comparative model since his *aristeia* ends with what mirrors death, as his fellow soldiers carry him on high honoring him as a deity (*BC* 6.250-4) and Lucan *faux*-eulogizes him for criminal *uirtus* (260-2; cf. 147-8: *pronus ad omne nefas et qui nesciret in armis | quam magnum uirtus crimen ciuilibus esset*, ‘eager for every wrong, he did not know | how great a crime is valour in civil war’). But this is not the final image of Scaeva’s corpse or his last appearance in the poem, as Lucan ‘resurrects’ him for the closing image in his epic (*BC* 10.542-6). Tydeus too is carried away from the field of battle by his troops at the point of death, but lives just long enough to also debase himself with criminal *uirtus* when he cannibalizes Melanippus’ head.

\(^{86}\) McNelis (2007): 132 and n.26 draws the connection but stops short of claiming a direct intertext.

He dies but also reappears at the end of the poem kissing with those ravenous lips his mourning wife Deipyle (12.802-03).

But it is Mezentius (from his aristeia and death at the end of Aeneid 10 and his unnarrated corpse abuse at the start of book 11) who is the model character I want to consider in a bit more detail. Michael Dewar rightly notes in his commentary on Thebaid 9 that ‘The last scenes of Aeneid 10 were very much in Statius’ mind when he composed this [the ninth] book...’; we could add the importance of the end of Thebaid 8 as well. Tydeus’ aristeia shares key resonances with that of Mezentius, particularly the opening simile comparing Mezentius to a boar surrounded by hunters (Aen. 10.707-18), and emphasis of the one vs. many motif (Aen. 10.689-701). There also exists a clear verbal parallel between Virgil’s concurrunt Tyrrhenae acies atque omnibus uni, | uni odisque uiro telisque frequentibus instant, ’Instantly, this one man is the target of every Etruscan | Blade, each volley of spears: the one focus for all their hatred’ (10.691-2), and the Statian lines noted above, 8.701-02: unum acies circum consumitur, unum | omnia tela uouent and 2.548-9: solus, | solus in arma uoco. In addition to direct word parallelism, note also the epanalepsis over the line break here of uni, | uni matched by solus, | solus at Theb. 2.548-9.

Mezentius, moreover, is the closest human in the poem to matching Tydeus’ bestial savagery (feritas): he is characterized by the ‘savage fierceness of his soul’ (10.898: effera

88 Lucan has borrowed much from Virgil’s Mezentius for his depiction of Scaeva (with D’Alessandro Behr [2007]: 47), so it seems Statius’ rendering of Tydeus here should be viewed through a Lucanian lens; certainly the elements of horror in the scene share a poetic synergy with Lucan.
uis animi) and by his ‘savage deeds’ (8.483-4: facta...effera: of his torture method of attaching dead bodies to the living); a stronger association than the ferocitas of Turnus or Aeneas, and elsewhere only applied to the monster Cacus in Virgil’s poem (8.205) and Dido, in the throes of her divinely induced madness (4.641). He also, in a simile likening him to a ravenous lion—bestial, and man-devouring, ‘face bloodied and streaming | Horror and gore’ (Aen. 10.728: lauit improba taeter | ora cruor)—recalls Tydeus’ recurring cruentus epithet. In this way, the simile likening him to a defensive boar shifts to that of an offensive lion (10.723-9), to accommodate Mezentius’ altered battle tactics. This mirrors Tydeus’ own movement—and corresponding similes—from defensive to offensive fighter. Tydeus essentially (with the added feature of cannibalism) completes Mezentius’ aim of decapitating his enemy Aeneas and carrying off his ‘bloody spoils’ (Aen. 10.862-3: aut hodie uictor spolia illa cruenta | et caput Aeneae referes), but both are themselves ‘bloodied’ in death (Aen. 10.908: cruore; Theb. 9.1: cruenti). Both heroes are removed from the front lines during their aristeiai to tend to battle wounds, surrounded by their comrades (Aen. 10.833-8; Theb. 8.728-33): Tydeus’ wounds are fatal, though he manages one last spear-cast; Mezentius will return to battle but is killed almost immediately by Aeneas. These allusions alone might not necessarily lead us to assume Statius was working directly around Virgil’s depiction of Mezentius’ swan-song—since they share commonalities with a variety of Homeric motifs—but for the aftermath of each scene.

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The transition from *Aeneid* book 10 to 11 is curious in that, unlike other book endings of the poem, the narrative structure spills over into the beginning of the next book, which deals further with the aftermath of Mezentius’ death and the quasi-narrative of his corpse abuse, juxtaposed with the proper burial of Pallas and the nameless dead on each side. Statius too follows a tightly structured pattern for book endings in all but the transition between books 8 and 9, which similarly track the narrative of Tydeus and his corpse. Both heroes die to close a book, and early in the next are abused by their captors. We might also stretch Pallas’ abandonment of Tydeus at the moment of his death to Mezentius’ overt godlessness (contemptor diuum): both men are ultimately left to the devices of their captors. Coupled with the boar imagery and linguistic ties of the one vs. many motif, it seems Statius is compounding imagery (perhaps already adopted by Ovid, in his own reading of Mezentius’ death and aftermath) of Ovid’s boar hunt and Mezentius’ aristeia and abuse. The difference is that Statius fills the narrative gap of the *Aeneid*’s depiction of Mezentius’ corpse abuse and anthropomorphizes (while retaining the bestial characteristics of) Ovid’s rampaging boar. Statius inserts the traditional Homeric feature of Leichenkampf (a motif Virgil does not adopt in his epic), and adds the grim description of enemy soldiers sharing in the mutilation of the captured corpse, whereas Virgil simply described Mezentius’ perforated breastplate as a poignant afterthought, leaving the space between books 10 and 11 for his audience to guess at the abuse his corpse received. As with Lucan’s exploration of Virgilian

96 While Capaneus most naturally shares the affinity for atheism with Mezentius (Eissfeldt [1904]: 414; Klinnert [1970]: 18, 43-5; Leigh [2006]: 226-8; Chaudhuri [2014]: 260-2, 271, 274-5), Ahl (1986): 2864 notes that other traditions focus more directly on Tydeus’ own hostility to the gods, which makes him ‘something of a double for Capaneus’, and naturally, for Mezentius as well.
silence concerning the treatment of Priam’s corpse, Statius actualizes implicit imagery in the
*Aeneid* and also actualizes attempted/unfulfilled abuse in the *Iliad*, to horrific effects, here
activated through the lens of Ovid’s depiction of the killing and ritual abuse of an animal.

If we consider the death and corpse abuse of Tydeus from an Iliadic perspective
alone, the hero seems to embody the most perverse aspects of both Achilles and Hector
during the climax of book 22. I have demonstrated how Tydeus’ cannibalism of Melanippus’
corpse represents the realization of Achilles’ threat to Hector (22.346-7), and that Tydeus’
own corpse mutilation is ultimately (via allusions to Mezentius and Ovid’s Calydonian boar)
derived from the Achaeans’ ritual stabbing of Hector (22.369-75). Tydeus is transformed
from a more savage Achilles to a more unfortunate Hector, from über-abuser to über-abused,
as the focus of mutilation shifts (between the end of book 8 and the beginning of 9) from
Melanippus’ mutilated and cannibalized body to that of Tydeus’ own mutilated corpse. This
double role is anticipated by the paralleling of animal allusions that cast Tydeus as offensive
and defensive beast, the captured boar and long-sought after lion.

Despite Eteocles’ (feigned) disgust at Tydeus’ behavior, the bestial savagery is not
simply contained in this one man or his coterie. Much as Hecuba’s defamation of Achilles’
‘savagery’ contaminates her own mind until she too claims to crave human flesh (*II*. 22.212),
the Thebans are swept up in the contagion of bestiality (9.25-31):

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furor omnibus idem
Tydeos inuisi spoliis raptoque potiri
corpore. non aliter subtexunt astra cateruae
incestarum auium, longe quibus aura nocentem
aera desertasque tulit sine funere mortes;
illo auiae cum uoce ruunt, sonat arduus aether
plausibus, et caelo uolucres cessere minores.
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all alike in their frenzy

120
to seize and lay claim to hated Tydeus’ spoils
and corpse—as hordes of carrion birds will weave darkness
beneath the stars when, from afar, a breeze has brought them
tainted air, the dead deserted and lying unburied.
Greedy, shrieking, down they swoop, high heaven resounds with
their wingbeats; lesser birds fly off, deserting the sky.

In a scene of similes come to life, the Thebans are greedy carrion birds, bane of epic corpses
(Achilles had promised Hector that dogs and birds would devour him completely, II. 22.354,
recapitulating Il. 1.4). What began as condemnation of Tydeus’ and the Argives’ unbounded
furor and feritas in Eteocles’ speech to inflame his troops, spreads to infect them, as they too
become prey to dehumanizing activity (9.184-5): iuuat ora rigentia leto | et formidatos
impune lacessere uultus, ‘Foes gloat as his face stiffens | in death; unchecked, they hack at
features they once had feared’. 97 Like Melanippus, Tydeus’ corpse too is mutilated and
implicitly cannibalized.

The transformation from man to beast is emblematic of the final third of Statius’
poem, following Dis’ injunction for monstrous crimes (esp. 8.66-74). The subhuman
behavior of Tydeus is a product of the building animal savagery Statius activates by invoking
a noua...Calliope (8.373-4) to assist in his Iliadic war-song. That humans will descend into
raging beasts is symbolized immediately after the re-invocation by imagery of horses and
their riders woven crudely into ire-filled centaurs (8.392-3): corpora ceu mixti dominis
irasque sedentum | induerint, ‘as if, attuned to the masters astride their backs, horses | put on
human rage’. The same image is evoked again when Tydeus slays Prothous with a spear that
pierces both rider and horse, pinning them in death as they roll down to the ground

Tydeus is the first in a series of warriors gripped by bestial furor that manifests most strikingly in the abuse and maltreatment of corpses, culminating in Creon’s inhuman refusal of burial to the dead Argives (11.661-4, 12.94-103: see chapter 5.1), and his own desire to lead beasts and birds to the corpses (12.97-8). The noxious air equating Tydeus’ corpse with the fodder of vultures (9.28-9) lingers as a prefiguring of Creon’s ban that leaves the fields strewn with foul decay (cf. 11.661-4, 754). He becomes so monstrous in his behavior that only war and arms can compel him to behave ‘like a human’ (12.165-6: bello cogendus et armis | in mores hominemque Creon, ‘By force of arms must Creon be driven to do | the right, the humane thing’). Tydeus’ beastly abuse of Melanippus’ corpse reverberates to infect the (vulture-)Thebans who abuse his own body, and the plague spreads to encompass the entire epic.

3.3. Future-Kill: Asbyte, Theron, and Hannibal in Silius’ Punica

Do people moulder equally...?
—Emily Dickinson

we got heads on sticks
you got ventriloquists
we got heads on sticks
you got ventriloquists
—Radiohead, ‘Kid A’

98 In fact, the first casualty of the war in book 7 is the Theban Pterelas who is killed by Tydeus. He is similarly transfixed by a spear to his horse and is compared, in death, to a centaur (7.636-40). Vessey (1973): 259 n.1 comments that this description signals ‘the beginning of the reign of bestiality at Thebes’. Tydeus is compared in simile to the centaur Pholus during the ambush at 2.559-64, an indication of his savagery and bestial nature. See Franchet d’Espèrey (1999): 193-7 on Statius’ similes comparing Hippomedon and Tydeus to centaurs as a dehumanizing indicator. See Taisne (1994): 88 on horses, their riders, and the ‘contagion du furor destructeur’.


Two of the most graphic scenes of corpse abuse in Silius’ *Punica* come in swift succession during the siege of Saguntum in book 2. In the first, Asbyte, an Amazonian virgin-warrior modeled on Penthesilea and Camilla, is killed and decapitated, and her head thrust onto a pike by Theron, the Herculean defender/priest of Saguntum (2.188-207). He in turn is killed by Hannibal, as recompense for the murder and abuse of Asbyte, and his body mutilated and left for the birds to devour (208-69). The two scenes are loaded with Homeric and Virgilian allusions but, as in the examples from Lucan and Statius, the implicit or silent staging of corpse maltreatment in the epic models is brought to its logical and gruesome ‘conclusion’ here.

The siege of Saguntum functions as a mini-epic that is at once tangential to the physical war between Rome and Carthage (i.e. Rome does not play a part in the siege), but crucial as the battle that ultimately brought Rome directly into conflict with Carthage. Silius is acutely aware of the historical accounts (e.g. Polyb. 3.6; Livy 21.5-6), 101 which offer him the opportunity to establish Hannibal’s ‘heroic’ epic credentials and his very real threat to Rome. The destruction of Saguntum thus serves a dual role of prefiguring the fates of both Rome (feared) and Carthage (actualized), while also repeatedly looking back to the fall of Troy, an event that ostensibly was the impetus for the foundation of Rome. This imagery of rising and falling is repeatedly evoked in the scenes of death and mutilation of Asbyte and Theron outside the walls of a crumbling every-city, as Silius casts his eyes backward and forward in mytho-historical time.

101 Briscoe (1990): 44-7 summarizes the historical events neatly.
Asbyte enters the battlefield and, following the role of Virgil’s Camilla, her most prominent literary antecedent, immediately begins her offensive onslaught (2.56-86). But, as for Camilla, her moment of glory is brief. She is hunted down by the aptly named Theron (the ‘hunter’), priest and double of Hercules, who upends her chariot by frightening the horses with the open jaws of his lion-skin cloak (192-6). Then follows a scene of escalating brutality (197-205):

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tum saltu Asbyten conantem linquere pugnas
occupat incussa gemina inter tempora claua
feruentesque rotas turbataque frena pauore
 disiecto spargit collisa per ossa cerebro
ac rapta properans caedem ostentare bipenni
amputat e curru reuolutae uirginis ora.
 necdum irae positae. celsa nam figitur hasta
spectandum caput; id gestent ante agmina Poenum
imperat et propere currus ad moenia uertant.  
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Then, as Asbyte tried to flee from the fight, he sprang to stop her, and smote her between the twin temples with his club; he spattered the glowing wheels and the reins, disordered by the terrified horses, with the brains that gushed from the broken skull. Then he seized her axe and, eager to display his slaughter of her, cut off the head of the maiden when she rolled out of her chariot. Not yet was his rage sated; for he fixed her head on a lofty pike, for all to see, and bade men bear it in front of the Punic army, and drive the chariot with speed to the town.

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Theron’s splattering of brains with a club suits Hercules, but subsequently to decapitate his victim and, his anger not yet sated (203), stick her head on a pike as a spectaculum for the Carthaginian army is pressing the limits of even Hercules’ own inclinations to ira.

This act spawns his abandonment by divine favor (206) and Hannibal’s own boundless anger (208-10: namque aderat toto ore ferens iramque minasque | Hannibal et caesam Asbyten fixique tropaeum | infandum capitis furiata mente dolebat, ‘For Hannibal came up, with wrath and menace expressed in every feature; with frenzied heart he raged at the slaughter of Asbyte, and at the horrid trophy of her head borne aloft’; cf. 239, 242). The Saguntines flee in terror at Hannibal’s approach, and barricade themselves inside the city walls, leaving Theron alone to defend the gates while his people watch in horror from the heights. Silius constructs the scene as a spectacle, as Theron himself yells to his comrades to play the role of spectacular audience (230-1: spectacula tantum | ferte, uiri) and so the action is evocative of the teichoskopia of Iliad 3.146-53, as Priam and his people prepare to watch from the walls the duel between Menelaus and Paris. But more relevant contextually are the

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105 Cf. e.g. [Sen.] HO 1449-51: utinam liceret stipite ingesto impiam | effringere animam quale Amazonium malum | circa niualis Caucasi domui latus, ‘If only I could smash out her wicked life with repeated club blows, like I tamed the unruly Amazons around the flanks of snowy Caucasus’; (and more disturbingly) Sen. HF 1024-6: in coniugem nunc clausa libratur grauis: | perfregit osa, corpori trunco caput | abest nec usquam est, ‘his heavy club is swung against his wife now; he crushed her bones, her head is gone from her trunk of a body, nothing’s left’, with the composite blood-splattering of 1006-07: ast illi caput | somuit, cerebro tecta disperso madent, ‘but his head explodes out and the walls drip with his splattered brain’. Also, Val. Fl. 3.165-7: sic dura sub ictu | ossa uirum malaque sonant sparsusque cerebro | albet ager, ‘even so beneath the blows sound the hard bones and jaws of warriors, while the ground is white with scattered brains’.

106 This form of brutal corpse abuse is a favorite of Silius: cf. 5.151, 7.704, 15.813, 17.308. Extra-poetically, all such scenes have the stain of Roman civil war abuses; of particular importance for Silius and a Flavian audience was the supposed severing, impaling, and parading of Galba’s head on a pike after his murder in the Forum: Suet. Galba 20.2: ingulatus est ad lacum Curti ac relictum ita uti erat, donec gregarius miles a frumentatione rediens abieicto onere caput ei amputauit; et quoniam capillo arripere non poterat, in gremium abdidit, mox inserto per os pollice ad Othonem detulit. ille lixis calonibusque donavit, qui hasta suffixum non sine ludibrio circum castra portarunt…. ‘he was killed near Lake Curtius, left there where he was, until a common soldier returning from grain distribution, put down his load and decapitated him. And since he couldn’t take him by the hair, he hid it in his robes. Eventually he brought it to Otho with his finger in its mouth. He gifted it to his attendants and staff-servants, who stuck it onto a pike and carried it around the camp like a toy’.

125
extended final duels that end the warring in both the *Iliad* (Achilles vs. Hector) and the *Aeneid* (Aeneas vs. Turnus), particularly as, like in the literary models, Theron flees from his more powerful attacker after ineffectually hurling his weapon at Hannibal (*Pun.* 2.248-50; cf. *Il.* 22.137-66, *Aen.* 12.742-65). The outcome is the same: Hannibal catches Theron and after framing the immolation as retributive and offering his death to the shade of Asbyte (2.258: *i, miseram Asbyten letō solare propinquō*, ‘Go!...and comfort hapless Asbyte by your speedy death!’), he buries (260: *condit*) his sword in Theron’s neck. Achilles had directly recalled Patroclus after stabbing Hector (*Il.* 22.331-5), and Aeneas evoked/channeled Pallas, whom he says will take retribution through Aeneas’ death-blow to Turnus (12.950: *condit*). Silius’ lone usage of *condere* in the Virgilian coinage of ‘bury a sword’ as a death-blow (*OLD* s.v. *condo* 7b) occurs here, echoing explicitly the close of the *Aeneid*.

The scene ends with the contrasting treatment of Asbyte’s and Theron’s corpses (2.264-9):

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107 Juhnke (1972): 191; Küppers (1986): 147-8; Spaltenstein (1986); *ad loc*; Vinchesi (2005); 122 n.100.
108 Juhnke (1972): 191, also references Achilles’ words at 22.271-2: *νῦν δ᾽ ἄθροά πάντ᾽ ἀπόχωσε| κηδε ἐμῶν ἐτάρων οὐς ἐκτάνες ἐγχεῖ θίνον*, ‘You will pay in a lump for all those | sorrows of my companions you killed in your spear’s fury’: death will be payback for the loss of all of Achilles’ comrades slain by Hector.
109 Hannibal’s slaying of Theron is anticipated by and mirrors his earlier slaying of Murrus from *Pun.* 1.456-517, who is a devoted worshiper of Hercules and even calls on the hero-god to come to his aid as he feels death approaching (505-07). Hannibal rebuffs the invocation and attempts to claim Hercules for himself (509-14). But by slaying two devotees of the god (one a mortal ‘double’) and by sacking a city built by Hercules, Hannibal destroys any bond he might have tried to establish with him and becomes more akin to an anti-Hercules (cf. *Stat. Silv.* 4.6.75-84 on Hercules’ hatred of Hannibal for his destruction of Italy, and Saguntum in particular). *Punica* 2 ends with the future image of Hannibal’s death (see below), in which he is described as *inuictus quondam* (‘previously invincible’, 2.706), which essentially erases him from association with Hercules’ Roman cult title, ‘Hercules Inuictus’. On Hannibal and Hercules in the *Pun.* see esp. Bassett (1966): 267-9; Vessey (1982); Marks (2005a): 88-9 with n.72; Asso (2010); Tipping (2010): 70-3, 78-80; Stocks (2014): 218-21. We know that Hannibal visited the temple to Hercules-Melkart in Gades (Liv. 21.21.9. Cf. *Pun.* 3.14-44) and that he began minting silver coinage containing his own and Hamilcar’s images in the likeness of the god, and a second series with Hannibal and Hercules’ club in the early 220s BCE: with Scullard (1989): 39-40; Stocks (2014): 220 n.4. Silius extrapolates the historical ties Hannibal tried to express into his own narrative, though he distorts the association by having Hannibal destroy Herculean ‘symbols’; Hannibal’s failure to appropriate Hercules (or his success in appropriating the *negative* associations with the god) is set in contrast with Scipio’s later association with Hercules’ more positive characteristics: Marks (2005a): 88-9 with n.72.
at Nomadum furibunda cohors miserabile humandi
deproperat munus tumulique adiungit honorem
et rapto cineres ter circum corpore lustrat.
hinc letale uiri robur tegimenque tremendum
in flammis iaciunt ambustoque ore genisque
deforme alitibus liquere cadauer Hiberis.

But the band of Numidians, frantic with grief, made haste with the sad office of burial, and
gave Asbyte the tribute of a pyre, and seized the dead man’s body and carried it thrice round
her ashes. Next they cast into the flames his murderous club and his dreadful head-dress; and,
when the face and beard were burnt, they left the unsightly corpse to the Spanish vultures.

Asbyte’s body is burned on the pyre, along with Theron’s club and lion-skin cape. But the
corpse (cadauer\textsuperscript{110}) of Theron is abused (266: rapto...: cf. II. 23.13, 24.16) and further
mutilated by having only his beard and face burned, matching symbolically the caput abuse
he dealt to Asbyte.\textsuperscript{111} His corpse is then left to the birds, accomplishing the most visceral
threats and fears of Homer’s and Virgil’s heroes. Theron had scolded his army for fleeing at
the sight of Hannibal for being ‘disgraceful’ or ‘unsightly’ (232: heu deforme!), a feature he
now shares with them, bodily (269: deforme...cadauer).

This summary of events has included a number of references to the ways Silius
engages with significant moments in the Iliad and Aeneid, and in what follows I will look

\textsuperscript{110} Silius’ use of cadauer is jarring, unpoetic, un-Virgilian (one appearance in the Aen. and three in Statius’
Theb.; 18 in the Pun.), and is a clear sign of the influence of Lucanian diction (36 appearances in BC: see
Bramble [1983]: 45; Mayer [1981]: 14 and ad 8.438 on Lucan’s affinity for unpoetic words like cadauer—as
his comm. is generally to Lucan, Mayer is unfairly hard on Silius here: ‘[Lucan] thus raised the word [cadauer]
to currency in epic—his ape, Silius, uses it often...’ See also Axelson [1945]: 49-50; Heuzé [1985]: 60; Chiesa
(2005): 24-9; Matthews [2008]: ad 5.669). It is a word of plague in Lucretius and Ovid’s Met. (e.g. Lucr.
6.1155, 1273-4; Ov. Met. 7.602). Virgil reserves it only for the corpse of the sub-human monster Cacus (Aen.
8.194: semihominis; 8.267: semiferi: see below) at Aen. 8.264, and at G. 3.556-7 of animals in a plague. In his
Ibis, Ovid uses cadauer three times (168, 338, 515) in the (perhaps relevant here) context of maledictions he
hopes to heap on the unnamed recipient of his curse. By way of comparison, Silius employs the more common
poetic usage ‘corpus’ for a dead (or presumed dead) body only 8 times of the 47 appearances of the word in the
Pun. as it applies to humans (39 instances), animals (7 instances), and the State anthropomorphized (1 instance).
Contrastingly, all 18 examples of cadauer in the Pun. refer to dead human bodies: this is, as for Lucan, by far
his preferred word for ‘corpse’.

\textsuperscript{111} Augoustakis (2010): 128.
more closely at these and other allusions in the scene, as well as the broader implications these associations have for the *Punica* as a whole.

Herbert Juhnke has laid out the scene’s appropriation of Iliadic material and character doubling:112 Hannibal’s revenge slaying of Theron mirrors Achilles’ slaying of Hector; and as the roles suggest ‘wie Hektor Patroklos erschlug, so Theron Asbyte’. Hannibal’s approach to Theron in bright glimmering armor, which causes fear and the flight of the Saguntine warriors into their city (2.211-14, 222) mirrors Achilles at the outset of his duel with Hector, whose flashing armor causes the latter to flee in terror (*Il*. 22.131-7). The Saguntine matrons’ fear that if they allow Theron entry into the city walls Hannibal might be granted entry as well, replays Priam’s fear that Achilles might gain access into Troy at *Iliad* 21.531-6.

Along with these narrative connections are more graphic allusions to threatened and attempted acts of corpse abuse in Homer, which Silius draws out in his recasting of the scene. Theron’s role as new-Hector in this mini-drama of larger Iliadic motifs finds a grisly complement in Hector’s threatened/attempted abuse of Patroclus in Homer’s poem. After slaying Patroclus, Homer tells us Hector was dragging away his corpse with the expressed intent of decapitating him and throwing his trunk to the dogs (*Il*. 17.126-7). Later, Iris relays to Achilles (in a dream) that Hector wants to decapitate Patroclus and fix his head on a stake, displaying it on the Trojan walls (18.175-7), and these words spur Achilles to action. Silius has Theron, in the role of a new-Hector, actually carry out these mutilations of Asbyte. Hannibal retaliates, focusing specifically on the abuse done to her head and corpse (*Pun*. 2.208-10). Theron’s corpse abuse mirrors Achilles’ attempted abuse of Hector: dragging the

112 Juhnke (1972): 189-91.
body in the dirt around the tomb of Asbyte-Patroclus (Pun. 2.266; cf. Il. 23.187, 24.16, 51-2, 416-17, 754-6); while the fate of his corpse as fodder for birds comparative to Asbyte’s proper burial represents Achilles’ boast to Hector that he will feed birds and dogs while Patroclus receives a customary funeral pyre (Pun. 2.264-9; Il. 22.335-6, cf. 22.354).

Though the abuse dealt to Hector’s corpse is brutal, he has the constant protection of the gods who ultimately preserve his body until Achilles hands him over to Priam for burial (Il. 23.184-7; 23.190-1, 24.20-1). Theron will have no such luck as the gods abandon him after his overt mutilation of Asbyte’s corpse (Pun. 2.206). The specific emphasis on the facial mutilation of Theron also recalls Achilles’ treatment of Hector, whom he drags face first in the dirt (Il. 22.397-8), marring the Trojan prince’s features (402-03). This act is symbolic of the threat of decapitation Achilles utters at 18.333-5, but which Homer does not allow to unfold in the poem. Like Achilles, Hannibal aims to dehumanize his victim by literally ‘effacing’ him, disfiguring him, by rendering him indistinguishable on the field of battle among the heaps of corpses. The Punica scene effectively stages in microcosm the action of Homer’s narrative combined with points of unfulfilled threats/boasts of corpse mutilation.

Iliadic intertextual cues are only part of the picture, of course. Silius interlaces the Homer models with scenes from the Aeneid that themselves have an integrated poetic engagement with the above Iliadic material, creating a complex web of intertextuality on the scale of ‘double imitation’ in classical poetics. Asbyte’s abuse by Theron, as noted, stages a gruesome recapitulation of Camilla’s death in Aeneid 11 that combines elements of abuse

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elsewhere in Virgil’s poem. But whereas Camilla dies rather peacefully, surrounded by her
coterie and avenged by Diana (via Opis: *Aen.* 11.818-67), Silius forgoes the *pathos* of the
model scene,\(^{114}\) and weaves imagery of Nisus’ and Euryalus’ (*Aen.* 9.465-72) and Amycus’
and Diores’ (12.509-12) corpse abuse into the narrative of Asbyte’s death.\(^ {115}\) As in the
Virgilian examples, Asbyte’s head is impaled and put on display (201: *properans caede
ostentare*, ‘eager to display his slaughter of her’; 203-04: *celsa nam figitur hasta |
spectandum caput*..., ‘he fixed her head on a lofty pike, for all to see’; cf. *Aen.* 9.465-6: *quin
ipsa arrectis…in hastis | praefigunt capita*, ‘they hoisted on spear-points | Heads they’s
impaled’); she is made a trophy (209: *tropaeum*) that incites the wrath of Hannibal.

Virgil’s silence in actually describing the physical corpse abuse is in Silius a point of
departure. The description of mutilation is not here expanded to the lengths of Lucan’s
description of Pompey’s decapitation and abuse—nothing in extant epic is—but it is no less
horrific an example of bestial savagery that defies the scale of appropriate human(e) behavior
in epic combat. The scene itself is surely evoking Lucan’s description of Pompey’s
decapitation and head-impaling in *BC* 8 (681-4: *Phario…ueruto | ...suffixum caput est*),\(^ {116}\)
coupled with the insights provided by Sextus Pompey of the parading of his father’s impaled
head as a spectacle in Egypt (9.136-9), both of which are already in dialogue with the scenes
of decapitation from the *Aeneid*. Lucan had set the stage to allow vivid description of this
form of corpse abuse into epic poetry, and Silius follows suit.

Nisus and Euryalus and Hopleus and Dymas from *Theb.* 10.
\(^{116}\) Silius exploits the scene of Pompey’s death and abuse elsewhere in the *Pun.*, see e.g. Bassett (1959): 14; Marpicati (1999).
Theron appropriately embodies the duality of man-beast typical of his double Hercules, and even morphs into the beast whose skin he wears when he brandishes the head of the lion to frighten Asbyte’s horses (192-4).117 His overstepping of the bounds of acceptable epic battlefield ira (by abusing an enemy corpse) result in his immediate abandonment by the gods (206), akin to the fate of Tydeus, whose animal savagery saw his granting of immortality slip away when Pallas fled at the sight of his brain-stained jaws (Theb. 8.760-6).118 Both heroes degenerate into a more monstrous Hercules character, and for their bestiality (both ‘transform’ into the animals whose skins they wear) they lose a chance at the divinely granted apotheosis Jupiter’s son enjoyed. This is perhaps best articulated by Silius’ description of Theron’s corpse as a deforme cadauer (Pun. 2.269) which recalls directly Virgil’s description of the monster Cacus’ corpse after he is slain by Hercules at Aeneid. 8.264: informe cadauer, Virgil’s only use of cadauer in the poem. Theron shares the fate of an earlier epic monster, the intertextual victim of the hero he crudely apes.

After Hannibal kills Theron, Asbyte’s Numidian band drag his corpse three times around her ashes (2.266: et rapto cineres ter circum corpore lustrat) mimicking the Aeneid’s description (on Dido’s temple at Carthage) of Achilles’ dragging of Hector’s corpse three times around the walls of Troy (Aen. 1.483-4: ter circum Iliacos raptauerat Hectora muros, | exanimumque auro corpus uendebat Achilles). The game of referential association with prior epic role-playing becomes muddled when we delve into the intertextual characterizations more closely. Hannibal’s swift response to Asbyte’s death casts him in the role of Virgil’s Turnus, who seeks vengeance for Camilla’s death, as does his association elsewhere more

118 Tipping (2010): 19 n.24, notes the comparison.
cosmically with Juno, both leaders’ divine protector. But the allusions to Nisus and Euryalus and Amycus and Diores, who suffer the same post mortem abuse as Asbyte, link Theron with Turnus (who oversaw the impaling of Nisus and Euryalus’ heads, and personally decapitated Amycus and Diores, displaying their heads on his chariot) and portray Hannibal as an avenging Aeneas, specifically as the focus on the abuse dealt to Asbyte’s corpse is highlighted as the impetus for Hannibal’s attack on Theron (209-10). The transition between Asbyte’s death and Theron’s own demise further demonstrates this parallelism of Virgilian role-jockeying, as Silius’ aside concerning Theron’s ignorance of his own impending doom demonstrates (Pun. 2.206-07): haec caecus fati diuumque abeunte fauore | uicino Theron edebat proelia leto, ‘Blind to his doom and deserted by divine favor, Theron fought on; but death was near him’. This echoes Virgil’s aside about Turnus’ fate after he has killed Pallas (Aen. 10.500-05):

quonunc Turnus ouat spolio gaudetque potitus. nescia mens hominum fati sortisque futurae et seruare modum rebus sublata secundis! Turno tempus erit magno cum optauerit emptum intactum Pallanta, et cum spolia ista diemque oderit

It’s now Turnus’ spoils. He’s happy to have it, triumphant. Witness the human mind, knowing nothing of fate or the future, Nothing about moderation when puffed with success and good fortune! Turnus will find there’s a time when he’ll wish he could purchase an unscathed Pallas, a time when he’ll hate these spoils and the day when he won them.

Theron’s obsession with winning Asbyte’s spolia (her glittering chariot and armor, 2.166-8) links him and his fate to that of Turnus, whose despoiling of Pallas’ baldric

ultimately robs him of any shot at _clementia_ Aeneas might have mustered. Hannibal, as an avenging Aeneas, hunts down the ‘fleeing-hunter’ (Pun. 2.247-50, with Aen. 12.742-65) and kills him, replaying, as we have seen, Aeneas’ words and death-blow in his killing of Turnus (Pun. 2.258-60, with Aen. 12.947-51). By condemning Theron’s corpse to be devoured by the birds (269), Hannibal again assumes the role of Aeneas, who, in the lone Iliadic style threat/boast of animal corpse consumption in the _Aeneid_, promised the same fate over the (decapitated, and so also ‘head-abused’ like Theron) corpse of Tarquitus (Aen. 10.557-60). By alluding to Aeneas’ boasting of corpse abuse along with imagery reflective of the end of the _Aeneid_, Silius here stages a ‘version’ of the end of Virgil’s poem—with further refracted cues from Virgil’s own model, Achilles’ slaying of Hector in the _Iliad_—which plays out the abuse of Turnus’ corpse that is left unsaid in the original.\textsuperscript{120}

The multiplicity of intertextual allusions pointedly and willfully complicates our reading of the text and the implications of the scene as a whole. By interlacing imagery from the main duels in the _Iliad_ and _Aeneid_ with allusions to corpse abuse elsewhere in these predecessor poems, Silius has created a composite of antagonistic models for Hannibal: he is at once an Achilles-Aeneas and a Hector-Turnus. This technique of imitation, whereby an author posits alternative contrasting models for specific characters is a device typical of Virgil’s own engagement with his Homeric (Iliadic) model, as Aeneas and Turnus take turns

\textsuperscript{120} Re-presentations and (per)versions of the end of the _Aeneid_ function as common and engaging early ‘readings’ of Virgil’s poem. Silius toys with ‘alternate endings’ throughout the _Punica_: cf. Hannibal’s slaying of Murrus at _Pun._ 1.456-517, Pedianus’ revenge killing of Cinyx who was gifted Paulus’ helmet by Hannibal (12.212-58), the two thwarted duels between Hannibal and Scipio at 9.434-85 at Cannae and later at Zama (17.385-405, 509-21, with the conflation of Juno’s _simulacrum_ of Scipio—17.522-57—mirroring the _simulacrum_ she created in _Aen._ 10), Nero’s slaying of Hasdrubal at Metaurus at 15.794-823, and Hasdrubal’s dying words granting Nero the power to ‘take what battle grants you’ (15.801: _utere Marte tuo_) echoing the dying Turnus’ words to Aeneas (Aen. 12.932: _utere sorte tua_), etc.
‘competing’ for the roles of Achilles and Hector. Silius continues the poetic game, but with the added element of weaving Virgil’s own epic heroes into his text, adding another layer of association. This is not simply Silius’ attempt at stockpiling allusions to Homer and Virgil. There is a deeper narratological significance to the references during this Asbyte-Theron scene.

Crucial to our understanding of Silius’ intertextual gymnastics is the role of Saguntum as a city under siege. As the initial victim of Hannibal’s wrath in the poem, the city functions as a prefiguring of what (potentially) Hannibal will do to Rome. But the siege and eventual sack also function as a recapitulation of Troy’s fall, and so look forward ultimately to the fall of Carthage. All of these allusions to fallen and threatened cities, past and future, are poignantly reflected in the literary models Silius uses to help frame his scene.

Theron’s role as the lone defender of his city (2.228-32), whose death will throw open the Saguntine walls to destruction (240-1) casts him as the embodiment of his city’s fortunes.

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121 Anderson (1990, repr. from 1957) is the classic study. See also, e.g. Van Nortwick (1980); King (1982); Barchiesi (1984): esp. chap 4; Gransden (1984); Traina (1990): 328.


125 Hardie (1993): 81-2 summarizes neatly: ‘Saguntum is another Troy, and just as the sack of Virgil’s Troy is a model for the sacks of Carthage and Alba Longa, and, by inversion, for the founding of Rome, so the sack of Saguntum is an image of what Hannibal desires, ultimately in vain, to do to Rome, and of what will eventually happen to Carthage’. Cf. Livy 21.10.10 (Hanno’s speech), positing a correlation between the fall of Saguntum and the fall of Carthage: Carthaginis nunc Hannibal uineas turresque admouet: Carthaginis moenia quatt arist e. Sagunti ruinae—falsus utinam uates sim—nostris capitibus incident, ‘Hannibal is now bringing up his penthouses and towers against Carthage. He rattles the walls of Carthage with a battering ram. Saguntum’s ruins—may I prove a false prophet—will fall upon our heads’. Silius follows Livy closely here in his own construction of Hanno’s speech (2.279-326).
This symbolism is strengthened by his role as a human equivalent of the city’s mythical founder and builder of her walls, Hercules. By his death, Saguntum will fall, and his burnt beard and face (268-9) stand as synecdoche for the mass conflagration that brings Saguntum to her knees.\textsuperscript{126} This association of the death of a leader with the fall of his city (see esp. my 2.2, 3.1, \textit{et passim}) has an epic parallel with the death of Hector in the \textit{Iliad}, whose death is seen as symbolic and proleptic of the burning of Troy itself, projected outside of the scope of Homer’s poem (esp. \textit{Il.} 22.410-11). The idea is picked up by Virgil, who equates Priam’s death with the fall of Troy in \textit{Aeneid} 2, and by Lucan who stages the fall of the Republic through Pompey’s murder off the shore of Egypt in \textit{BC} 8.\textsuperscript{127} By framing his scene around Achilles’ slaying of Hector, Silius equates the fall of Saguntum with that of Troy, prefigured and symbolized by the death of each city’s heroic ‘gate-keeper’. Hannibal here is the Achillean sacker of cities (\textit{ptoliporthos}), and Theron the ill-starred would-be savior of his homeland, a Hector analogue. Theron’s death and/as the city’s destruction is echoed in the divine realm, as Juno (through her minion Tisiphone) defeats Hercules’ attempt (through the personified Fides) to encourage the suffering Saguntines to bravely resist the Carthaginian assault (2.475-649),\textsuperscript{128} a rekindling of their age-old animosity. Both godly and human figures of Hercules fail and their city crumbles as a result.

\textsuperscript{126} Noted by Augoustakis (2010): 128.
\textsuperscript{127} Theron’s corpse abuse mirrors interestingly Pompey’s abuse in \textit{BC} 8, as both have their heads mutilated, and are only half-burnt by flames; Theron’s fall is equated with the fall of Saguntum, as Pompey’s is for the Roman Republic. In this way, Silius has split the corpse abuse of Pompey in half between Asbyte and Theron, creating a further epic role-doubling to go along with the role-doubling allusions from the \textit{Iliad} and the \textit{Aeneid}.
\textsuperscript{128} Augoustakis (2010): 114.
Even in victory however is a reminder/premonition of Hannibal’s ultimate defeat. The lasting image of the sack of Saguntum—the final lines of book 2 in fact—is not one of promise and joy for the Carthaginian leader, but an epilogue of defeat and death (2.699-707):

cui uero non aequa dedit victoria nomen (audite, o gentes, neu rumpite foedera pacis nec regnis postferte fidem!), uagus exul in orbe errabit toto patriis proiectus ab oris, tergaque uertentem trepidans Carthago uidebit. saepe Saguntinis somnos exterritus umbris optabit cecidisse manu, ferroque negato inuictus quondam Stygias bellator ad undas deformatā feret liuenti membra ueneno.

Whereas he, who gained glory by an unjust victory—hear it, ye nations, and break not treaties of peace nor set power above loyalty!—banished from his native land he shall wander, an exile, over the whole earth; and terrified Carthage shall see him in full retreat. Often, startled in his sleep by the ghosts of Saguntum, he shall wish that he had fallen by his own hand; but the steel will be denied him, and the warrior once invincible in earlier years shall carry down to the waters of Styx a body disfigured and blackened by poison.

It is an image of Hannibal’s deformed corpse, not Theron’s or the other Saguntines’ that ends the narrative of the siege. Yet Hannibal’s deformatā membra do directly recall Theron’s deforme cadauer129 (2.269) in the same word sequence/position, as well as the hideous sight of the emaciated Saguntines (467-8): iam lurida sola | tecta cute et uenis male iuncta trementibus ossa | extant consumptis uisu deformia membris, ‘the bones, a hideous sight when the flesh was gone, stuck out, covered only by the yellow skin and ill-joined by the shaking arteries’, just before they commit mass societal suicide. At the end of the episode, Silius presents us with his own poetic prefigured disfiguring of Hannibal’s corpse (by

129 The word membra is standard poetic synecdoche for corpus (OLD s.v. membrum 2) and, by extension, cadauer, Silius’ preferred term for a dead human (see note above).
poison), evoking the fates of both Theron and the suicidal Saguntines, whose demise stands for the destruction of their city.

Although his death is outside the framework of Silius’ poem, we come back to this scene at the end of the *Punica*, as Hannibal sees the finish line and defeat and contemplates the suicide we are told will not at this time be granted to him. Scipio has gained the upperhand in the war, the Carthaginians have lost a string of battles, and Hannibal is forced back to Carthage to try to contain Scipio and the invading Roman army from obliterating Carthage. Hannibal has been forced away from the field of battle (Zama) by a ruse orchestrated by Juno, and as he watches his army fall from a short distance away, he looks at his sword for a sweet release (17.561-6):

‘...mea signa secuti,
quis pugnae auspicium dedimus, caeduntur, et absens
accipio gemitus vocesque ac uerba uocantum
Hannibalem. quis nostra satis delicta piabit
Tartareus torrens?’ simul haec fundebat et una
spectabat dextram ac leti feruebat amore.

‘The men who followed my standard and whom I led on to war are being slaughtered, and I am not with them; I hear their groans and their cries to Hannibal to help them. What river of Tartarus will ever purge away my guilt?’ Even as he poured forth this complaint, he looked to the sword in his right hand in his passionate desire for death.

Hannibal’s attempted suicide mentioned at 2.705 looks ahead to his actual suicide outside of the confines of the poem, and is the closest Silius can come to illustrating his demise without

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130 Hannibal’s death is also anticipated by the Sibyl at *Pun.* 13.892-3, the last lines of her prophecy to Scipio: *...pocula furtivai rapiet properata veneno | ac tandem terras longa formidine soluet,* ‘in hasty stealth he will swallow a draught of poison, and free the world at last from a long-enduring dread’.

131 Note the parallel with Turnus’ contemplation of suicide at *Aen.* 10.680-86: see Marks (2005a): 196 n.85 for scholarship on the larger correspondence between the scenes in each epic, where Juno creates *simulacra* of Aeneas and Scipio to lure her favorites (Turnus and Hannibal, respectively) away from imminent danger. Also Stocks (2014): 64-7. Cf. *Pun.* 4.457-9 of Scipio’s attempted suicide: *bis conatus erat praecurrere fata parentis | conuersa in semet dextra, bis transtulit iras | in Poenos Mauors,* ‘Twice he sought to lay violent hands on himself and die before his father; but twice Mars turned his fury against the Carthaginians instead’ (and note below).
breaking historical strictures. Concomitant with Hannibal’s fall climaxing in book 17 is the
dismemberment of Carthage itself, that is described as being held together by the one man
alone, one name alone, even (17.149-51): *stabat Carthago truncatis undique membris | uni
innixa uiro, tantoque fragore ruentem | Hannibal absenti retinebat nomine molem*, ‘Now that
all her limbs were severed, Carthage depended entirely upon one man for support; and the
great name of Hannibal, even in his absence, kept the edifice of her greatness from falling in
utter ruin’. Carthage’s utter reliance on the one man posits a synecdochic relationship
between the city and its leader,132 in the same way we have seen with Hector (in the *Iliad*)
and Priam (in the *Aeneid*) for Troy, Pompey for the Roman Republic (in Lucan), and Theron
for Saguntum. Carthage’s security depends entirely on that of its leader, as Scipio
understands, prompting his challenge of Hannibal at Zama (17.512-18):

   Hannibal unus
dum restet, non, si muris Carthaginis ignis
subdatu caesisque cadant exercitus omnis,
profectum Latio. contra, si concidat unus,
nequiquam fore Ageno reis cuncta arma uirosque.
illum igitur lustrans circumfert lumina campo
rimaturque ducem.

While Hannibal alone survived, Rome had gained nothing, even if the walls of Carthage were
set on fire and all her soldiers slain; on the other hand, if Hannibal alone fell, all her weapons

\[132\] Cf. Flaminius’ comment to his troops before Trasimene that Hannibal’s death alone will make up for all the
dead Romans who have died thus far (5.153): *unum hoc pro cunctis sat erit caput*, ‘That one head will make
amends for all our slain’ (see further below). Note the reworking here of *Aen.* 5.814-15 of the sacrifice of (one)
Palinurus for (the whole of) what amounts to future Roman history (Neptune’s prophecy): *unus erit tantum
amissum quem gurgite quaeres; | num pro multis dabitur caput*, ‘One only shall there be whom, lost in the
flood, you will seek in vain; one life shall be given for many’ (see below). Cf. also, of Hannibal’s singular
importance to Carthage, 16.17-19: *proque omnibus armis | et castrorum opibus dextrisque recentibus unum |
Hannibalis sat nomen erat*, ‘The name of Hannibal was enough: it took the place of all weapons and camp-
equipment and fresh recruits’; and further, 17.399-405 (with the added importance of Scipio to Rome). On the
and all her men would profit the people of Carthage not at all. Therefore he turned his gaze all over the field, seeking and searching for Hannibal.

Carthage’s ‘arms and men’ (516: *arma uirosque*) are nothing when weighed against Hannibal’s singular importance. Hannibal subsumes his own nation, he outbids Virgil’s/Aeneas’ arms and the man, and the credo of his epic predecessor. The contrast between one and many is hammered home. Without its leader, Carthage will fall to pieces, and we see this at the close of the epic (17.616-24): as Hannibal flees, Carthage opens her gates to Scipio, surrenders her war elephants, money, and has her fleet burned. This is tantamount to utter destruction.

Raymond Marks fruitfully compares Hannibal’s demise in the final books of the *Punica* and his forfeiture of military prowess for a ‘shadow of a great name’ with Pompey’s demise in Lucan’s *BC*, with further allusions to the long sought after ‘head’ (*caput*) of each leader. Just like the dismemberment of Carthage, Hannibal’s demise is implicitly articulated as the severing of a head from its body. Hannibal’s *caput* is directly sought out as an object of desire by Romans (1.483-4, 2.26-7, 5.151-3, 11.318-20).

Particularly poignant (and gruesome) is the decapitation of Hannibal’s brother and ‘double’ Hasdrubal (15.805-08), whose murder and corpse abuse functions as a surrogate slaying of Hannibal himself, as Antony Augoustakis has shown. Like Asbyte, Hasdrubal’s head is thrust onto a pike and paraded before the Carthaginian leader (15.813-23). The

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133 On the metapoetic play here, see Tipping (2010): 181-2. Silius has a particularly interest in repurposing the *incipit* of Virgil’s *Aeneid*, as Cowan (2007b): 26 n.91 has documented, with further bibliography on *arma uirosque* as a heroic leitmotif.
134 Marks (2008).
135 Cf. Livy’s description (from the mouth of Fabius) of Hannibal as the ‘head’ (*caput*) and ‘citadel’ (*arx*) of not just Carthage, but the whole of the Second Punic War (28.46.16).
orchestrator of this act, the (hyper-historical?) consul Gaius Claudius Nero, defines the
decapitation of Hasdrubal as full retribution for Hannibal’s victories earlier in the war (814-
16), reworking Flaminius’ earlier claim that Hannibal’s head alone, severed and paraded on a
pike, could make amends for Rome’s mass slain (5.151-3: uestrum opus est uestrumque
decus suffixa per urbem | Poeni ferre ducis spectanda parentibus ora. | unum hoc pro cunctis
sat erit caput). Livy’s Hannibal saw his and Carthage’s future defeat in the death and
decapitation of Hasdrubal (27.51.11-12: Hannibal, tanto simul publico familiarique ictus
luctu, agnosce re fortunam Carthaginis furtur dixisse, ‘struck by such a blow both private
and public, it is said that Hannibal stated he recognized the fate of Carthage’), and Silius
prepares us for the symbolic dismemberment of Carthage and Hannibal through the surrogate
mutilation of Hannibal’s brother. Hannibal acted immediately and ragefully at the parading
of Asbyte’s head at Saguntum, but here enfeebled he resigns himself to defeat and removes
his camp to avoid the dangers of battle.

The anticipatory image of Hannibal’s death at the end of book 2 also contains
imagery linking Hannibal’s wandering after Zama and Carthage’s subjugation (2.701-02:
ugus exul in orbe | errabit toto, ‘he shall wander, an exile, over the whole earth’) to Aeneas’
(and Odysseus’) wandering after the fall of Troy. This is echoed again at 17.211-17, when
Hannibal looks back in tears at Italy, as Silius compares him to an exile driven to distant

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137 Interest in the scene has typically focused on the possible allusions Silius is making between the ruthlessness of the emperor Nero and his historical namesake: Marks (2005): 264-5 with notes for further bibliography; Tipping (2010): 43-4. As Tipping notes, the intertext with Virgil’s scene of the parading of Nisus and Euryalus’ heads in Aen. 9 and Virgil’s interjected disgust (9.465: uius miserabile) should probably be read into Silius’ scene, despite Silius’ silence concerning the overt brutality of Nero’s act. Whether this reflects back on the emperor Nero is unclear, but probably not unlikely. Livy (27.51.11) says that Nero ordered Hasdrubal’s head to be cast into Hannibal’s camp, and Frontinus (Str. 2.9.2) tells us that Nero did this himself. As Ahl, Davis, and Pomeroy (1986): 2541 note, it is hard not to see in this scene of corpse abuse the brutality of Rome’s civil wars, in particular the abuse the emperor Galba received.

shores leaving his homeland behind. Hannibal has spent so much of his adult life in Italy that it has become his home. Virgil exploits this in a simile that recalls directly Aeneas’ abandoning of Troy at Aen. 3.10-12, but where Aeneas looks back at his own devastated city, Hannibal looks back at the city he had hoped to destroy, the city that Aeneas’ wanderings would eventually produce. He is, in this sense, a malfunctioning Aeneas, trying to destroy the world Aeneas created. But by losing, he will essentially accomplish the same goal as Aeneas of forming and strengthening Roman identity. He thus also accomplishes Jupiter’s aim of testing the sluggish Romans with character-building warfare (3.573-83).

Lucan had repurposed these lines of Aeneas’ flight from Troy for his own depiction of Pompey’s flight from Rome at BC 3.3-7, as he looks back (like Aeneas) at the home he will never see again. Silius has neatly blended both passages for his description of Hannibal’s flight from Italy, both of which play on his associative, competing roles of epic victor and

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139 The image follows Livy’s Hannibal (cf. 30.20.1-9) as much as it does Virgil’s Aeneas: see Marks (2005a): 59 n.115, with further bibliography. Add to this: Tipping (2010): 87; Stocks (2013): 61.
140 Cf. 17.158-69 of Hannibal’s tender, almost loving relationship with Roma. Virgil had distorted the tradition Odyssean nostos by tracing the journey of Aeneas not from a foreign land to his home, but from home to a foreign land—Trojan associations with an Italic Dardanus, aside (see e.g. Barchiesi [1984]: 94-5); here, Silius further confuse things by blending the misery of Aeneas leaving Troy, his home, with the joy of Odysseus leaving Troy (foreign land just sacked) for home. Hannibal, of course, will never have a homecoming.
142 Silius is well aware of the theme of Rome’s birth out of Troy’s death/destruction that is key to the framework of the Aeneid, e.g. Pun. 7.474-5: tum pius Aeneas terris et undis | Dardanos Italia posuit tellure penates, ‘Then good Aeneas, after much suffering on land and sea, established the gods of Troy on the soil of Italy’. Unlike Aeneas, Hannibal’s wanderings will lead only to death.
144 Ahl, Davis, and Pomeroy (1986): 2516: Hannibal is the ‘unconscious builder of Roman greatness’; Klaassen (2009): 105: ‘Rome’s greatest enemy is cast as its founder, and contrary to Hannibal’s wishes, he does turn out to be like Aeneas in establishing Rome’s supremacy’.
victim. Hannibal aims at victory out of defeat like an Aeneas, but like Pompey his flight from Rome will only guarantee his ultimate failure and death, Carthage crumbling along with him like the Republic falls with Pompey. Both will leave deformed corpses lying far from the field of battle and far from home.

By presenting this anticipatory imagery of defeat and destruction at the end of Hannibal’s successful conquest of Saguntum in _Punica_ 2, Silius cleverly blends Saguntum’s collapse with Troy’s as the impetus for the rising of Roman power. Just as Troy’s fall in the _Aeneid_ was necessary for providing the momentum which brought about the founding of Rome, so Saguntum’s sacking facilitates (and functions as surrogate for) Rome’s transition from city to imperial world power. Rome’s pre-ordained rise comes at the expense of Hannibal and Carthage, whose loss is essentially collateral damage to Rome’s continued ascent.

Thus at the outset of the war, following a siege that is supposed to prefigure the fall of Rome, Silius presents us with the image of Hannibal’s deformed corpse (_Pun._ 2.707), symbolic of his failure and the destruction of his city. Saguntum in fact represents the only successful siege in the poem, setting a standard that will not be matched for the rest of the war: the poem effectively follows Hannibal from victory to defeat. In his first major

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victory is an immediate anticipation of his ultimate failure, and this tension between his role as victor and vanquished is captured in the splitting of his character’s intertextual models between epic winners and losers. His deformata membra (2.707) recall Theron’s deforme cadauer (2.269) moments after the latter has accomplished his greatest victory in slaying Asbyte, as well the bodies of the suicidal Saguntines (468: …deformia membris), blending images of his own eventual defeat and suicide. As Hannibal will learn, in the Punica victory is never far from defeat.

3.4. Some Conclusions

Gen. Kirby: Leave anything for us?
Matrix: Just bodies.
—Commando

I have illustrated in this chapter Lucan’s, Statius’, and Silius’ engagement with the normative features of corpse treatment represented by the most extreme example of abuse (the mutilation of an enemy head) in Homer’s Iliad and Virgil’s Aeneid. In every way, these Latin authors pervert their poetic models through a similar sort of engaged and disruptive imitatio, wrenching cracks in the earlier epicists’ narrative frameworks. What is clear from the above examples is the driving interplay and intertextuality between these authors who compete to be different both from their epic predecessors and from each other.
My focus on corpse maltreatment as a way of approaching this poetic engagement is strategic, since it represents for the previous epic tradition a largely taboo subject. Homer, as we have seen, presents corpse mutilation as something imagined in the heat of wrathful or vindictive fury, but the threats are rarely allowed to manifest themselves, as this would carry his heroes beyond the limits of proper human/heroic conduct. In Virgil, we have more evidence of this sort of abuse taking place, but at the final moment the poet shifts focus away from the act, and leaves the audience to imagine a scene of horror that he pointedly does not narrate for us. What the post-Augustan epicists have done is place the focus directly on these scenes of horror, opening up and exploring the imagined or attempted threats and narrative silences, filling these gaps in a reactionary narrative engagement; there is an attempt in these imperial epics to make explicit tensions and silences that aim at implicit suggestion. By referring allusively to the material of prior epic and transforming it, they implode the moral (and structural) compass that guides those poems through their inclusion of gruesome versions of threatened or implied scenes of corpse abuse. The scenes I have outlined in this chapter ‘attack’ the earlier model scenes in Homer and Virgil, and explode the limits those poets imposed on expressions of violence and anger.

I have argued that by depicting scenes of decapitation and further abuse inflicted upon severed heads in vivid detail in their epics, the post-Augustan epicists all in a sense ‘re-stage’ scenes from the earlier poems that touch elusively on this sort of abuse, but this comment requires a bit of unpacking. There is much cultural-historical context at play in this intertextual dialogue as well, as we shall see, but for now it will be useful to lay out some general observations about poetics that I think are crucial for our understanding (and my reading) of intertextual engagement in these poems.
As an audience, we experience this poetic re-staging through a variety of referential effects that take us to a prior moment in epic poetic ‘history’. This occurs most broadly through generic and figurative models or ‘type-scenes’ that invite us to read back to an earlier scene in an earlier epic poem as a narrative guide, which will then be inflected and transformed. When the foreign invader Hannibal meets Theron alone on the battlefield in a duel beneath the walls of Theron’s home city with his countrymen looking on in horror, and slays him and abuses his corpse, we can be expected to read this as formulaically recasting the duel between Achilles and Hector in *Iliad* 22, but with a new ‘conclusion’ in which the victor successfully mutilates his victim’s corpse without the gods’ intervention. Along with type-scenes are more precise lexical cues that point to an earlier model, as when Hannibal ‘buries’ his sword in Theron’s neck (*Pun.* 2.260: *condit*) to close the duel, repurposing unmistakably Virgil’s coinage of *condere* in this sense for Aeneas’ death-blow to Turnus which famously closes their own duel and Virgil’s poem (*Aen.* 12.951: *condit*). Silius contrastingly fills the narrative silence concerning the issue of Turnus’ corpse treatment left unresolved in Virgil’s poem by showing us what happens to the corpse of the defeated enemy, almost as a coda to his reading of the end of the *Aeneid*. These re-stagings work multidirectionally: the newer text re-reads and re-interprets the earlier text, and simultaneously the earlier text affects the reading of the newer text.

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150 What follows in many ways combines the intertextual model of Barchiesi (1984), on Virgil’s appropriation of Iliadic material (see also Barchiesi [2001]: 141-54, more generally), with the practice of what has been called ‘double allusion/imitation’ or ‘window reference’, where one author imitates and repurposes two models, ‘one of which is at the same time the model for the other’: Hardie (1989): 4; building from Thomas (1986): 188-9 and McKeown (1987): 37-45. Some similar ground covered (and importantly ‘destabilized’) in Hinds (1998): 25-47.

151 See James (1995) for Virgil’s development of *condere* in the *Aeneid*. 
As the example here illustrates, these types of allusive cues point the reader to a model which itself has very often been given extra interpretive weight through an intermediary re-interpretation. In the above case, Virgil’s duel between Aeneas and Turnus is already generated (and skillfully/uniquely transformed) from the duel between Achilles and Hector in Homer. Silius uses both models, but repurposes them into a new whole. To take another particularly complex example I examined in this chapter, Statius’ elaboration of the abuse dealt to Mezentius’ corpse in the silence between Aeneid 10 and 11 for his scene of Tydeus’ abuse by the Thebans in Thebaid 9, has already been modelled by Virgil on the Achaean’s ritual stabbing of Hector’s corpse in Iliad 22. This is mediated again, I argue, through Ovid’s staging of the Calydonian boar hunt and the ritual stabbing of the beast by the famous band of hunters in Metamorphoses 8, which itself looks back to the earlier scenes in the Aeneid and the Iliad (among others).

This form of complex imitation is not simply poetic window-dressing since all of these reference points help in our analysis of Statius’ scene, his characterization of Tydeus and the Theban warriors who mutilate him, and provide some sense of the poet’s own interest in and interpretation of his models, each of which we can identify in isolation but which Statius has intricately woven together into a seamless coexistent whole. I do not mean to suggest that this sort of intertextual reading is the only way readers can gain understanding from these texts (far from it); rather, and simply, the hyper-sensitivity to earlier scenes and motifs forms a basic poetics of epic engagement that these poets take as a baseline for generic and generative composition. By tracing the literary cues we are able to follow the development of a particular motif stretched through multiple connected redefinitions of the epic landscape.
CHAPTER 4

TALES FROM THE CRYPT: NON-BURIAL AND BURIAL
DISTORTION IN LUCAN’S BELLUM CIVILE

I am myself
am one massive, soundless scream
above the thousand thousand buried here.

In the previous chapter, I analyzed a scene from each of the post-Augustan epics that most
directly embodies the theme of corpse abuse, with a view to larger motifs in each poem.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 will focus on the related interest these epicists have with distorted burial
practice and the withholding of funeral rites. My lens here will be wider, as I consider a
series of scenes across the poems as vignettes illustrating the variety and breadth of each
poet’s obsession with undermining the traditional features of epic burial. Just as the earlier
discussion of corpse maltreatment invariably involved issues of burial rites, so too scenes tied
to non-burial and burial distortion have an intimate interest in the physical abuse of corpses,
and this will be reflected in what follows. My focus again will be on the manipulation of
imagery from the genre’s major martial epic predecessors (the Iliad and Aeneid), but as a
consequence of the hyper-intertextuality of these poems (particularly the Flavian epics\(^1\)),
much supplementary insight can be gleaned from more diffuse textual engagements, as I will
demonstrate.

Chapter 4 is dedicated entirely to Lucan. The size of the chapter is a testament to
Lucan’s obsession with issues of burial rites. I have broken the chapter into four main
sections that address issues of burial perversion, abnegation, and distortion. A fifth section

\(^{1}\) Wilson’s (2004): 248 claim that the Punica is ‘the most intertextual of poems’ has probably only the Thebaid
as competition among Latin epics for this prize.
closes the discussion with a brief consideration of how Lucan politicizes some of the recurrent themes related to burial rites, linking the earlier Republican events in his poetry with Neronian Rome. I look first (3.1) at the horrors described by the elderly survivor of the civil wars during the time of Marius and Sulla recounted in book 2. Next (3.2) I examine the extended fragmentary burial rites for Pompey that Lucan has stretched over the length of the poem. Section 3.3 focuses on Caesar and his lack of interest in the rites of burial. I examine a variety of scenes featuring Caesar, including his braving the sea-storm in a tiny boat in book 5, his denial of burial for the fallen Pompeian soldiers at Pharsalus in book 7, his sightseeing tour of the ruins of Troy in book 9, and his visit to Alexander the Great’s tomb in Alexandria in book 10. Section 3.4 treats the witch Erichtho’s ‘zombification’ of a dead soldier in book 6 and the corpse’s bizarre prophecy of the future evils awaiting the Pompeians and Rome.

4.1. Twice-Told Tales

_I remember_
_the first time I dismembered_
_a family member,_
_December I think it was..._
―Eminem, ‘3 A.M.’

The first extended scene in Lucan’s _Bellum Civile_ that engages issues of burial forms the bulk of the anonymous old man’s elaborate spoken narrative from 2.67-233. With the civil war between Pompey and Caesar rounding into form, Lucan looks back on the earlier Roman civil war through the voice of an elderly survivor who takes over the role of narrator and recounts the violence Marius and Sulla visited upon Rome from 88-81 BCE. His tale is a

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2 On these lines see esp. Conte (1968); Schrijvers (1988); Fantham (1992a): 90-121; Ambühl (2010); Thorne (2011); Fratantuono (2012): 59-66.
horror show of atrocities. He describes cases of slaughter, mutilation, decapitation, suicides, piles of corpses decaying, and bodies blocking the flow of the Tiber. The scene functions as a prelude—historically and narratively—to the atrocities of the ‘current’ civil war between Caesar and Pompey, and as a baseline of brutality and cruelty that Lucan’s narrator and his characters will aim to eclipse. In other words, this earlier civil war narrative (the survivor’s ‘poem’) is terrible, but Lucan’s will be much worse *(BC 1.1: bella...plus quam ciuilia; these are ‘wars worse than civil’)*.

The survivor’s story is punctuated by descriptions of burial perversions. In this narrative, the living were mingled with the dead, as fugitives concealed themselves in tombs *(2.152-3: busta repleta fuga, permixtaque uiua sepultis | corpora, ‘Tombs were full of fugitives and living bodies mingled | with the buried’)*. The lines between the living and the dead are blurred. The imagery is evocative of Virgil’s description of Mezentius’ method of torture in the *Aeneid*, whereby he would fasten rotting corpses to living bodies and wait for them to die *(Aen. 8.485-8)*. But now, the living seek out the dead voluntarily, and breach their tombs to do so. There is here a hint of Erichtho’s tomb-raiding and living among the dead from book 6 (e.g. 6.511-12: *desertaque busta | incolit tumulos expulsis obtinet umbris*, ‘so in abandoned tombs she lives | and, driving out the ghosts, is mistress of the...

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3 The scene ends with Lucan’s description of the elders almost prophetically looking ahead to what they know will be a war worse than the civil war they remember *(2.231-3): “[Neither Pompey nor Caesar] ciuilia bella moueret, | contentus quo Sulla fuit. sic maesta senectus | praeteritique memor flebat metuensque futuri, “‘Neither would rouse civil war, | if content with what contented Sulla”. Like this, melancholy elders | lamented, remembering the past and fearful of the future’. See Gowing (2005): 85-6 on the failure here of memory to inspire aversion to a renewal of civil wars.

4 Similar scenes appear at *BC* 6.100-02, where plague couples unburied corpses with the living: *turbaque cadentum | aucta lues, dum mixta iacent incondita uiuis | corpora, ‘the plague is worsened | by the crowd of dying people, while bodies lie unburied, mingled | with the living’.*

graves’). The witch’s presence stains the epic, particularly in scenes related to burial rites.⁶

As often, Lucan aims to paint civil wars (past, present, future) as boundary-breaching or dissolving, and this includes the boundaries separating life and death: civil war is like a waking/walking death.

A series of suicides climaxes with a man constructing his own pyre and leaping onto the flames while cremation is still an option (2.159: desilit in flammas et, dum licet, occupat ignes, ‘[he] leaps into the flames | ...and takes the fires while he can’). With death already assured, this is the only way to ensure your corpse will be ‘properly’ handled. Subsequently, to drive the point home, we see just how difficult it is for the survivors to cremate the dead.⁷

The piles of corpses lie rotting, the decay blurring their features so family members cannot distinguish one from another (166-8). The speaker recalls his own personal experience trying to provide burial rites for his brother (169-73):

meque ipsum memini, caesi deformia fratris
ora rogo cupidum uetitisque inponere flammis,
onnia Sullanae lustrasse cadauera pacis
perque omnis truncos, cum qua ceruice recisum conueniat, quaesisse, caput.

I recall how I myself, keen to place my slain brother’s disfigured face on the pyre’s forbidden flames, examined all the corpses of Sulla’s peace and searched through all the headless bodies for a neck to match the severed head.

The syntax of the final clause is chopped up to recall his brother’s body’s own mutilation, and the confusion mirrors the speaker’s inability to locate the separated pieces of the body—we are looking for the caput (delayed until verse 173), he is looking for the truncus. He does

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⁷ Fantham (1992a): ad 2.157-9 notes this point of transition.
not tell us whether he was in the end able to attach the disfigured head to its body and burn
the entire corpse of his brother,\(^8\) and this all logically looks forward to Pompey’s own end in
book 8. Much of the imagery in the speaker’s story, and particularly this scene, anticipates
Pompey’s death.\(^9\) Pompey’s son, without direct knowledge of the location of his father’s
\textit{truncus}, which was burned separately on the Egyptian shore, will declare his intention to
provide flames for his father’s severed head (9.158-60), but this wish goes unfulfilled.
Ultimately the task falls to Caesar to provide burial for Pompey’s head in Egypt (9.1089-93: see chapters 4.2, 4.3).

Elsewhere, the tomb of Catulus is propitiated with blood offerings, but it is human
blood, of Marius Gratidianus, and the shade rejects the offering (174-6): \textit{cum uictima tristes | inferias Marius forsan nolentibus umbris | pendit inexpleto non fanda piacula busto}, ‘when
as victim Marius, | with the shades perhaps not liking the bitter offerings, | made a sacrifice
unspeakable to a tomb never satisfied’. Elaine Fantham notes the confusion here of \textit{inexpleto busto}: ‘Either L[ucan] contrasts the insatiable thirst of the burial ground with the
undemanding shade, or \textit{inexpletus}…means rather “unsatisfied by this wrong kind of
atonement”’.\(^{10}\) In any case, the funereal context is distorted, as are the implicit links to epic
predecessor scenes like Achilles’ offering of prisoners to Patroclus’ shade (\textit{Il.} 21.26-32, 23.175-6), Achilles’ (shade’s) own demand for the sacrifice of Polyxena at his tomb (Ovid \textit{Met.} 13.439-82\(^{11}\)), and Aeneas’ sacrifice of prisoners to Pallas’ shade (10.517-20, 11.81-2).

\(^{8}\) See Thorne (2011): 372-4 on the ‘crisis of memory’ in this account of prior civil war, specifically relative to
proper funeral rites: ‘The basic memorial functions of the Roman \textit{funus} simply cannot operate in this world of
civil war, for effective memory has become impossible’ (373).
\(^{9}\) See e.g. Fantham (1992a): \textit{ad} 2.172.
\(^{10}\) Fantham (1992a): \textit{ad} 174-5.
\(^{11}\) The sacrifice of Polyxena at the demand of Achilles’ shade is the plot of Sophocles’ \textit{Polyxena} and Euripides’
In the previous epics, the brutality of this sort of offering is clear, but each poet excises any specific detail about the sacrifice of the living victims. Lucan has made a point of focusing directly on the description of the sacrifice in grisly detail (177-93). The poet lays out the torture of Marius Gratidianus, who is slaughtered to the point of death but not beyond it, and as he hovers somewhere between living and dying, his body feeds an ‘unsatisfied tomb’ while he lacks the honor of one.

The elderly survivor closes with the only real burial in this story: Sulla’s own (221-2):

> hisne salus rerum, felix his Sulla uocari, | his meruit tumulum medio sibi tollere Campo?,

‘For this did Sulla earn the name of “Saviour of the State”, | of “Fortunate”, the right to raise his tomb in the middle of the Campus?’ Sulla is given a public funeral and buried on the Campus Martius, the site of his executions of the Samnites captured after the battle of Colline Gate. Lucan lumps this together with the massacre of the Marian soldiers after

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*Hecuba*, the influence of both is present here too (outside of an epic context).

12 Ovid’s narrative is the most explicit, but emphasis is on Polyxena’s courage and poise in facing death; the crowd weeps as does her executioner and pathos emerges most definitively. More frightening is Catullus’ depiction of Polyxena’s death scene in his (*epyllion*) 64.368-70: *alta Polyxenia madefient caede sepulcra; | quae, uelut ancipiti succumbens uictima ferro, | proiciet truncum summisso poplite corpus*, ‘the high tomb will drip with Polyxena’s slaughter, who, like a victim falling beneath the double-edged sword, kneeling, will toss down her body, her trunk’. The allusion to the propitiating of Achilles’ shade is clear (*denique testis erit morti quoque reddita praeda*, ‘finally also witness will be the reward given to [Achilles] in death’, 362). Catullus handles the scene with brutal realism, but this is still miles from Lucan’s torture scene. Ambühl (2010): 25-6 notes also borrowings from Eur. *Hec.* and Sen. *Troades* in the sacrifice of Polyxena.

13 See Ambühl (2010): 26-7. She goes on to add that the physical description of Marius is an expansion of the mutilation Deiphobus suffers at *Aen.* 6.494-501.


15 Hinard (1984): 303-07 and (1985): 377-80 argues that the stylistic (historical) mutilation of Marius Gratidianus functioned as a perverse reversal of an aristocratic funeral. This whole passage in book 2 has the whiff of earlier plague narratives esp. as far as haphazard burial efforts and the accumulation of corpses: e.g. Thuc. 2.52.4; Lucr. 6.1282-6, 1247-8; *Ov. Met.* 7.609-13; Manilius 1.888-91. Lucan himself mentions plague as an equivalent accumulator of mass death (2.200); Sulla’s influence is ‘medical’ to the point of mad-scientist excess (2.140-3).

16 *Cic. Leg.* 2.57; *App. B Civ.* 1.104-05; *De vir ill.* 75; Plat. *Sull.* 38
Praeneste to heighten the effects of civil war horror, in defiance of historical accuracy. Following a lengthy description of the unburied bodies piled high on the Campus (196-220), the description of Sulla’s *tumulus* at the same location is a gruesome juxtaposition. Sulla’s tomb is presented in the poem in contrast to and at the (literally, public) expense of the burial perversions and unburials of his civil war. His one burial comes with the denial of proper burial for the countless multitude of his civil war victims.

The specific focus on Sulla’s burial and on the abuse and burial denial of a ‘Marius’ might allow us to infer a deeper subtext here. Earlier, Lucan had alluded elliptically to the *post mortem* fate of Gaius Marius, the uncle of Marius Gratidianus, with a further mention of the unburied ghosts of Sulla’s slaughter on the Campus (1.580-3):

```latex
\text{e medio uisi consurgere Campo} \\
\text{tristia Sullani ceckere oracula manes,} \\
\text{tollentemque caput gelidas Anienis ad undas} \\
\text{agricolae fracto Marium fugere sepulchro.}
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From the Campus the shade[s] of Sulla [are] seen to rise and uttered dreadful oracles, and the farmers fled as Marius burst his tomb and raised his head by Anio’s chill waters.

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18 Noted by Henderson (1998): 179: ‘The “mound” he raised re-presented “all the heap…of Sullan bodies” whose memory the poem has just waded through.’
19 Sulla’s funeral (to add insult to injury) was paid for at public expense, a day of holiday was declared, and the rites constituted one of the most elaborate funeral celebrations Rome had ever seen: see Wesch-Klein (1993): 11, 92; Flower (1996): 123-4.
20 That Lucan has meant to highlight this discrepancy/contrast is clear if we consider that all of his descriptions of burial perversion contained within the survivor’s story come in the section treating Sulla’s actions (2.139-224), none in his account of Marius’. On Lucan’s exploitation of the theme of ‘one for the many’ of Virgil (posing rather a situation of the sacrifice of ‘many for the benefit of one’), see Hardie (1993): 7-8, 10-11, 30-2, 53-6.
The shades of the victims he consigned to death without burial, whom he watched die
without disturbance or care (2.207-09),\(^{21}\) rise from the Campus here\(^{22}\) as a foreshadowing of
the lavish details Lucan will invest in their corporeal dissolving into the field in book 2. The
‘shattered tomb’ and waters of the Anio are a clear reference to Sulla’s ‘Erichthonian’ raiding
of Marius’ tomb and the scattering of his decaying remains in that river.\(^{23}\) Pliny notes that
Sulla, recognizing that his maltreatment of Marius’ interred corpse might come back to haunt
him, made arrangements to have his own corpse cremated.\(^{24}\) By alluding back narratively and
forward chronologically to the description of Sulla the tomb-raider and the ghosts of his
victims still unpacified, the inclusion of Sulla’s own tomb at the end of the survivor’s tale is
all the more unsettling: the most bloodthirsty character\(^{25}\) in this earlier civil war is the only
one to emerge physically unscathed, gifted with a place in Elysium (6.787).

4.2. Rest in Pieces

McBain: You’re going to be going to a lot of funerals, including your own
—McBain

Bad Alien: I come in peace!
Jack Caine: And you go in pieces, asshole
—Dark Angel (aka, I come in Peace)

I have devoted some space to Pompey’s death in BC 8 (chapter 3.1) and now I want to look
more closely at his burial and the extended rites that accompany it. The description of the

\(^{21}\) Sulla’s voyeuristic madness and rejection of burial for the dead here anticipates Caesar’s viewing of the
corpse of those slain at Pharsalia the morning after the major battle, also deprived of burial rites (7.786-99: see

\(^{22}\) See Bagnani (1955) for *Sullani manes* as the ghosts of those killed by Sulla as opposed to Sulla’s own ghost. My slight adjustments to Braund’s (1992) translation above reflect my agreement with Bagnani’s position.


\(^{25}\) Ahl (1976): 139 with n.19 notes that throughout the poem, the adjective *Sullanus* evokes bloodthirstiness and ferocity.
physical funeral for Pompey occupies very little narrative space in the poem, but the scene is a striking perversion of a traditional Roman funeral which follows naturally from Pompey’s perverse murder and mutilation. Lucan wastes no time parroting epic conventions to heighten the shock and outrage at the miserable end to his hero of the Republican cause. I begin with the physical rites Pompey’s corpse receives on the Egyptian shore in book 8, before moving on to the elaborate imagined, substitute, and unfulfilled rites the poet and other characters envision or attempt to provide for Pompey.

From the outset, Pompey’s burial is something of a farce, as Lucan describes Fortuna rushing to throw together a grave for Pompey out of pity or, perhaps more sinisterly, so as to deny him the chance of a better one (8.713-14). In death Pompey mirrored Priam from *Aeneid* 2 (550-8), and it takes the efforts of a devotee to fashion something resembling a funeral Priam seems to have lacked.26 A follower of Pompey called Cordus emerges from the woods to retrieve the body and engages the sea in something of a warped *Leichenkampf* (723-4, 753-4), like those over the dead Patroclus and Sarpedon in the *Iliad*.27 In the end however the sea relents and even aids Cordus in heaving Pompey’s body to the shore. Cordus then steals half-baked embers from a neighboring pyre and constructs a tiny cremation pit in the sand (756: *exigua...scrobe*), the size of which is set in sharp contrast to the ‘Mr. Big’ it is meant to contain.28 It seems Lucan has in mind here the story of Eteocles and Polynices

26 For the unburied Priam, see Sen. *Tro.* 55-6: *caret sepulcro Priamus et flamma indiget | ardente Troia*, ‘Priam lacks a tomb, and he requires funeral fires while Troy burns’, and 140-41: *magn...Ioui victima caesus | Sigea premis litora truncus*, ‘slaughtered as a victim to great Jove, you press on the Sigean shore, a trunk’. For Pompey, see Vell. (following Pollio) 2.53.3: *in tantum in illo uiro a se discordante fortuna ut, cui modo ad uictoriam terra defuerat, deesset ad sepulturam*, ‘for this man, there was such a discrepancy of fortune that, only recently land had been lacking for him to conquer, now it’s lacking for his burial’; App. *B Civ.* 2.86.


whose mingled remains on a pyre on the battlefield outside of Thebes brought a *post mortem* ‘reigniting’ of their own personal civil war. The Theban myth and its Greek tragedies were certainly not foreign to Lucan’s conception of the horrors of civil war, as he mentions explicitly the duel between Polynices and Eteocles at BC 1.550-2 as mythic context for the civil war he is beginning to narrate.29 Whether Lucan is reactivating this image here or not, the fact that it requires stolen fire and embers contaminated with another corpse’s cremation to kindle Pompey’s own pyre is pathetical and grotesque at the least.

There is further play on epic tropes as Cordus uses broken fragments of a small boat (755: *lacerae fragmenta carinae*) to place in the pit. The contrast here between the major tree-felling scenes in Homer, Ennius, and Virgil for the construction of a funeral pyre is typically shocking and underscores the pathetic nature of Pompey’s funeral.30 There is not even enough room for the embers to be placed beneath the corpse, so Pompey is kindled with flames at his side (756-8): *nobile corpus | robora nulla premunt, nulla strue membra recumbunt*: | *admotus Magnus, non subditus, accipit ignis*, ‘No timber rests upon | the noble corpse, the limbs lie on no pile: Magnus is received by fire laid beside, not underneath, him’.

The emphasis here is on negation (*nulla, nulla, non*),31 and, as we will see, this forms the basis of Lucan’s extended narrative of Pompey’s funeral.

29 See Ambühl (2005): 289. Her paper looks broadly at the importance of the Theban myth (and the associative tragedies: Euripides’ *Phoen.* and *Supp.*; Sophocles’ *Ant.*; and Seneca’s *Phoen.*) for Lucan’s poem, particularly in terms of themes of burial/funeral denial. Burck (1981): 481-2 and Lovatt (1999): 143-4 have shown convincingly that Statius borrowed considerably from Lucan’s depiction of Pompey’s death for his own description of the burial of Polynices in *Theb.* 12. Perhaps he was reaffirming Lucan’s own allusion to the Greek myth (?)


Cordus then provides a lament over Pompey’s corpse which again highlights absence

(759-75):

ille sedens iuxta flammamas ‘o maxime’ dixit
‘ductor et Hesperii maiestas nominis una, 760
si tibi iactatu pelagi, si funere nullo
tristior iste rogus, manes animamque potentem
officiis auerte meis: iniuria fati
hoc fas esse iubet; ne ponti belua quicquam,
ne fera, ne uolucres, ne saeui Caesaris ira
audeat, exiguam, quantum potes, accipe flammam
Romana succense manu. fortuna recursus
si det in Hesperiam, non hac in sede quiescent
tam sacri cineres, sed te Cornelia, Magne,
accipiet nostraque manu transfundet in urnam. 770
interea paruo signemus litora saxo,
ut nota sit busti; siquis placare peremptum
forte uolent plenos et reddere mortis honores,
inueniat trunci cineres et norit harenas
ad quas, Magne, tuum referat caput’.

Sitting near the flames, he said: ‘O mightiest
commander, crowning majesty of the Hesperian name, 760
if this pyre is more repulsive to you than tossing on the sea
or than unburied body, then turn aside your shade
and mighty spirit from my ceremonials; Fate’s injustice
directs that this be right; to prevent any outrage
by monster of the sea, by beast, by birds, by savage Caesar’s
rage, accept all that you can, a tiny flame,
kindled by a Roman hand. If Fortune grant return
to Hesperia, ashes so sacred will not rest
in this spot, but Cornelia will receive you,
Magnus, and pour you from my hand into the urn. 770
Meanwhile let me mark the shore with a little rock,
to be a signal of your grave; if anyone by chance should want
to placate you slain and give in full the honours of death,
let him find the ashes of your torso and let him recognize the sands
to which he must restore your head, Magnus’.

Most apparent is the absence of Pompey’s wife Cornelia, who is imagined as receiving the
ashes in Italy and not at the site of the cremation in Egypt. Cordus had earlier expressed
reserved joy that at least Cornelia was not present at this funeral to provide the torch for the
pyre and the traditional lament (738-41). This will instead be his task, as he assumes the role typically reserved for the widow or eldest son, as well as acting as an ‘ill-equipped corpse-burner’ (738: *sordidus ustor*). The funeral is lowly and on foreign soil (hence the focus on the ashes’ hopeful return to Italy at 767-70), in sharp contrast to the funeral Pompey should have received. Cordus ends his lament, the last word, in fact, with a chilling reminder of the most obvious absence in the scene: Pompey’s severed head (774-5). The focus of Pompey’s murder had been squarely his head: its severing, continued functioning, impaling, and mummification. But with the head en route to Ptolemy, and ultimately Caesar, Lucan has shifted focus to the headless corpse. For the first time in seventy lines we are reminded that this funeral is being conducted over a *truncus*. Cordus hopes someone will be able to reunite the head with its torso, but the prayer for reunion only serves to recall to the audience the scene of dismemberment, and so the lament ends on a gruesome note.

Cordus is compelled by duty to perform this rite over Pompey’s corpse (763: *officiis…meis*), but the more practical reason is to prevent the corpse being outraged by beasts (764-6): *ne ponti belua quicquam, | ne fera, ne uolucres, ne saeui Caesaris ira | audeat, exiguam, quantum potes, accipe flammam…*, ‘to prevent any outrage | by monster of the sea, by beast, by birds, by savage Caesar’s | rage, accept all that you can, a tiny flame…’ I have commented earlier (chapter 2.1) on the standard epic fear of corpse mutilation by animals, instigated by the proem of the *Iliad* at 1.4-5, and Cordus here is attempting to spare Pompey that fate, and the fate of his own soldiers at Pharsalus, whose corpses glut all forms of Thessalian beast (cf. 7.825-46). Yet it is Caesar’s presence capping this list of scavengers

33 Coffee (2009): 154 and (2011): 422 notes that this is the only act in the poem described as an *officium*.  

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that is most shocking and provocative, and might be a more pointed comment on Lucan’s
description of Caesar after the battle of Pharsalus ‘breakfasting’ atop the dead Pompeian
soldiers who were denied burial by him.\textsuperscript{34} As was the case at Pharsalus there is the
suggestion of cannibalism in these lines as Caesar’s savagery straddles uncomfortably the
line between man and beast.\textsuperscript{35} There are traces of Erichtho’s battlefield grazing here (cf.
6.543-53, 577-88; see my 4.4), and her work in concert with beasts, tearing human flesh,
seems to be echoed in this description of Caesar as an animal scavenger.

The small funeral flame is at least hot enough to provide Lucan space to indulge his
taste for gore (777-8): \textit{carpitur et lentum Magnus destillat in ignem} | \textit{tabe fouens bustum},
‘Magnus is consumed and into the slow fire he drips, | feeding pyre with melting flesh’. The
detail is ‘realistic ifmacabre’,\textsuperscript{36} and the image of Pompey distilling into the fire creates a
gruesome paralleling of the more somber description of Pompey’s ashes being poured from
Cordus’ hand to Cornelia’s funerary urn in the lines just above (770: \textit{transfundet in urnam}).\textsuperscript{37}

Cordus breaks off the ceremony and he hides, but devotion and Lucan’s apostrophic
reproaches compel him to complete the funeral (785-6). He removes the half-burnt bones

\textsuperscript{34} 7.792-4: \textit{epulisque patur} | \textit{ille locus, uoltus ex quo faciesque iacentum} | \textit{agnoscat}, ‘a place for feasting | is
prepared from where he can discern the faces and the features | of the dead’.
\textsuperscript{35} Cf. also 7.838-40, where birds drop (propitiatory?) blood and human limbs from the sky onto Caesar’s face
(we can imagine ‘into his mouth’ very easily); and later Caesar is described as \textit{Emathia satiatus clade}, ‘satiated
with the slaughter of Emathia’ (9.950; cf. 10.74: \textit{sanguine Thessalicae cladis perfusus}, ‘[Caesar] drenched with
Caesar’s dining on the battlefield in \textit{BC} 7. For Mayer (1981): \textit{ad} 8.764-5 he is ‘inhuman Caesar’. Lucan might
also be distorting the tradition of the \textit{silicernium}, the funerary feast eaten at the grave of the dead after burial:
see Toynbee (1971): 50-1, Lindsay (2000): 166-7, for the rite. See Dunbabin (2003) for graveside feasts,
generally. Note also Sen. \textit{Clem}. 1.25.1 on Alexander the Great as the model of the bestial ‘cannibal-king’;
Lucan will map Caesar(s)—Nero is his ‘audience’—onto Alexander, esp. at the end of book 9 and the
beginning of 10 (see 4.3 below).
\textsuperscript{36} Noy (2000): 190. The word \textit{destillat} is jarring here, and highlights the ‘scientific’ feel of this description of
bodily decomposition.
\textsuperscript{37} The earlier funeral prayer is for Johnson (1987): 82: a ‘moving understatement’. The subsequent description
corrupts any earlier attempt at \textit{pathos}. 

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from the pyre, not yet separated from their muscles, and quenches them in the sea. The remains are heaped up and sprinkled with a bit of dirt, covered with a rock which is inscribed with an epitaph (793): *hic situs est Magnus*, ‘Here lies Magnus’.38

The contrast here between the burial rites of Patroclus in the *Iliad* (II. 23.236-57) and Pallas in the *Aeneid* (esp. *Aen*. 9.59-99) is pointedly jarring. In particular, the special care given to Patroclus’ bones and the enormity of the burial mound he is provided with stand in dramatic opposition to Magnus’ half-burnt bones and speck of dirt.39

Alison Keith has argued that Cordus’ disposal of Pompey’s corpse is ‘ritually correct’, considering he burns the corpse on a pyre, quenches the remains in liquid, and collects the ashes.40 While technically true, all of these actions are distorted in ways that highlight rather ritual corruption:41 traditional liquids like fresh water or wine are replaced by sea water, the ashes are covered with a rock to prevent even a light breeze from carrying them away. Most striking, the remains themselves are half-burnt, with muscles and bone marrow still largely intact. David Noy has demonstrated just how horrifying the idea of a half-burnt body was to Romans obsessed with burial rites, as an offense to the living and an insult to the dead.42 Lucan’s description of Pompey’s half-burial and abuse has some

38 On the complexity of this *sententia* and the various possible meanings of *situs* Lucan is teasing, see Malamud (1995): 178; Spencer (2005): 61-2; Day (2013): 224-5.


41 Galtier (2010): 196 argues that Cordus cannot compensate for Cornelia’s presence not only because he is ill-equipped to play the part of a mourning widow, but also because of his lower social rank. See also Loupiac (1998): 169. Keith (2008): 251 notes that Cordus carries out the obligation owed to the *patronus* by his social inferiors.

42 See Noy (2000), with useful discussion of literary examples, including the scene of Pompey’s half-finished burial in *BC* (p.190). He has conflated somewhat the accounts of Lucan and Plutarch by placing Plutarch’s Philippus in Lucan’s account with Cordus. See further Kyle (1998): 222 on the half-burnt corpse causing an incomplete releasing of the soul from the body, dooming it to torment.
disturbing resonances with the evidence of Pompey’s father’s (Pompeius Strabo) corpse maltreatment after his death in 87 BCE. The elder Pompey was ripped from his pyre, half-cremated, and his corpse was abused and dragged through the streets (e.g. Vell. Pat. 2.21.4; Plut Pomp. 1.2). While Pompeius Magnus’ own death and abuse provided sufficient material for elaboration, perhaps Lucan also had in mind the cremation disruption of his father here. In any case, Lucan’s scene of Pompey’s half-completed cremation was meant to shock and appall the audience, and the fact that Cordus attempts to adhere to the traditional framework of funerary rites but fails so spectacularly makes the scene all the more disturbing.

The focus on ritual corruption has everywhere the stain of the ritually corrupt Erichtho, whom Lucan fashions raiding funerals and snatching half-burnt corpses from funeral pyres in the service of her dark arts. Consider her manner of thievery (6.533-7):

fumantis iuuenum cineres ardentiaque ossa
e mediis rapit illa rogis ipsamque parentes
quam tenuere facem, nigroque uolantia fumo
feralis fragmenta tori uestesque fluentis
colliget in cineres et olentis membra fauillas.

Smoking ashes of the young and blazing bones
she grabs from the middle of the pyre and even the torch held by the parents; she gathers fragments of the funeral bier which fly about in black smoke, and clothes crumbling into cinders, and ashes with the smell of limbs.

I have noted (chapter 3.1) how the embalming of Pompey’s head resembles Erichtho’s mutilation of a head during Lucan’s description of the witch’s list of atrocities (6.565-9). Just as she was present symbolically in this earlier scene, so too she is recalled as Pompey’s limbs are hastily removed half-burnt from the pyre by Cordus.

Erichtho casts spells in the hope that the war will remain in Thessaly so she will have fodder—in the form of fields of corpses—for more witchcraft. She had expressed the hope to
‘mangle the corpses of slain kings’ (6.584: caesorum truncare cadauera regum | sperat) and steal Hesperian ashes and the bones of noblemen (6.585-6). The image of ‘truncated’, and ‘chopped up kings’ and noblemen bones looks ahead to Pompey’s death and mutilation and the events of book 8 that leave him literally ‘truncated’. We may even be tempted to read ‘Caesar(s)’ into caesorum...regum,\(^{43}\) in which case, Erichtho has a telescopic future-view toward the Ides and Caesar’s own shredded corpse (not unlikely, given her ability to toy with time and space: see 3.4). Her main concern however eschews all implicit allusion: she wants to see what she can steal from the bodies of Pompey and Caesar at Pharsalus (587-8). While this desire is not directly granted to her, Pompey’s stolen embalmed head and half-burnt torso actualize the sort of demonic witchcraft Erichtho champions. She is outwardly the embodiment of the anti-funeral, and the epic—and its climax of Pompey’s death and funeral—is saturated with her spells and allegorical presence (though, as we will see the situation is a bit more complicated than this, as ultimately Erichtho provides the only ‘successful’ burial in BC, in a typical Lucanian paradox [4.4]; outwardly, her many atrocities include abuses of the dead and buried).

These then are the physical funeral rites Lucan ascribes to Pompey as carried out by Cordus. They are hurried, half complete, distorted, and ritually corrupt. But these rites represent only a small part of a larger picture of Lucan’s extended requiem for Pompey. Just as Lucan refashions Pompey’s death scene and mutilation in a variety of forms before and after the actual scene of the crime (chapter 3.1), he also scatters elements of funereal rites for Pompey throughout the epic as bizarre supplements to the funeral Cordus provides on the

\(^{43}\) For Lucan’s play on Caesar and ‘slaughter/sever’ (caedo) generally, see Henderson (1998): 204 with n.136; also Korenjak (1996): ad 6.584.
Egyptian shore.\textsuperscript{44} Many of these are in the form of ‘negative enumeration’,\textsuperscript{45} in which Lucan as narrator or other characters imagine a better set of circumstances for Pompey’s end. Coupled with these are scenes of mock or substitute funerals, a eulogy \textit{in absentia}, imagined parades, and other funereal features which, taken together, create a full picture of the sort of grand spectacle Lucan imagines Pompey would have received at Rome.

The disparate funeral elements Lucan presents here square with what we know of Roman aristocratic funeral procedure, laid out by Polybius (6.53-4; cf. Dion. Hal. \textit{Ant. Rom.} 7.72). This included a procession of the corpse accompanied by family and friends, actors wearing masks (\textit{imagines}) of deceased relatives, professional mourners, and musicians. The corpse was brought to the forum, whereupon the eldest son (or another family member) delivered a funeral oration praising his father and recalling his exploits (\textit{laudatio funebris}). The corpse was buried/cremated, and a death-mask (\textit{imago}) was made to recreate exactly the features of the deceased. All of these elements appear in Lucan’s re-imagining of Pompey’s death rites, but they are importantly scattered, distorted, or unfulfilled. Lucan creates a multiplicity of burials or funeral contexts for Pompey, all of which fly in the face of his actual burial. In their fragmented state, these rites feign at propriety and recall the fragmentation of Pompey’s own body and the body of the Republican cause he represents. I will work through this list largely chronologically, beginning with the catalogue of Pompey’s

\textsuperscript{44} Loupiac (1998): 167 notes the importance of Pompey’s extended burial rites: ‘L’ensemble du poème est en effet traversé par le thème de la mort et des funérailles de Pompée. Les Livres I à VII sont parsemés d’allusions à son cadavre et les funérailles clandestines improvisées par le dévoué Cordus, enfin le chant IX se livre à une sorte de ressaisissement morbide de ces images et de ce thème à travers la vision de Cornélie, la récit de Sextus Pompée, et les honneurs finalement rendus à Pompée et aux morts de Pharsale par le biais de bûchers symboliques’. What follows here is an expansion and elaboration of some material in Loupiac (1998): 167-72.


The first example of this extended funeral for Pompey occurs in book 3. Lucan has included the standard epic topos of a catalogue of troops; here all the people are listed who will fight for Pompey and the Republican cause against Caesar (3.169-297). The catalogue already distorts the features of a typical epic catalogue of troops, but Lucan’s summary of the list of peoples warps distortion further into perversion (3.290-2):

tot inmensae comites missura ruinae
exciuit populos et dignas funere Magni
exequias Fortuna dedit.

So many peoples Fortune roused to send as companions in his immense downfall, as a procession fit for Magnus’ burial.

The mass of troops, outnumbering the host of Cyrus, Xerxes, and Agamemnon (284-90), are dramatically articulated as participants in Pompey’s funeral pomp, arrayed not for battle but for the funeral of the man they have not even begun fighting for yet. The catalogue is built up monumentally in anticipation of war only to be toppled, as Lucan reminds us of Pompey’s inevitable failure and death, alone on the sand: this is not a war, it is a death-march for the leader.47

Book 7 opens with Pompey’s dream (7-19) as he imagines being cheered and celebrated by the Roman populace in his own theater, the night before the battle of Pharsalus. The happy dream, an ‘empty apparition’ (8: *uana...imagine*), which casts Pompey back to his youthful exploits, shifts in Lucan’s own reminder of the realities of the present campaign (24-8), which precipitates a movement from joy to sorrow. Roma personified, cast as Pompey’s lover (29-32), will not be able to tend his grave, since he will be buried on foreign soil (35-6)—this scene anticipates Cornelia’s fate as she mourns her inability to carry out proper funeral procedure for her husband. The scene of applause at Pompey’s triumph turns into envisioned public lamentation, which represents the first negative enumeration of Pompey’s funeral rites (37-44):

> te mixto flesset luctu iuuenisque senexque
> iniussusque puer; lacerasset crine soluto
> pectora femineum ceu Bruti funere uolgus.
> nunc quoque, tela licet paueant uictoris iniqui,
> nuntiet ipse licet Caesar tua funera, flebunt,
> sed dum tura ferunt, dum laurea serta Tonanti.
> o miseri, quorum gemitus ede dolorem,
> qui te non pleno pariter planxere theatro.

Joined in grief, young man and old and boy unbidden would have wept for you, with loosened hair the crowd of women would have torn their breasts, as at Brutus’ death. Now too, though they fear the unjust victor’s weapons, though Caesar personally announce your death, they will weep, even while bringing incense, bringing laurel garlands to the Thunderer. O how unhappy—their groans concealed their anguish;

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48 For the extended ‘dream sequence’ (7-44), which shifts from Pompey’s dream to Lucan’s own, capped by the negative enumeration of Pompey’s funeral, see Radicke (2004): 376-8, with 376 n.5 for relevant bibliography. See additionally, Perutelli (2000): 150-3; Dinter (2012): 30; Fratantuono (2012): 270-1.
49 There is a peculiar blurring of temporality in this dream sequence as we are thrust backward and forward in imagined time: see Mudry (1991): 85-6; Narducci (2002): 293.
51 This point is made by Dinter (2012): 30.
they could not bewail you together in full theatre.

The theater of applause (9: *theatri*) becomes a theater of silent mourning (44: *theatro*: same *sedes*). The Roman people, multiplying the grief of Roma herself in the earlier image, are imagined publicly mourning their dead leader in a sort of *funus publicum*, with ritual lamentation (weeping men, women and children; women with loosened hair ‘tearing their breasts’). Sulla received an elaborate *funus publicum* similar to what is portrayed here (App. B Civ. 1.105-06), and Pompey oversaw the proper cremation of his body (Plut. *Sull.* 38). The contrast—‘master’ (Sulla) to protégé (Pompey)—may have been on Lucan’s mind, as it surely was during the description of Sulla’s tomb at the close of the survivor’s Boschian nightmare tale in book 2.

The transitional juxtaposition between theatrical applause and mourning is doubled by Lucan’s odd description of the Roman people stifling their anguish over Pompey’s death while simultaneously celebrating Caesar’s triumph (40-4). This movement from a publicly honored, triumphant Pompey to his death and public funeral, which is effectively silenced by Caesar’s triumph and its own mass celebration, closes the dream sequence with a manifestly disturbing twist. At the outset of the major battle of the poem (and the war), Lucan focuses on the public funeral for Pompey that will not take place (7.37: ‘[the people] would have wept for you…’), positioning the reader chronologically after the battle and Pompey’s defeat, and undercutting the momentum he has built for the militaristic climax. The war is a lost cause, and Lucan’s focus is already on Pompey’s solitary death and burial. As in the example

\[\text{\textsuperscript{52} Perutelli (2000): 153: ‘in una Ringkomposition…che chiude l’episodio del sogno, i plausus della scena del trionfo si sono trasformati nei planctus di dolore per la morte del condottiere’}.\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{53} Dinter (2012): 30: ‘her inhabitants stand for the city’}.\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{54} On this special rite, see Toynbee (1971): 55-6.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{55} See Behr (2007): 69-70 for similar points.}\]
from book 3, the enormity of the imagined audience for the public ceremony highlights the actuality of Pompey’s funerary isolation.

Around the physical funeral rites in book 8 Lucan has added a series of negative enumerations which further add to the funeral procession Pompey will not receive. The first comes from Cordus himself, who delivers a speech over Pompey’s body before cremation (8.729-35):

non pretiosa petit cumulato ture sepulchra
Pompeius, Fortuna, tuus, non pinguis ad astra
ut ferat e membris Eoos fumus odores,
ut Romana suum gestent pia colla parentem,
praeferat ut ueteres feralis pompa triumphos,
ut resonent tristi cantu fora, totus ut ignes
proiectis maerens exercitus ambiat armis.

Your Pompey, Fortune, does not ask for costly pyre
heaped high with frankincense; he does not ask that smoke enriched
should carry eastern perfumes from his body to the stars;
or that the loyal necks of Romans should bear their Parent;
or that his funeral procession should display his ancient triumphs;
or that the Fora should resound with mournful song; that all the army,
grieving and with weapons cast down, should pass around the fires.

Under normal circumstances, Pompey would have received precisely this sort of lavish display at a grand funeral in Rome,\textsuperscript{56} and by including the image of this funeral, Lucan has created a further substitute burial for Pompey along the lines of the \textit{funus publicum} image from book 7. The contrast here between what Pompey should have received and his actual fate still elicits \textit{pathos} and a further reminder of the perversion of Lucan’s epic world, the price of wars ‘worse than civil’.\textsuperscript{57} Pompey does not ask (729: \textit{non…petit}) for all of this lofty

pomp, he only requires the lowly tomb of a plebeian funeral and a flame (736-8),\textsuperscript{58} and this is naturally all Cordus can offer.

Next, Cordus imagines Cornelia’s lament over her husband’s corpse and her imagined performance of the traditional rites reserved for a widow (739-42):

\begin{quote}
sit satis, o superi, quod non Cornelia fuso
crine iacet subicique facem complexa maritum
imperat, extremo sed abest a munere busti
infelix coniunx nec adhuc a litore longe est.
\end{quote}

Let it be enough, O gods, that Cornelia does not lie with loosened hair and, as she embraces her husband, does not command the torch to be placed beneath, but that she, unhappy wife, is missing from the final tribute of the pyre, though she is not yet far from shore.

This continues the impossible picture of Pompey’s burial in Rome and the more natural role the wife would be expected to play in a funeral for her husband.\textsuperscript{59} In reality, Cordus is ‘acting’ (poorly) as the lamenting wife; \textit{Cordus}, the ‘heart’ or ‘dear one’ whose name speaks out implicitly/lexically as a substitute for Cornelia, Pompey’s wife, his ‘sweetheart’ \textit{in absentia}.\textsuperscript{60} As in the previous examples, the imagined funeral rites are distorted, as Cordus seems to describe Cornelia immolating herself on the pyre with Pompey (740).\textsuperscript{61} If Lucan had in mind the pyre of Polynices as he was constructing the scene of Pompey’s burial, the image of a wife burning herself on a pyre with her husband would keep us in a Theban

\textsuperscript{58} There are significant links here to Propertius’ imagined funeral for himself at 2.13.17-39: there the author, in negative enumeration, rejects the typical features of an elite ceremony and prefers the rites of a ‘plebian funeral’. Lucan twists the sentiments by having not Pompey himself, but his \textit{ustor} reject these rites.

\textsuperscript{59} Again, this seems to be reacting to an image in a poem of Propertius (1.17.19-24), which depicts the imagined rites Cynthia would perform over the poet’s corpse in Rome, in contrast to his lack of burial as a shipwreck victim. Pompey too resembles a shipwreck victim, lacking funeral rites and beaten by the waves.

\textsuperscript{60} See Keith (2008): 246-8 for Cordus’ appropriation of the role of lamenting widow in this scene. Cornelia will herself lament her inability to perform the rites over Pompey’s corpse, and will enact a mock or substitute funeral for him using his clothes and armor (more on this below). See Brennan (1969) for the argument that for Cordus Lucan means to make reference to the Pompeian sympathizer Cremutius Cordus, a Republican historian who was forced to commit suicide by Sejanus, and whose works were burned.

\textsuperscript{61} Mayer (1981): \textit{ad loc.} makes this point.
context, by recalling Evadne’s self-immolation on the pyre of her husband Capaneus.

Perhaps this is why Cordus holds Cornelia’s absence as being the only (relative) good to come from Pompey’s lowly isolated burial.

The final negative enumeration from book 8 comes after Cordus inscribes Pompey’s pithy epitaph on a stone (793), which elicits Lucan’s wrath. His apostrophe of Cordus morphs into a list of Pompey’s achievements, which deserve commemoration (806-15):

\[
\begin{align*}
quod si tam sacro dignaris nomine saxum & \\
adde actus tantos monimentaque maxuma rerum, & 810 \\
adde trucis Lepidi motus Alpinaque bella & \\
armaque Sertori reuocato consule uicta & \\
et currus quos egit eques, commercia tuta & \\
gentibus et pauidos Cilicas maris, adde subactam & \\
barbariem gentesque uagas et quidquid in Euro & \\
regnorum Boreaque iacet. dic semper ab armis & \\
ciulem repetisse togam, ter curribus actis & 815 \\
contentum multos patriae donasse triumphos. & \\
\end{align*}
\]

But if you think the rock is worthy of such a sacred name, then list his exploits so immense, memorials of his mightiest deeds, fierce Lepidus’ upheavals and the Alpine war, the conquered army of Sertorius when the consul was recalled, the chariots he drove while still a knight, trade secure for the nations and Cilicians frightened of the sea; the conquest of the barbarian world and nomad races and all the realms which lie in the east and in the north. Say that always after warfare he returned to the toga of the citizen, that, content with driving chariots three times, he waived his claim to many triumphs for his fatherland.

These and the following lines (816-22), serve as Lucan’s laudatio funebris over Pompey.\(^{62}\)

These are his great achievements in life which deserve—or demand: note the fervent

\(^{62}\) Noted by Burck (1981): 482; Mayer (1981): ad 8.793; Braund (1992): 305 n.793-822. Galtier (2010): 201 argues that Lucan’s narrative imposition here is a further indication of the problem of Cordus’ burial, since the poet supplies the laudatio funebris that his character is unable to (whether inscribed or otherwise). Of course, Cordus does offer his own words over Pompey’s corpse at 759-75 which amount to a graveside laudatio; Lucan’s own words are offered in addition. Polybius 6.53-4, as I have mentioned above, is the best source on Roman funereal rites; for specifics on the laudatio funebris, see Kierdorf (1980).
anaphora of *adde*—to be recorded in death. Yet not simply recorded, but rather
‘monumentalized’. Lucan is constructing an epitaphic funeral monument for Pompey, a
poetic tomb of impossible size (816: *quis capit haec tumulus?*, ‘What grave can hold all
this?’), to house a record of his immense deeds.63 The ‘virtual monument’ further elaborates
Lucan’s broadening portrait of Pompey’s imaginary funeral rites in reaction to his actual
funeral on the Egyptian shore. The monument however is quickly destroyed as Lucan
reverses field in favor of the subtle grandeur of Cordus’ perishable tomb which, unlike a
more lasting physical monument, will in time offer no sure proof even of Pompey’s death
(865-9).64 This emblem of Pompey’s idealized burial is recorded, only to be cast aside as
impermissible, and Lucan’s own words—his poem—become a more lasting monument of
Pompey’s life and death.65

The allusions to Horace *Carm.* 3.30 are unavoidable here.66 There too the power of
poetic monumentality, in a strongly funerary context, eclipses the perishable value of
monuments which in time will waste away (*Carm.* 3.30.1: *exegi monumentum aere
perennius*..., ‘I have raised a monument more lasting than bronze’). Lucan erects a virtual

63 On these lines, see Day (2013): 222-4; Lovatt (2013): 366. Appian records Pompey’s grave read simply: τῶ
ναοῖς βριθοντί πόση σπάνις ἐπιλετο τύμβου, ‘for one so rich in temples, what a pitiful tomb this is’ (*B Civ.*
2.86); the juxtaposition between Pompey’s ‘monumental’ fame in life and his pauper burial is at the heart of
Lucan’s passage.
64 Lucan’s dramatic changes of opinion here have been articulated by Mayer (1981): 185. On the transitory
65 There is a play on *monimenta* (806) which in meaning spans the physical monument/tomb of Cordus, the
monumental deeds of Pompey’s career, and the literary monument Lucan is creating of Pompey’s deeds: see
*OLD* s.v. *monumentum* 1-5 for the range.
66 On poetry’s competition with monuments as a vehicle for immortality, cf. also *Ann.* 404-07 Skutsch;
*Virg.* G. 3.10-48; Prop. 3.2.17-26, 4.1.57, 4.1.65-7; *Ov. Met.* 15.871-9. Lucan will solidify his own place in the
tradition of poetic monument-making when he immortalizes his and Caesar’s ‘Pharsalia’ amidst the ruins of
Troy (9.980-6). For *monumenta* as literary records, see e.g. *Livy Praef.* 6, 10-12 and 8.40.3-5; *Tac.* 2.101.1;
monument, only to reject it in favor of the more lasting monument championed by Horace.\textsuperscript{67}

Lucan’s narratorial confusion and changing of opinion concerning the appropriate way Pompey’s corpse should be treated manifest in re-writings of the scene of his actual burial. Lucan first imagines he will remain unburied, then he castigates Cordus for his hasty burial, then imagines an enormous future-tomb, and finally settles on a future in which there exists no tomb at all, equating Pompey with a Jupiter-like omnipresence and mythic immortality.

The same imposition of imagined funeral rites for Pompey continues in book 9. Lucan halts the momentum of his text in order to retrace elements of Pompey’s demise, and as a means of creating even more re-imaginings of his death and funeral. Lucan is known for his delay tactics (\textit{mora}),\textsuperscript{68} but these narrative tactics are normally deployed as a means of halting the progress of his narrative as it grinds toward Pharsalus, a battle he does not want to recount. Here conversely Lucan lingers on his tragic hero’s ending, which resulted from the post-battle horror of Pharsalus. In other words, Lucan is rewinding the film to replay it, slightly differently.

After a series of allusions to Cornelia’s absence during Cordus’ burial of Pompey, Lucan finally gives Cornelia a voice of her own (9.55-62):

\begin{quote}
‘ergo indigna fui’, dixit ‘Fortuna, marito
accendisse rogum gelidosque effusa per artus
\end{quote}

\begin{footnote}
\textsuperscript{67} So Gowing (2005): 88: ‘At least to some degree, the \textit{Pharsalia} constitutes a poetic (à la Horace) \textit{monumentum} for the dead general, compensation for the cult denied to him but accorded to the victor and all his successors’. This has broader implications, as Loupiac observes (1998): 168: ‘…et même, pourrait-on dire, d’innombrables sépultures, puisque la fin du poème, en reprenant et en variant ce nouveau thème, à la fois issu et distinct du précédent, fait de \textit{La Pharsale} elle-même une sorte de «Tombeau de Pompée»’. Thorne (2011): 372-4 considers the \textit{BC} as a literary funeral monument which, at the same time, recognizes the danger of monumentalizing \textit{memoria}. He examines this by analyzing the flashback in book 2 of the previous civil war, but a (perhaps) more powerful example of this line of thinking occurs here during Lucan’s extended ‘burial’ of Pompey. See also Feeney (1991): 298 n.189.

\end{footnote}
incubuisse uiro, laceros exurere crines
membraque dispersi pelago conponere Magni,
uolneribus cunctis largos infundere fletus,
ossibus et tepida uestes inplere faulla,
quidquid ab extincto licuiisset tollere busto
in templis sparsura deum’.

she said: ‘So, Fortune, I was not fit to kindle
my husband’s pyre, to throw myself full stretch across
his icy limbs, to tear and burn my hair
and to lay out the limbs of Magnus scattered by the sea,
to pour generous tears on all his wounds,
to fill my robes with bones and tepid cinders
to gather whatever I could from the extinguished tomb
to sprinkle in the temples of the gods’.

The negative enumeration of her ritual lament echoes directly Cordus’ funeral rites as he
adopted Cornelia’s role of a mourning widow: both address/condemn Fortuna (cf. 8.730);

incubuisse uiro (9.57) matches Cordus’ act upon retrieving Pompey’s body (8.727: incubuit
Magno, ‘he bent over Magnus’),69 she would have poured tears into Pompey’s wounds, as
Cordus does (8.727-8: lacrimas...effudit in omne uolnus, ‘[he] poured tears into every |

wound’; 9.59: uolneribus cunctis largos infundere fletus).70 More striking are the allusions
to the less pious elements of the funeral scene from book 8. Cornelia’s wish to gather up and
fill her robes with the ashes and bones from the pyre site recalls Cordus’ collection of the
remains from the anonymous pyre which he too carries in his ‘robes’ (9.60: sic fatus
plenusque sinus ardente faulla | peruolat ad truncum, ‘So he speaks and filling up his cloak
with burning ashes | flies back to the torso...’; 8.752-3: inplere faulla). Cordus’ act is ritually
suspect, since he defiles another man’s pyre, and Cornelia’s implicit allusion to this scene
adds an element of perversion to her sentiments. The sequence of acts Cornelia describes

69 Wick (2004): ad loc.
square with Cordus’ reference to Cornelia’s imagined self-immolation on Pompey’s pyre at 8.739-41: in her own words she would light the pyre, then throw herself on her husband’s corpse (note not just the tearing, but also the burning of her hair at 57). One example to this effect could probably be characterized as dramatic hystericon proteron, but the same imagined event occurring twice in this order carries more grim assurances.\textsuperscript{71} At any rate, suicide was something Cornelia had earlier threatened/attempted (8.646-7, 653-62; cf. implicitly 9.101-02).\textsuperscript{72}

Cornelia’s lament continues and, as a counter to Cordus’ own burial rites, she performs a surrogate burial for Pompey using his garments, medals, and armor (9.174-9):

\begin{quote}

it primum in sociae peruenit litora terrae,
collegit uestes miserique insignia Magni
armaque et impressas auro, quas gesserat olim.
exuuias pictasque togas, uelamina summo
ter conspecta Ioui, funestoque intulit igni.
ille fuit miserae Magni cinis.
\end{quote}

When first she came to the shores of allied land,
she gathered Magnus’ garments and his medals and his weapons
and his armour stamped with gold, which he once had worn,
and the embroidered toga, garments three times
seen by highest Jupiter, and she put them on the funeral fire.
In her sorrow those were Magnus’ ashes.

\textsuperscript{71} Pace Wick (2004): \textit{ad} 9.56sq, who only notices the evidence from book 9.

\textsuperscript{72} These suicidal threats from book 8, coupled with the anguish of her inability to perform the proper burial rites over Pompey’s decapitated corpse, recall the lament of Euryalus’ mother at \textit{Aen.} 9.481-97, who mourns the death of her decapitated son. Lucan has split the speech from the \textit{Aen.} into two separate speeches: the first (from book 8) rebukes Pompey with a series of questions, corresponding to the first part of Euryalus’ mother’s speech; the second (from book 9), laments the state of Pompey’s body and her inability to perform rites over it, which corresponds to the second half of Euryalus’ mother’s speech. The speech from \textit{Aen.} ends with the mother pleading for her own death, as both of Cornelia’s speeches in \textit{BC} make allusions to death/suicide. See Moretti (1985): 138-9 n.17. Lausberg (1985): 1594 notes the original context here is Andromache’s double lament at \textit{Il.} 22.477-514 and 24.725-45, which serves as the baseline model for both Virgil and Lucan. See also Hutchinson (2013): 331, with somewhat less confidence in the intertextual association (more on the Andromache connection below).
Aeneas led surrogate/symbolic funerals for Polydorus (*Aen.* 3.62-8) and Deiphobus (6.505-08); Procne constructed a false sepulcher for Philomela (*Ov. Met.* 6.566-70).\(^{73}\) Scholars additionally have seen in this a reference to Dido’s substitute funeral for Aeneas in the *Aeneid* (4.494-7, 507-08, 648-51).\(^{74}\) This adds another element to the allusion of self-immolation, as Dido’s funeral of Aeneas’ possessions doubled as her own funeral pyre.

Lucan primes his audience for Cornelia’s suicidal ending—she acts out the presumed role of an Evadne or Dido—only to snatch it away, as Cornelia fades from the epic scene.

Lucan perhaps also had in mind Andromache’s substitute funeral for Hector in the *Iliad*, the original epic model for this sort of quasi- or surrogate burial (22.508-15):

\begin{quote}
‘νῦν δὲ σὲ μὲν παρὰ νηρὰ κορωφία νόσφι τοκήων αἰώλαι εὐλα ἔδωνται, ἐπεὶ κε χάνες κορέσωνται
gυμνῶν ἀτάρ τοι εἴμαι’ ἐν μεγάρωσι κέονται
λεπτά τε καὶ χαίρετα τετυμένα χεροὶ γυναῖκών.
ἀλλὰ ἤτοι τάδε πάντα καταφλέξω πυρὶ κηλέω
οὐδὲν σοὶ γ᾽ ὀφέλος. ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἐγκείσεις αὐτοῖς,
ἀλλὰ πρὸς Τρώων καὶ Τρωιάδων κλέος εἶναι.
’Ος ἐφαστο κλαίοντι, ἐπὶ δὲ στενάχοντο γυναῖκες.
\end{quote}

‘But now, beside the curving ships, far away from your parents, the writhing worms will feed, when the dogs have had enough of you, on your naked corpse, though in your house there is clothing laid up that is fine-textured and pleasant, wrought by the hands of women. But all of these I will burn up in the fire’s blazing, no use to you, since you will never be laid away in them; but in your honour, from the men of Troy and the Trojan women’. So she spoke, in tears; and the women joined in her mourning.

Andromache watches the chariot carry her husband away to the Achaean camp on the shore and she faints (*Il.* 22.464-7, 473-4) as Cornelia had fainting witnessing Pompey’s death along the Egyptian shore (*BC* 8.661-2). They scold their husbands for leaving them alone to their


cruel fates (I. 22.477-84; BC 8.583-9). Andromache’s focus on the abuse of Hector’s corpse by beasts and maggots (I. 22.508-09) finds its counterpart in Sextus and the younger Magnus’ concerns for their father’s corpse at the hand of scavengers just before Cornelia’s substitute funeral (9.141-2). For both women, the focus is on the burning of finely woven garments, and the actions of each prompt general lamentation (I. 22.515, 23.1; BC 9.179-81, 186-8). But whereas Andromache dissolves into lamentation (I. 24.725-45\textsuperscript{75}), Cornelia transfers her own sorrow to anger and aggression, as she discharges Pompey’s final orders to her sons and Cato to renew the war, and thus the poem (9.84-97).\textsuperscript{76}

Antony Augoustakis sees Cornelia’s act (relative to its association with Dido’s substitute funeral aimed at erasing her memory of Aeneas) as an attempt to move the epic beyond the shadow of Pompey, to bring closure to his death and move the war/poem forward.\textsuperscript{77} Certainly, historical parameters dictate this change of focus. From here, the epic is entrusted to Cato, who relieves Pompey as the ‘head’ of the Republican cause—this is also symbolically adduced by Pompey’s metempsychosis which transfers his soul into the breasts of Cato and Brutus (9.1-18).

But Lucan never does quite get over Pompey. Aside from further burial features, which I will detail momentarily, Pompey’s ghost continues to haunt the narrative. His soul lives on, implanting itself in the breast of Brutus and the mind of Cato (9.17-18), and further

\textsuperscript{75} Cf. Aen. 3.301-05, where Virgil continues Andromache’s substitute rites for Hector begun in the Iliad in the ‘New Troy’ at Buthrotum.
\textsuperscript{76} For Cornelia’s call to arms, and the continuation of the epic, see Keith (2008): 248-9; Augoustakis (2011): 189-90. For Cornelia’s usurpation of Julia’s anger here, see Finiello (2005): 172-6. Lucan refocuses the Republican effort after Pompey’s death through the character of Cato, though historically Metellus Scipio took control of the army (Plut. Cat. Min. 56.3-57.3).
\textsuperscript{77} Augoustakis (2011): 193-4, who follows cues from Keith (2008): 248. Wick (2004): 67 makes a similar point about Cato’s efforts to distance himself from Pompey to establish his own position as the war moves forward.
Cornelia claims Pompey’s soul lives in her own breast (9.70-1). Pompey prevents Caesar’s death occurring prematurely in Egypt (10.6-8); he possesses Pothinus (10.333-7); his shade receives Achillas as a sacrifice (10.524); and Magnus, in fact, closes the epic as it stands (10.543-6).78

Pompey’s haunting presence in the epic continues as Lucan draws out further funereal features for his dead hero. Cato delivers a eulogy in absentia for Pompey (9.190-214), an odd epideixis full of ambivalence and skewed praise,79 which, far from pushing us past the shadow of Pompey, adds another piece to his never-ending funeral. Cato’s is now the second laudatio funebris for Pompey, after a string of funerary laments. Cato counters Cordus’ initial lament, which calls on Pompey as the greatest leader (8.759-60: o maxime… | ductor), by announcing Pompey as simply a dead citizen (9.190: ciuis obit),80 and the speech in general undercuts what has already been said in the other laments.81 Cato aims more generally at identifying the antitheses in Pompey’s character that Lucan’s poem everywhere advances. Cato might be looking towards the future, but in doing so he also takes us back: to book 2, to Marius and Sulla, to a Republic long since crippled, with freedom (libertas) a myth82 only Pompey had been foolish enough to entertain (9.204-07).83 Cato concludes his

78 10.543-6: respexit in agmine denso | Scaeuam perpetuae meritum iam nomina famae | ad campos, Epidamne, tuos, ubi solus apertis | obseedit muris calcantem moenia Magnus, ‘[Caesar] looked back at Scaeva in the crowded line, Scaeva who had already had earned the fame of everlasting glory | on your fields, Epidamus, when after the walls were breached | he alone blockaded Magnus as he trod upon the ramparts’. Both Scaeva, the dead soldier who is not really dead, and the headless Pompey are brought back from the dead, so to speak, at the poem’s ‘death’.
80 See Morford (1967): 6 with n.1. The only major point of contact is 9.199 with Lucan’s praise at 8.813-14. A main driving force of Lucan’s poem is the damaged/destroyed state of libertas (the symbol of the Roman
speech with a view toward his own death, but even here he imagines an ahistorical decapitation for himself that recalls directly Pompey’s ending (9.212-14):

> et mihi, si fatis aliena in iura uenimus,
> fac talem, Fortuna, Iubam; non deprecor hosti
> seruari, dum me seruet ceruice recisa.

And if by fate I fall into another’s power, make Juba, Fortune, behave like this to me; I do not decline to be kept for the enemy, provided that he keeps me with my head cut off.84

Lucan eschews the exemplum of Cato’s famous suicide and replaces the image of hara-kiri with Pompey’s decapitation.85 Cato here (not Cicero, who will be decapitated) is imagined as the next headless victim of the Senatorial party.


83 For similar sentiments, see Johnson (1987): 70-2. Pompey’s death is synecdochic for the final fall of libertas and the Republic, as Cato’s words here imply (9.204-07): olim uera fides Sulla Marioque receptis | libertatis obit: Pompeio rebus adempto | nunc et ficta perit, non iam regnare pudet, | nec color imperii nec frons erit ulla senatus, ‘Long ago, when Marius and Sulla were admitted, the true guarantee | of liberty disappeared: with Pompey taken from the world, | now even the bogus guarantee has gone. Now tyranny will be no shame, | nor will there be a screen for power nor will the senate be a mask’: see Due (1962): 112; Feeney (1986a): 242; Wick (2004): 69-70. But while Pharsalus was the final death blow to the Republic, as Cato articulates it has long been in ruins: cf. Cicero writing to Atticus in January 60 (Att. 1.18.6): amissa re publica ‘with the Republic lost’; and again in 59 (Att. 2.21): de re publica quid ego tibi subtiliter? tota periti, ‘what can I say to you about the Republic, simply? It’s totally ruined’. Flower (2010): 135 cites the above Cicero quotes as epigraphs to her chapter (p.135-53) on the volatile period from 78-49 BCE which, she proposes, was already time after the fall of the traditional interpretation of the Late Republic. Lucan’s assessment seems to fall similarly in line with this. The issue of when the Republic ends and the Empire begins, and where exactly ‘Augustanism’ fits into this picture, is a much debated topic. We can at least say that there existed an ill-defined period between Republic and Empire at least until Ovid began to articulate the Republic as clearly a thing of the ‘past’, and certainly upon Tiberius’ succession.

84 Seewald (2008): ad 9.212-14. In general, Cato’s words recall Pompey, but note esp. remane, temeraria coniux, | et tu, nate, precor, longeque a litore casus | expectate meos et in hac ceruice tyranni | explorate fidem, ‘Stay behind, my reckless wife, | you too, my son, I pray, and watch my fortunes | far from shore, and on this neck put to the test | the tyrant’s loyalty’ (8.579-82).

85 Seo (2011): 213-17 and (2013): 83-8 has argued convincingly that Lucan imports features of Cato’s Stoic suicide into Pompey’s death in book 8, transforming the assassination into a Catonian mors voluntaria; cf. Malamud (2003): 34. The reverse seems to be at play in Cato’s own imagining of his death in book 9. Cf. 2.306-19, where Cato anticipates his death again framed around Pompey-like punishments imposed on his ‘head’: e.g. o utinam caelique deis Ereboque liceret | hoc caput in cunctasdamnatum exponere poenas!, ‘O if only this head, condemned by heaven’s gods | and Erebus’, could be exposed to every punishment!’ (306-07). On Cato’s famous suicide, cf. Cic. Off. 3.60-1; Livy Per. 114; Sen. Prov. 2.10-11; App. B Civ. 2.98-9; Dio
Before Cornelia’s substitute funeral and Cato’s eulogy, Pompey’s son swears to locate and bury his father’s severed head and, in retaliation for the murder of Pompey, exhume the bodies of Alexander the Great, Amasis, Isis, and Osiris, and use their remains as fuel for the pyre (9.148-64). The grotesque plan to burn the head using the remains of the dead (there is a hesitation to label them ‘gods’) as fuel recalls Cordus’ theft of the cremation embers from the anonymous pyre, which he used to burn Pompey’s truncus. Though he cannot know it, this is a grimly poetic attempt at the ‘unification’ of his father’s body (which was also burnt with tainted embers) and head in death. Cato checks the ‘worthy wrath’ of the youth (9.166), rendering the vow a non-event. But the scene is a chilling reminder that some of Pompey is still out there, embalmed and awaiting the gaze of Caesar. Lucan is not finished with Pompey.

We are left wondering about Pompey’s head through book 9 and, as Elaine Fantham and others have shown, the Medusa excursus containing the myth of Perseus’ decapitation of Medusa (9.619-99), which is loaded symbolically with allusion to Pompey’s decapitation, only serves to heighten our expectations for Pompey’s head’s eventual confrontation with Caesar. Finally, a satellite of Ptolemy reveals Pompey’s severed head to Caesar (9.1032-6), a cruel visage of what the mighty leader had been, head drooping. The head has become a funereal imago, solidified like a death-mask by Egyptian poison (8.687-91), yet imperfect,

43.11.4-5; Martial 1.78; Florus 2.13: with, recently, Edwards (2007): index s.v. ‘Cato, Marcus Porcius (Younger)’.
86 The desire to unearth the dead and cast their rotten/rotting remains in the Nile and Maroetis recalls, again, Sulla’s treatment of Marius’ exhumed corpse.
87 On the decapitation of Medusa as, among other things, a recapitulation of Pompey’s own decapitation and the eventual meeting of heads between Caesar and Pompey, see Fantham (1992b): 110; Malamud (2003); Papaioannou (2005).
88 Lucan never names directly the satelles who brings the head to Caesar, though Pothinus is implied, I think. Plut. Caes. 48.2 conversely names a Theodotus (absent in Lucan) as the presenter of Pompey’s head.
recalling the masks used to preserve the faces of dead ancestors. Pompey’s head was stuck on a pike (8.679-84), and his son Sextus informs us that the head was ‘paraded’ through the streets (9.136-9), in a warping of the funeral *pompa* which displayed the ancestral ‘heads’ of the dead. Having lost access to a proper funeral, at which ancestral *imagines* would be paraded along with the corpse of the dead man (Polyb. 6.53), Pompey’s own preserved *imago* offered a grim indicator of his death.  

The Egyptian satellite shows this Pompeian *imago* to Caesar, who sheds crocodile tears and hurls abuses at the satellite and Ptolemy for the crime (1037-89). Then Caesar demands a burial for the head (1089-1104):

Bury in the tomb
the mighty leader’s head, but not in such a way that earth merely hides your guilt: offer incense to his rightful grave, placate the head and gather up the ashes dispersed upon the shore and to the scattered shade grant a single urn. Let the ghost sense the arrival of his father-in-law and let him hear

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89 Cornelia seals implicitly Pompey’s head’s association with funereal *imagines* when she laments not being able to offer proper burial rites over his corpse, yet, strikingly, his *imago* clings to her guts (9.71-2): *non imis haeret imago* | *uisceribus*?
my words of loving protest. Since he prefers everything to me, since he prefers to owe his life to his Pharian vassal, the nations have been deprived of a day of happiness, our reconciliation has been lost to the world. My prayer has found no favouring gods—my prayer that, after laying down successful weapons, I might embrace you and ask from you your old affection and your staying alive, Magnus, and to be your equal, satisfied with a reward quite worthy of my toils. Then in lasting peace I could have helped you in defeat forgive the gods; you could have helped Rome forgive me.

There is an implicit allusion to Cordus’ hope here that someone might find Pompey’s (truncus) ashes on the shore and provide ‘full honors’ (8.773: plenos...honores) to the dead man by restoring Pompey’s head to the initial place of cremation (8.772-5). But Caesar’s burial, the third ‘funeral’ for Pompey in the poem, will usurp Cordus’. His will be a ‘rightful grave’ (1091: iusto...sepulchro), combining at last Pompey’s head with what remains of his dispersed torso (1092: cineres...fusos), uniting scattered body and ‘scattered shade’ (1093: sparsis...manibus) in a single urn, and erasing Cordus’ burial entirely. It is an aim at some semblance of bodily integrity that Lucan’s whole poem has been fighting against: Civil War is a disruption/violation of boundaries, most viscerally elucidated by Lucan in terms of corporeal dismemberment, with Pompey’s decapitation as its centerpiece. Caesar is the poem’s ultimate boundary violator, so it is jarring that Lucan would include his willful efforts to unify Pompey’s dismembered corpse here. The unity of Pompey’s body is symbolically doubled in Caesar’s obituary by his claims at reconciliation with his nemesis (1097-8), by his desire to ‘embrace’ Pompey (1099), to be ‘equals’ (1102). But these pleas at

93 See Myers (2011).
unification fool no one and his generosity is undercut by the reaction of his followers who (inwardly) deride his feigned *clementia* (1104-08).  

False tears and words should leave us with at least a hint of false claims, and the book ends on a note of unease and insecurity about whether Caesar will actually go through with his plan to bury Pompey. Allusions to Pompey’s burial continue into book 10, most dramatically in Pothinus’ speech arguing for the murder of Caesar (10.378-81):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{aspice litus,} \\
\text{spem nostri sceleris; pollutos consule fluctus} \\
\text{quid liceat nobis, tumulumque e puluere paruo} \\
\text{aspice Pompei non omnia membra tegentem}
\end{align*}
\]

Look upon the shore, which gives us confidence for wickedness; consult the defiled waves about the power we have; and look on Pompey’s grave of scanty dust, not covering all his parts.

Rhetorical appeals aside, it does at least appear as though Pompey’s remains are still lying on the shore, the tiny speck of dust still not covering all of his ‘great’ limbs (*paruus* contrasting *Magnus* Pompeius, here). Pothinus’ comment offers a further reminder that not all of Pompey is actually there. Our unease about Caesar’s claims is outwardly confirmed, and Pompey still remains, at the poem’s close, half-buried and fragmented.

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95 Erasmo (2008): 124: ‘Lucan does not tell us whether Caesar’s plans for the burial were carried out, so Pompey’s corpse remains unassembled in the poem’. Lucan elsewhere highlights the disjunction between Caesar’s words and actions: e.g. the crossing of the Rubicon and defiance of Roma (1.190-203) and his specious claims to rebuild Troy (9.998-9: cf. Seut. *Caes.* 79.3; Nic. Dam. *Caes.* 20, for rumors of Caesar’s supposed desire to move the capital to Alexandria or Troy). Caesar’s sham *clementia* is doubled by his sham *pietas* here: he lacks ‘true piety’ (9.1056: *uera pietas*: with the irony of 1094-5 and Caesar’s *uoces pias* to Pompey’s shade). He is a faulty *pius Aeneas*.

96 Berti (2000): *ad* 10.381: ‘Ma qui al topos sepolcrale della tomb anche per la sua esiguità non riesce a coprire tutte la membra, si aggiunge un’allusione alla testa rimasta fuori, un altro diffuso motivo di compianto in relazione alla morte di Pompeo: cfr. 8,772 ss’. 
This list of features relating to Pompey’s burial in the poem points directly to Lucan’s obsession with the scene of Pompey’s ending, its aftermath, and its implications. Lucan does not simply offer the same funereal features over and over, he varies elements of Pompey’s (real or imagined) funeral in a multiplicity of forms which bombard the audience with an endless series of re-fashionings of the epic’s climax. Lucan does the same thing with Pompey’s actual murder and corpse abuse (see 3.1): we see Pompey’s death and abuse represented repeatedly in the poem (both anticipated and re-imagined after the fact). All of these fragmentary repetitions,\textsuperscript{97} slightly altered, create a complex patchwork of one elaborate death and funeral for Pompey, but their imagined, fragmentary, and unfulfilled state function only as a further recapitulation/reminder of Pompey’s brutal decapitation and half-finished burial.\textsuperscript{98}

David Quint and others have argued that repetition in Lucan serves as a constant rehashing of the ‘negative cycles’ of civil war.\textsuperscript{99} Most obviously, this repetition appears in

\textsuperscript{97} Erasmo (2008): 124, 127 argues that the repetitions of Pompey’s funeral scenes are aimed at confounding and renewing audience mourning. This may be a by-product of Lucan’s repetition, but the aim, I think, is to swamp the audience with the destruction wrought by civil war and the repetitiveness of civil war itself. Galtier (2010) too notes the repetitiveness of Pompey’s death and burial (particularly in imagery implicitly relating to Pompey’s eventual decapitation, and the well-known intertext with Priam from the \textit{Aen.} 2), but his study looks more at Lucan’s attempt to rebuild Pompey’s image through the destruction of Pompey’s physical body, leaving just a celebration of his famous name. Loupiac (1998): 167-75 is the most thorough examination of the repetition of Pompey’s burial rites, though there are significant gaps here as well.

\textsuperscript{98} Cicero notes that among the laws governing funeral rites in the Roman 12 Tables was one that outlawed the digging up of a corpse that had already been buried (Cic. \textit{Leg.} 2.24.60: \textit{hominem mortuo ne ossa legito, quo post funus faciat}), except in the case of a death in war or a death abroad (à la Pompey). But he goes on to say that there was a rule prohibiting multiple obsequies and funeral processions arranged for any one individual (\textit{De leg.} 2.24.60). Lucan’s multiple rites for Pompey in his poem are not only disturbing for their fragmentary nature, they also cut directly against Roman sacred law.

\textsuperscript{99} Quint (1989, repr. in 1993: 21-46) and (1991, repr. in 1993: 117-57) on repetition in the \textit{Aen.} and the Trojan’s breaking the cycle of negative repetition, and Quint (1993): 8-9, 131-60 \textit{passim}, on BCs explication of the negative, fragmentary repetition of ‘losing’. See also most recently, Dinter (2012): 138-43. The very act of writing his epic serves as a recapitulation, or better a reliving, of civil war that is \textit{always}: past, present, future. See Masters (1992): 6 ‘…in writing the poem [Lucan] is allowing the civil war to be re-enacted, he \textit{is} re-enacting the war’.

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the survivor’s tale from book 2, which anticipates the atrocities of the impending war. But it is with Pompey that these themes are most poignantly exploited. As the corpus which stands for the body of the Republic, Lucan’s repeated recycling of Pompey’s fragmentary death and burial functions as an elaboration of the endlessly fragmented, bludgeoned death and burial of the Republic at the hands of civil war. There is no Virgilian promise of future prosperity, where present (Virgil’s own) readers are invited to view the past as aiming teleologically at Augustan Rome and their own better ‘future-perfect’ world. Lucan’s view of the future is only ever more of this cruel past.

The final image of Pompey’s ‘tomb’ in the poem is the one mentioned above during Pothinus’ speech (10.378-81). But Lucan as narrator provides the most chronologically current comment (8.843-6, 849-50):

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satis o nimiumque beatus,
si mihi contingat manes transibis in urbem,
transibis in urbem,
Magne, tuam, summusque feret tua busta sacerdos.
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  enough and O too greatly blessed
  if it were my luck to tear up the remains and bear them
  to Ausonia, to violate a general’s so-called tomb.
  Perhaps...

  Magnus, you will pass
  into your Rome and your ashes will be carried by the highest priest.
```
It is a perverse wish. Poet as tomb-raider has shades of Sullan madness and puts Lucan on par with Erichtho and later Caesar at Alexandria (4.3). Yet this wish fits seamlessly into Lucan’s narrative of Pompey’s funeral(s) and of the cyclical carnage of his *Civil War*: if only he could dig Pompey up one last time, in order to bury him again.

4.3. El Hombre y el Monstruo

*Le soleil rayonnait sur cette pourriture,*  
*Comme afin de la cuire à point,*  
*Et de rendre au centuple à la grande Nature*  
*Tout ce qu’ensemble elle avait joint...*  
—Charles Baudelaire, ‘Une Charogne’

*Whenever I am at Paris, I am dragged by invisible force into the Morgue. I never want to go there, but am always pulled there.*  
—Charles Dickens, The Uncommercial Traveller

Caesar’s order to perform rites over and bury Pompey’s severed head at the end of *BC* 9 is resoundingly suspicious not only given its own context, but also considering Caesar’s aversion to funeral rites elsewhere in Lucan’s poem. In this section I analyze four scenes involving Caesar and burial rites in the poem: (1) Caesar’s rejection of the importance of his own burial rites during the storm scene in book 5; (2) his maltreatment of the dead Pompeians after the battle of Pharsalus in book 7; (3) his sightseeing visit to the ruins of Troy in book 9; and (4) his trip to see Alexander the Great’s tomb in Alexandria in book 10. Each scene displays his lack of interest in proper burial rites and his own self-serving wickedness.

Stationed now in Epirus with only part of his army, and furious with Mark Antony for hesitating to ship the rest of his army over to Epirus from Italy, Caesar decides to return to Italy by himself in the middle of the night. He enlists the aid of an elderly boat-man
(Amyclas) and both men attempt to cross the Adriatic in the midst of a massive sea-storm.\textsuperscript{102}

As they are battered by winds, rain, and sea-swells, Caesar confronts the possibility of his own death at sea with little interest in the fate of his corpse or rites of burial (5.668-71):

\begin{verbatim}
mihi funere nullo
est opus, o superi: lacerum retinete cadauer
fluctibus in mediis, desint mihi busta rogusque,
dum metuar semper terraque expecter ab omni.
\end{verbatim}

No need have I
of burial, O gods: keep my mangled corpse
in the billows’ midst: let me be without a tomb and pyre,
provided I am always feared, by every land awaited.

The scene and Caesar’s words openly flout the epic models of Aeneas (\textit{Aen.} 1.94-101) and, more directly, Odysseus (\textit{Od.} 5.299-312) and Achilles (\textit{Il.} 21.271-83, with the response of the river-god Scamander at 318-23), who lament the idea of dying at sea (or for Achilles’, a river) and the consequent likelihood of non-burial.\textsuperscript{103} Far from praying for divine intervention to save him from this fate, Caesar embraces the gods’ onslaught at this the close of his theomachic madness.\textsuperscript{104} Achilles, Odysseus, and Aeneas had mourned their inability to die on the battlefield—as ‘proper’ heroic warriors—but Caesar, in his battle with the (presumed) gods realizes they are more worthy adversaries than mere mortals and embraces

\textsuperscript{102} Caesar’s attempt to cross the Adriatic in a small boat (\textit{BC} 5.504-677) is recorded elsewhere at Val. Max. 9.8.2, Plut. \textit{Caes.} 38, Seut. \textit{Iul.} 58.


\textsuperscript{104} On Caesar as a theomachic or ‘god-fighting’ figure in \textit{BC}, see most recently Chaudhuri (2014): 156-94, though he does not discuss the storm scene.
the possibility of death at their hands. His megalomania is nowhere more apparent than in this scene from book 5.

Emanuele Narducci notes that Caesar resembles Virgil’s Mezentius, as a contemaptor diuum, a scorners of the gods, but whereas Mezentius was made to pay for his godlessness, Caesar’s impiety and ‘Titanic contempt’ (‘titanistico disprezzo’) are in Lucan’s poem valorous qualities: the monstrous are rewarded, those seeking a just cause (Pompey/Cato) are paradoxically destined for defeat. Another feature that separates Mezentius and Caesar is that Mezentius never rejected his own burial rites. His dying words in fact concern the treatment of his corpse (Aen. 10.903-06). Caesar’s indifference is emblematic of his presumed superiority both to his epic predecessors, whose concerns are for him trivial, and to the gods, to whom most men pray for a surer outcome in similar moments of desperation. The word cadauer, a favorite of Lucan’s, is cold and animalistic: Caesar’s corpse is mere organic matter to him. His sights are set higher than corporeal limitations. The tenth wave, the largest, rises and casts Caesar back to shore, back where this crazed, warped aristeia began, and Caesar emerges alive and unscathed.

As well as rewriting a well-known epic topos, the scene also has resonances with Pompey’s own death scene later in the poem. Caesar in fact contemplates suffering the same
fate that will come to Pompey in book 8: to be an unburied corpse battered by the waves.\textsuperscript{110} Caesar’s near-death at sea anticipates the setting of Pompey’s actual death scene. That Cordus uses fragments of a boat for Pompey’s cremation pit calls to mind the nature of Pompey’s ‘death at sea’ in a small boat off the Egyptian shore. The epitaph Cordus inscribes on a stone (8.793: \textit{hic situs est Magnus}, ‘Here lies Magnus’) recalls the tradition of Hellenistic shipwreck epigrams, and Pompey should be understood as a quasi-shipwreck victim.\textsuperscript{111}

Both leaders are in a small boat (Caesar, 5.503: \textit{exigua...carina}; Pompey, 8.541: \textit{exiguam...carinam}), both call on the gods (5.669: \textit{o superi}; 8.630: \textit{o superi}), and they anticipate their mangled and scattered corpses (5.669-70, cf. 5.684: \textit{inuitis spargenda dabas tua membra procellis?}, ‘you gave your limbs to be scattered by unwilling waves?’; 8.629: \textit{spargant lacerunque}, ‘they tear and mangle’, cf. 8.751: \textit{sparsis Pompei manibus}, ‘Pompey’s remains are scattered’, 9.58: \textit{dispersi}, 9.1093: \textit{sparsis}; 8.667 and 737: \textit{lacerum}). Caesar considers the gods largely powerless against him (esp. 5.579-85), while Pompey claims no god has the power to deprive him of his fortune (8.630-1: \textit{felix}). While we might question the validity of this claim for the quasi-shipwrecked Pompey, it is Caesar who will emerge from


\textsuperscript{111} Fratantuono (2012): 342. See Johnson (1987): 81-2 on the anonymous pyre as reminiscent of ‘the somber world of the anonymous dead in the \textit{Anthology}, the outcast, the shipwrecked, whom humble piety rescues and pities’. Note, e.g. Callim. 50 GP = 58 Pf = \textit{AP} 7.277; the \textit{nauagika} poems in the Posidippus papyrus: 89-94 AB. At the outset of the battle at Pharsalus, Pompey is described as a sailor letting loose his sails, overcome by violent winds (7.125-7: \textit{ut uictus uiolento nauita Coro| dat regimen uentis ignauumque arte relicta| puppies onus trahitur, ‘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’). The battle and its aftermath are, by extension, his death at sea (see further below).
the sea as the ‘survivor of a shipwreck’ (5.699: felix naufragus). While Pompey’s death at sea reactivates the epic theme of the sacrifice of one for the many of Palinurus’ (unwitting) sacrifice in Aeneid 5—though still warping Virgil’s idea by having Pompey die together with the Republic, instead of for it—Caesar, the embodiment of the new Imperialism, the caput (BC 5.686) of his burgeoning State, becomes a victorious anti-Palinurus incapable of being sacrificed. Pompey’s was the body of the Republic, both dead and torn to pieces, but Caesar(ism) is and was ‘everything’ of this New Rome (3.105-09: senate, consuls, praetors, curules): omnia Caesar erat (108).

Caesar’s claim to need no tomb and pyre as long as he is feared and awaited by every land (5.670-1) achieves grimly the same boundless ‘supernatural omnipresence’, to borrow the phrase of Martin Dinter, which Lucan sought for Pompey through the erasure of his burial monument. The universality of memoria or fama is the aim of each as he faces death, but Caesar’s is more sinister: he demands to be feared, not loved. Lucan here and at the close of book 8, when he rejects the idea of Pompey’s physical monument, warps the traditional epic idea that a funeral and physical tomb honored and preserved the glory of the

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112 Amyclas confuses Caesar with a shipwreck victim at the outset of the storm scene as well (5.521: naufragus). Hershkowitz (1998): 228-30 points to the shipwreck simile that anticipates the fall of the Republic at BC 1.498-504 in her discussion of the storm scene in book 5, arguing that ‘[Caesar] has effectively shifted the signification of felix naufragus, from fortunate shipwreckee to fortunate shipwrecker, dashing to pieces, for his own benefit, not the little boat that carries him on the sea, but the Ship of State’ (230).

113 Aen. 5.814-15: unus erit tantum amissum quem gurgite quaeres; | unum pro multis dabitur caput, ‘One man alone will be lost. You will search for him out on the sea’s swell: | One single life shall be offered to save many’.

114 Cf. Ovid’s designation (perhaps resignation) of Augustus Caesar as the embodiment of the res publica at Tr. 4.4.15: res est publica Caesar.

115 See Narducci (2002): 257-8: ‘Va rilevata, nelle parole de Cesare, la connessione tra il dilatarsi della fama e l’assenza di ogni tangibile testimonianza della sepoltura; siamo di fronte a una versione, per così dire, “satanica” degli stessi motivi che il poeta sfrutterà nella sua apostrofe al cadavere di Pompeo…che non sarà fuori luogo richiamare nuovamente (Phars. VIII 865 sgg.)’. Note also Dinter (2012): 86.
dead by claiming conversely that the absence of these provides more lasting fame.\textsuperscript{116} The brutality of the river-god Scamander’s boast to Achilles at \textit{Iliad} 21.318-23 derives from his ability to bury the hero’s immortal fame along with his body beneath the sand and silt of his river: Achilles’ bones will be unrecoverable and no tomb will be needed to honor him, or immortalize him. Lucan rejects this tradition and the idea of a physical monument having any value for immortality. Poetic immortality lasts much longer.

Caesar commands so much control in this presumed death scene at sea that he even provides his own brief \textit{laudatio funebris} (5.661-8):\textsuperscript{117}

\begin{verbatim}
Arctoas domui gentes, inimica subegi
arma metu, uidit Magnum mihi Roma secundum,
iussa plebe tuli fasces per bella negatos;
nulla meis aberit titulis Romana potestas,
nec sciet hoc quisquam nisi tu, quae sola meorum
conscia uotorum es, me, quamuis plenus honorum
et dictator eam Stygias et consul ad umbras,
prutatum, Fortuna, mori.
\end{verbatim}

I have tamed the northern peoples, by fear subdued hostile soldiers, Rome has seen Magnus second to me, by ordering the people I have won the Rods denied to me by warfare; no Roman office will my inscription lack, and none but you will know this, Fortune, the only sharer of my prayers, that though I go to Stygian shades heaped with honours, consul and dictator both, as an ordinary man I die.

Pompey is second to Caesar, not just in the Roman political spectrum. Pompey passively will require the aid of his loved ones to provide some semblance of funerary observance, whereas

\begin{flushright}
116 See Chaudhuri (2014): 187-8 for similar points about the absence of Pompey’s physical tomb both as a guarantor of fame and more grimly, by equating Pompey with Zeus (whose place of death is famously disputed), as a potential threat to the gods.
117 Suet. \textit{Iul.} 84 tells us that Caesar did not receive a proper \textit{laudatio}, and Lucan may be toying with this as Caesar looks forward and the poet looks back in historical time. For further source material on Caesar’s funeral, see Plut. \textit{Ant.} 14.3-4 and \textit{Ad Brut.} 20.2-7; App. \textit{B Civ.} 2.143-47; Dio 44.36-49.
\end{flushright}
Caesar preempts all of this, denying the importance of his own burial but offering material for his tombstone or monument anyway (664: meis...titulis). Dinter sees in this scene Caesar’s metaliterary/metahistorical self-consciousness of his eventual divinity, his assurance of apotheosis—he was a fixture in the Roman pantheon by the time of Lucan’s writing—and this may go some way toward understanding his rejection of mortal burial rites. The self-laudatio and rejection of funeral rites may also point to the actual circumstances of Caesar’s impromptu cremation in the Forum, where he was burned on a makeshift pyre by a frenzied mob, instead of in the Campus Martius where a traditional pyre had been set up (e.g. Cic. Phil. 1.5; Suet. Iul. 84.1, 3; App. B Civ. 2.148). Cicero explicitly calls this a ‘burial that was no burial’ (Phil. 1.5.14: insepultam sepulturum). Further, he tells us a ‘tomb’ (bustum) was set up by Caesar’s supporters at the place of cremation, but this too was removed a few weeks later by Dolabella. And it was not until 29 BCE that a temple to ‘Diuus Iulius’ at that spot was dedicated to Caesar, immortalizing him (Dio 51.22.2-9). Lucan’s Caesar rejects the rites of proper burial in a way that largely points to his impending historical burial perversion.119

This future-view to divinity may as well point to Caesar’s confidence in challenging the gods to war during Lucan’s storm-scene. There is something of Diomedes’ self-confidence in confronting gods in Iliad 5 in Caesar’s theomachy in BC 5. Descriptions of

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118 Dinter (2012): 85-6. There are further hints at Caesar’s eventual divinity during the storm scene at 5.482: quid superos et fata tenes?, ‘why do you check the gods and destiny?’, and 5.536: ne cessa praebere deo tua fata, ‘Do not delay to present your destiny to the god...’: with Matthews (2008): ad locc. Cf. 7.457: bella pares superis facient ciuilia diuos, ‘the civil wars will create divinities equal to those above’. See Feeney (1991): 295: ‘The gods favour Caesar because he is going to be one of them’. Authors had hinted at Caesar’s living-divinity (e.g. Cic. Phil. 2.110, Att. 12.45.2, 13.28.3; Dio 44.6.4 says that Caesar was even called ‘Jupiter Julius’), but Lucan’s is the most extensive explication of Caesar’s godlikeness during his lifetime, as he implicitly usurps the role of divinity in the poem.
119 Thanks to Siobhán McElduff for pointing me in this direction.
sailing have a tendency to shift to battlefield language (e.g. 5.583: *medias perrumpe procellas*, ‘break through the gales’ midst’), and the storm passage began with Caesar’s manic desire for battle (476-7). But Caesar, in his prodding encouragement of Amyclas here, resembles more the goddess Athena motivating Diomedes in battle, leading him as his charioteer against men and other gods (esp. *Il.* 5.120-32). In this way Caesar appropriates the role of epic divinity: he will become a god anyway, and establish a principate of future-gods, his greatest challenge to the established divine order. In the absence of traditional divine machinery in the poem, Caesar assumes the role of the gods throughout the extended storm scene: of Athena in the *Iliad*, of Virgil’s Jupiter in *Aeneid* 4, of Ovid’s Jupiter and Mercury in *Metamorphoses* 8.  

We should not be surprised then when a pseudo-divine Caesar who denies funeral rites to his own corpse during his odd theomachy, finds no reason to provide burials for the Pompeian dead after his victory at Pharsalus. Pompey flees Pharsalus, Caesar and his troops are victorious, and Caesar takes in the glory of his win and the carnage in the aftermath of the battle (7.786-99):

\[
\begin{align*}
tamen omnia passo, 
postquam clara dies Pharsalica damna rexit, 
nulla loci facies reuocat feralibus aruis 
haerentis oculos. cernit propulsa cruore 
flumina et excelsos cumulis aequantia colles 
corpora, sidentis in tabem spectat aceruos 
\end{align*}
\]

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120 Caesar’s desire to avoid delay mirrors Jupiter’s annoyance that Aeneas is delaying/denying fate by lingering too long with Dido in Carthage. See Thompson-Bruère (1968): 11.
121 Caesar enters Amyclas’ hut, a storm-tossed traveler, like Jupiter and Mercury enter the home of Baucis and Philamon in *Met.* 8. See Narducci (1983) and (2002): 251-2. For more on Caesar’s ‘divinity’ in the storm scene, see Matthews (2008): index s.v. ‘Caesar: god-like behaviour’.
122 Caesar’s denial of burial here cuts sharply against the most basic rites guaranteed to Roman soldiers. See, e.g. Carrié (1993): 113: ‘Soldiers were automatically assured a minimal decent burial by their obligatory payments into the unit’s “coffers”. This institutional solidarity was backed up by a spontaneous professional solidarity in which soldiers agreed to see to one another’s eventual obsequies’.

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191
et Magni numerat populos, epulisque paratur
ille locus, uoltus ex quo faciesque iacentum
agnoscat. iuuat Emathiam non cernere terram
et lustrare oculis campos sub clade latentes.
fortunam superosque suos in sanguine cernit.
ac, ne laeta furesc scelerum spectacula perdat,
inuidet igne rogi miseris, caeloque nocenti
ingerit Emathiam.

Though he suffered all of this,
when shining daylight revealed the losses of Pharsalia,
the appearance of the place in no way checks his eyes from fastening
upon the deathly fields. He sees rivers driven on
by gore and mounds of corpses high as lofty
hills, he watches heaps sinking into putrefaction
and counts the peoples of Magnus; a place for feasting
is prepared from where he can discern the faces and the features
of the dead. He is delighted that he cannot see the Emathian land
and that his eyes scan fields hidden underneath the carnage.

In the blood he sees his fortune and his gods.
And not to lose the joyful sight of his wickedness, in a frenzy
he refuses those unfotunates the pyre’s flame and forces on to guilty
heaven the sight of Emathia.

The mass of troops compiled by Pompey to be witness to his presumptive proto-funeral
(3.169-297: see 4.2) all rot here on the battlefield at Pharsalus while their leader flees the
scene. In the end though, Pompey’s death will mirror the deaths of his army as they lie
unburied, and receive substitute rites from afar (9.179-81). There is in iacentum...agnoscat
(793-4) an allusion to the raving matron’s recognition of Pompey’s corpse lying on the shore
in book 1 (685-6): hunc ego, fluminea deformis truncus harena | qui iacet, agnosco, ‘him I

123 Here Lucan offers another example of the perversion of Virgil’s sacrifice of ‘the one for the many’ theme by
allowing Pompey to flee while his army perishes in his place: see Hardie (1993): 54-5; Bartsch (1997): 79-80;
Leigh (1997): 155-6. Does this offer a more cynical take on Cicero’s claim to have ‘embraced bodily the whole
attack of chaos, the whole force of evil men’ in his flight into quasi-exile as a means of saving the Republic
from bloodshed (Dom. 63. Cf. Dom. 1-2, 87, 99, 137, 141)? Elsewhere, like Lucan’s Pompey, Cicero positions
himself as the synecdochic hero of the Republican body politic: see e.g. Cic. Sest. 24, 31, 49; Red. sen. 4, 25,
32, 34, 36; Red. pop. 25; Vit. 8; Har. resp. 15, 45, 47: with May (1981) and (1988). Pompey’s flight from the
battlefield manages only to save his own hide (for a time), while the Republic ‘dies’.
recognize, lying on the river sands, | an unsightly headless corpse’. Pompey himself equates
his own body with the body of his troops, their deaths with his (7.652-3). At 7.117-19
Pompey anticipates his death being mirrored by the death of the Republic. And the dead at
Pharsalus are magnis nominibus (7.209-10), minions of Lucan’s description of Pompey as a
( shadow of a) ‘great name’ (1.135: stat magni nominis umbra). But with his flight from
the battle of Pharsalus, this ‘head’ of the Republic (Pompey) has gone, and its truncus, much
like Pompey’s own on the Egyptian shore in book 8, and uiscera are strewn upon the
Pharsalian fields.

The scene destroys the typical epic agreement to allow for the proper burial of the
dead following a requisite truce (Il. 7.421-32, 24.659-70; Aen. 11.100-21, 182-212; cf. 11.22-
6), and casts Caesar as an inhuman monster for denying these basic rites owed to the
dead. Caesar here takes to its perverse conclusion Achilles’ attempts at denying burial to
Hector in the Iliad, but amplifies this to include an entire unburied army, reminiscent of
Creon’s burial ban of the Argive dead that drives the plot of Euripides’ Suppliants. He

126 The viscera of the dead which Caesar tramples through double as the viscera of Rome and the Senate (7.721-
2): tu, Caesar, in alto | caedis adhuc cumulo patriae per uiscera uadis, ‘Caesar, you are walking still | in a lofty
heap of slaughter through the guts of your fatherland’; cf. further (7.578-80): monstratque senatum; | scit, cruor
imperii qui sit, quae uiscera rerum, | unde petat Romam..., ‘[Caesar] indicates the Senate; | well he knows
which is the empire’s blood, which are the guts of the state, | he knows the starting-point of his course to
Rome’, and: 7.293-4, 7.491; with Petrone (1996): 142-5; Dinter (2012): 29-37. This all picks up on the uiscera
Lucan founds his suicidal poem on in the proem (1.3), and forms a recurrent motif that expands upon Anchises’
fears in his address to the ‘future’ Caesar and Pompey at Aen. 6.832-3: ne, pueri, ne tanta animis adsuescite
bella | neu patriae ualidas in uiscera vertite uiris. Pompey hopes the gods will guide his cause through Caesar’s
uiscera (7.349-51, cf. 10.528-9), but it is his own guts that will be heinously probed (8.521, 556, 644-5).
127 See Gioseffi (1995), elaborating on some preliminary points by Martina (1991). For further links to epic and
130 Lovatt (1999): 129-36 argues that Lucan has in mind the tragic/mythic model of Creon for his description of
mirrors Sulla from earlier in the epic, whom Lucan describes denying burial to the previous civil war’s dead (cf. 2.139-224). Whatever the conventions, Caesar will outdo them.

Though he aims to discern the faces and features of the dead (793-4), Caesar dehumanizes his countrymen by reducing the bodies to statistics (792: Magni numerat populos, ‘[he] counts the peoples of Magnus’), and geographical features (rivers of blood, 789-90; corpses as hills, 790-1; unspecified ‘heaps’, 791, land inseparable from the bodies covering it, 794-5). The corpses are a measurement of statistical success, and a sign of pride. Caesar rejoices (794: iuuat; 797: laeta...spectacula) in the field of carnage like the god-fighting Erichtho (e.g. 6.526, 540-1, 604), though his ‘breakfast’ among the corpses contrasts her midnight marauding. His victory is equally hers, since her potions, spells, and incantations ensured the battle would be fought at Pharsalus, that the corpses left there would be hers to employ (6.570-88). Pharsalus can thus be framed as their dual Thessalian aristeia.135

131 E.g. Leigh (1997): 289-90. See Narducci (2002): 228-9 for a further possible connection to Sulla, who was said to have dined with the severed heads of the proscribed on his dinner table (Val. Max. 9.2.1; Luc. 2.122). Caesar ‘dines’ among the corpses of slain Pompeians, suggesting cannibalism, as similarly Voisin (1984): 277 discusses in connection with Marius and Sulla dining amidst the severed heads of their victims. Larson (2014): esp. 61-9 examines many American World War 2 soldiers’ attempts at ‘domesticating’ the trophy skulls of severed heads of Japanese soldiers.


133 This point about Caesar’s arithmetic is made by Lovatt (1999): 131.


135 For this indulgence in gore as Caesar’s aristeia, see Johnson (1987): 102, with Thierfelder (1970): 63-7. Cf. also Tesoriero (2004): 205: ‘Erichtho casts a spell to initiate the battle on the night before Pharsalus, Caesar watches the desecration afterwards. This suggests that Erichtho initiated the war, while Caesar settles back to enjoy the result, personal victory for himself’. 
In the end, Caesar does not see faces and features of the dead at all, only ‘his fortune and his gods in the blood’ (796: *fortunam superosque suos in sanguine cernit*). Pompey saw himself dying in the blood of the same battle (7.652: *se tam mucho pereuntem sanguine uidit*), his own and the Republic’s mass defeat. Caesar sees the rise of Caesarism. These dead do not merit burial, they only serve to validate Caesar’s victory and villainy. They are dehumanized, appropriately, because they are a collective ‘body’ of the Roman *res publica*, as Pompey had implicitly articulated. Caesar thus not only denies burial to dead Romans, he denies it to the ‘dead Republic’: the State has collapsed, and the new ruler refuses it burial rites. This act of *nefas* is heaped upon the gods (798-9), continuing the godlessness, or godlikeness, of Caesar’s theomachic actions during the sea storm. As in that instance, there is no divine (re)action. With the dead beginning to decompose, the stench of rotting flesh proves too much for Caesar, and he flees the scene (7.820-2).

Framing the scene of Caesar’s bizarre confrontation with Pompey’s severed head and his specious request for its burial (9.1035-1108) are Caesar’s sightseeing of the ruins of Troy (9.950-99) and his visit to the tomb of Alexander the Great in Alexandria (10.1-52). Alexander is omnipresent here, both in book 10, and since Caesar’s visit to Troy imitates the Macedonian king’s earlier visit to the sight of Troy (Cic. *Arch*. 24; Plut. *Alex*. 15.4). Both of these scenes play with issues of burial and tease out further allusions to Pompey’s extended

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136 Lovatt (2013): 120: ‘Caesar sees the blood and dead bodies as an index of his own success, and perhaps a sort of epiphany, revealing his divine sponsorship, or an act of revenge’.


138 Roach (2003): 70: ‘It is difficult to put words to the smell of decomposing human. It is dense and cloying, sweet but not flower-sweet. Halfway between rotting fruit and rotting meat’.

139 We might be tempted to recall Alexander the Great’s flight from the site of his great victory at Gaugamela as a result of his aversion to the stench of the dead (cf. Curt. 5.2.11). For Caesar’s association in *BC* with Alexander, see below.
funeral on the Egyptian shore and beyond. I look first at Caesar’s trip to Troy, as he stumbles around the ruins of the once-great city with a local tour guide who points out famous dilapidated monuments.

The site of Troy, with its shadows and once great name, its rotting oaks (9.964-79), recalls directly Lucan’s description of Pompey as a rotting oak and shadow of a great name at 1.135-43.\(^\text{140}\) Beyond this, scholars have noted that the dilapidated Troy resembles Lucan’s description of Rome devastated by the civil wars, especially after the bloodbath of Pharsalus (7.391-408, cf. 1.21-32).\(^\text{141}\) Lucan has cast Pompey as synecdoche for the destruction of the Republic, as the symbol of its fall. This plays on earlier epic symbols: Homer’s casting of Hector as the embodiment of Troy’s fate in the *Iliad*; Virgil’s casting of Priam in the same synecdochic role in *Aeneid* 2. Both symbols—symbols of epic defeat—are present in Lucan’s depiction of the ruins of Troy (9.976-9):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Phryx incola manes} \\
\text{Hectoreos calcare uetat. discussa iacebant} \\
\text{saxa nec ullius faciem seruantia sacri:} \\
\text{‘Herceas’ monstrator ait ‘non respicis aras?’}
\end{align*}
\]

the Phrygian local tells him
not to tread upon the shade of Hector. Scattered stones
were lying there, preserving no appearance of anything sacred:
the guide says: ‘Have you no respect for the Hercean altars?’

We have seen how Lucan recalls the death of Priam in *Aeneid* 2 for his own depiction of Pompey’s death and decapitation in *BC* 8, so it is not surprising that Priam’s death scene and its implications of ruin are noted here, positing a further tie between Troy’s fall and Rome’s

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via the death of each city’s ‘leader’.\textsuperscript{142} But Lucan also cleverly links Pompey’s tomb with Hector’s here at Troy.\textsuperscript{143} The aphorism \textit{nullum est sine nomine saxum}, ‘no stone is without a story’ (9.973) in the context of dilapidated monuments is evocative of the stone Cordus inscribes with Pompey’s \textit{nomen} to mark the location of his haphazard grave in book 8. The burial site is so lowly that a passerby would fail to notice Pompey’s grave if it were not pointed out (8.820-2). Caesar, oblivious to Hector’s tomb, is reprimanded by the Trojan tour-guide for his carelessness in trampling it.\textsuperscript{144} Pompey’s death and burial encompass, as a stand in for the fall of the Republic, his dual role as Hector and Priam, the defeated heroes of prior epics, the last bastions of Troy’s power as envisioned by Homer and Virgil, respectively. By including these symbolic pointers at the site of a ruined Troy, Lucan offers an homage to his epic predecessors through the lens of defeat, proleptic of his vision of present/future Rome similarly crumbling and dying.

But Lucan’s—typically—is an aggressive homage. Caesar’s trampling on the Hercean altar recalls Pyrrhus’ slaughter of Priam and the desecration of the same sacred site.\textsuperscript{145} Achilles and his son had ‘ruined’ Troy\textsuperscript{146} just as Caesar is making new ruins of his Rome; theirs brought the destruction of a foreign enemy in Troy and the Trojans,\textsuperscript{147} Caesar’s

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{142} Rossi (2001): 322-3 makes this point.
\item \textsuperscript{143} Lucan’s Troy is some amalgamation of Virgil’s Troy in \textit{Aen.} 2, the ‘replica’ Troy at Buthrotum in \textit{Aen.} 3 (housing a cenotaph for Hector), future Rome in \textit{Aen.} 8, the present crumbling Rome from Lucan’s own BC 1 and 7, and the site of Pompey’s burial on the Egyptian shore in BC 8. The layering of locations and time periods is dizzying.
\item \textsuperscript{146} Achilles threw Troy’s gates open by killing Hector, the city’s ‘gate-keeper; Neoptolemus/Pyrrhus finished the job by killing and decapitating Priam, the symbolic embodiment of his city’s fate. See Putnam (1965): 33-7; Smith (1999): 247-8; Dekel (2012): 68-9.
\item \textsuperscript{147} Though it is noteworthy that Achilles’ wrath was also ‘destructive’ to his—loosely affiliated—Achaean cohort, signaled in the poem’s \textit{incipit}, as well as to the Trojans (\textit{Il.} 1.1-2): \textit{μὴ…οὐδὸμένην, ‘destructive
\end{itemize}
victories are ‘suicidal’ by nature of the internecine conflict he is waging. Whether we believe that Caesar is cognizant of what he sees at Troy or not,\textsuperscript{148} Lucan tells us that he does go out of his way to honor the tombs of Ajax and Achilles, the great Achaean heroes (9.961-3). In this way, Caesar aligns himself with the epic winners contra his own genealogical connection with the epic losers, whom he stomps underfoot.\textsuperscript{149} Lucan’s sphragis (9.980-9), his monumentalizing of his own poetic achievement and his muse, Caesar, is a monument to Caesar’s destructive wickedness and the poet’s own implication in that wickedness (by narrating Caesar’s villainy).\textsuperscript{150} Caesar in BC only ever creates ruins, he tramples (calcire).\textsuperscript{151} Lucan had feared that Pompey’s tomb might be trampled as a result of its inconspicuousness (8.804-05): erremus populi cinerumque tuorum, | Magne, metu nullas Nili calcemus harenas, ‘Let us peoples be in doubt and tread on none | of Nile’s sands in terror of your ashes, Magnus’. Here symbolically Caesar tramples Pompey’s tomb through his desecration of the epic models for this tomb, as he wanders victorious through a graveyard of epics past.

\textsuperscript{148} I.e. is his sightseeing aimless or attentive: and thus, does he ‘stumble’ onto Hector’s tomb and the altar or does he seek them out for defilement? For different readings of Caesar’s ‘vision’ here, see esp. Ormand (1994); Rossi (2001); Tesoriero (2005).

\textsuperscript{149} Noted by Tesoriero (2005): 205-06.


\textsuperscript{151} E.g. 7.292-4, 748-9; 9.977, 1043-4; 10.2: with Zwierlein (2010): 422; Wick (2004): ad 977sq; Leigh (2009): 243; Day (2013): 177-8. From calx, the back of the heel (OLD s.v. calx\textsuperscript{1} 1); often of accidental treading, but Lucan uses the verb more forcefully, of trampling bodies and objects (OLD s.v. calco 6 a, b). Petronius, catching the refrain, will have his own Caesar in Eumolpus’ Bellum Civile (effectively a rebuttal to Lucan’s poem) ‘trample the heights’ in his crossing of the Alps (BC 152: haec ubi calcavit Caesar iuga milite laeto). Caesar in Lucan’s poem is the opposite of Aeneas the city-founder/builder, and this makes his claim to the shades of Troy that he will build/found a Roman Pergamum insidiously comical (9.997-9). His offer of pia tura (996) to the gods of Troy’s ashes constitutes his first attempted demonstration of pietas in the poem; at this moment he most clearly aims at emulating Aeneas but so brutally fails at reactivating his ancestor’s selflessness (991-96). See Feeney (1991): 294. Note also: Caesar will shortly claim to offer tura to the ‘rightful grave’ (9.1091: iusto…sepulcro) of Pompey, in a similarly unconvincing attempt at Aeneas-like pietas.
At the opening of the final book of the poem, Caesar stomps into Alexandria (10.2: *calcauit*), and, ignoring all other sites, immediately seeks out the tomb of Alexander the Great. Scholarship has tended appropriately to view the scene as Lucan’s comparison of Caesar with Alexander, and of the subsequent polemic against Alexander as more obliquely an attack on tyrannical Caesar(s).\(^{152}\) I will look briefly at the less acknowledged connection that Lucan is making here instead between Alexander and Pompey and the implications of Caesar’s implicit ‘tomb-raiding’.

The allusion is subtle, but loaded (10.19): [Caesar] *effossum tumulis cupide descendit in antrum*, ‘[Caesar] eagerly descends into the cavern hollowed out for a burial-place’. Lucan everywhere plays with epic topoi, and here Caesar’s descent into the hollowed out *antrum* functions as a *katabasis*.\(^{153}\) Caesar however needs no Sibylline guide, he is like Hercules breaching the world of the dead without fear or compunction. But it is not quite the ‘Tartarean cave’ he is entering (e.g. *BC* 6.712: *Tartareo...antro*), it is one shaped into a *tumulus*, and so Caesar again takes on the guise of an Erichtho or a Sulla gleefully (*cupide*) entering tombs to exhume the dead.

Lucan does not detail what exactly Caesar is doing in Alexander’s tomb, but the image of tomb-raiding continues as Alexander and his remains are equated with Pompey’s scattered corpse from book 8. Alexander’s limbs should have been dispersed throughout the world (10.22-3): *sacratis totum spargenda per orbem | membra uiri posuere adytis*, ‘in a sacred shrine they laid the warrior’s limbs | which should have been dispersed through all the


world’. This is the corporal punishment Caesar belittles during the storm scene in book 5, but Pompey actually suffers after his own death (cf. 8.629: *spargant laceruntque*, cf. 8.751: *sparsis Pompei manibus*, 9.58: *dispersi*, 9.1093: *sparsis*: see above).\(^{154}\) Alexander should have been a source of mockery (10.26: *ludibrio*), as Pompey’s corpse becomes (8.710): *ludibrium pelagi*, ‘plaything of the sea’, and afterwards at 9.14: *risitque sui ludibria trunci*, ‘[Pompey’s ghost] laughed at the insults to its torso’.\(^{155}\) Pompey had feared before Pharsalus that he would become the ‘plaything’ of his father-in-law Caesar (7.380: *ludibrium soceri*); while his trunk becomes a toy of the sea his head comes as a grim trinket at which Caesar feigns disgust. Caesar’s tomb-raiding brings him into direct contact with the corpse of another Magnus (Alexander), another toy.

Beyond these are more general allusions between Pompey and Alexander that Lucan has been building throughout the poem and which climax here in the description of each in death. The first mention of Alexander comes during the catalogue of Pompey’s troops (3.233-4): *hic ubi Pellaeus post Tethyos aequora doctor* | *constitit et magno uinci se fassus ab orbe est*, ‘here where the Pellaean commander halted after reaching Tethys’ | waters and confessed that he was beaten by the world’s great size’. The comparison is meant to champion the might of Pompey’s resources in the East, but it doubles as a prelude to his demise: like Alexander, this world conquering will not end well for Pompey.

The same image of Pompey’s ill-fated Eastern connections with the Macedonian ruler appears in his message to enlist the aid of the Parthians after his defeat at Pharsalus,\(^{156}\) Berti (2000): *ad* 10.22-3 notes the allusions to Pompey here through repetition of forms of *spargere*.\(^{155}\) See Quint (1993): 155; Berti (2000): *ad* 10.26.
containing a catalogue of his exploits in Alexander’s old haunts (8.218-38). Lucan frames the battle between Caesar and Pompey as a competition for the right to be the next Alexander (5.1-3): *sic alterna duces bellorum uolnera passos | in Macetum terras miscens aduersa secundis | seruuit fortuna pares*, ‘So Fortune mingled failure with success, and kept the leaders | for the Macedonians’ land, well-matched after suffering wounds | of war in turn’. The ‘lands of the Macedonians’ is meant to recall Alexander, the original world ruler, as each leader balances victory with defeat in pursuit of the Macedonian’s legacy of despotism.157

Lucan teased at Pompey’s connection to Alexander at the beginning of book 8, but the parallel is clinched at 8.692-9. Here Lucan contrasts Alexander’s burial with Pompey’s lack of burial. Alexander is housed in a vault (694: *sacrato Macedon seruatur in antro*, ‘you preserve the Macedonian in a consecrated cave’), while Pompey is scattered and tossed in the waves. This scene is the direct precursor to Lucan’s description of Caesar visiting the vault (10.19: *antrum*) of Alexander at the beginning of book 10, where he laments the fact that Alexander’s remains are not ‘scattered’ throughout the world as Pompey’s have been. There is a sense that while one ‘Magnus’ is buried, the other must be denied burial. This is implicit in book 8, but more clear at 9.153-4, when the younger Pompey promises to provide burial for his father at the expense of the exhuming of Alexander: *non ego Pellaeas arces adytisque retectum | corpus Alexandri pigra Mareotide mergam?*, ‘Shall I not engulf in sluggish Mareotis the rotting flesh of Pella, | Alexander’s body from its sanctuary uncovered?’ As David Quint argues, Alexander’s body should resemble the fate of his empire: lacerated and

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broken to pieces after his death.\textsuperscript{158} We can take this further: his body should stand for the dismemberment (the \textit{sparagmos}) of his empire just as Lucan has (de)constructed Pompey’s body as a stand in for the scattered, dismembered state of Rome’s Republic after Pharsalus.

Pompey had styled himself as Alexander: he was, after all, Pompeius ‘Magnus’. \textit{Alexander-imitatio} was common among Roman generals, but Pompey appropriated this connection more intensely than other imitators. Plutarch tells us he was nicknamed Alexander in his youth for a physical resemblance between the two—he later styled his appearance after Alexander—and the trajectory of his youthfully successful career in the East mirrored Alexander’s conquests. He even wore a cloak during his triumph celebrating the Eastern victories said to have belonged to Alexander (App. \textit{Mith.} 117).\textsuperscript{159} Their ends were both catastrophic, and both were ultimately embalmed (Alexander’s body, Pompey’s head). Lucan seems to be toying with this as his description of Pompey’s embalming is immediately followed by his frustration that Alexander’s (embalmed) body is allowed a final resting place (8.688-700).

If Pompey has been more directly associated with Alexander in the poem up to book 10, it is here that Caesar will claim sole succession. After preliminary associations between dead Pompey and dead Alexander during Lucan’s polemic against the Macedonian ruler,

\textsuperscript{158} Quint (1993): 155. Dinter (2012): 17 comments: ‘Even though Alexander was the ultimate ruler, his empire falls apart at the very moment the ruler’s body becomes defunct…’ He notes the ‘painfully obvious’ correspondences between Alexander and Caesar here, but nothing on the associations between Alexander and Pompey.

Alexander’s connection with the lightning bolt and star (10.34, 35), Caesar’s ‘tokens’, seals the deal. Caesar has wrested sole claim to Alexander-imitatio in Lucan’s poem, and this is the ultimate prize of his raiding of Alexander’s tomb, the tomb Pompey should have had instead. This association however is the kiss of death for Caesar—as it was for Pompey—who exits the epic as it stands perplexed, dismayed, at the point of defeat surrounded by Egyptian troops (10.534-46), while Pompey, in a stunning role reversal, usurps Caesar’s deific ‘trampling’ (cf. 10.2) in the final image of the poem (10.546): ...calcantem moenia Magnum, ‘...Magnus as he trod upon the ramparts’.

4.4. Re-Animator

et ad quempiam praetereuntium ‘quid hoc’ inquam ‘comperior? hicine mortui solent au fugere?’ ‘tace’, respondit ille ‘nam oppido puer et satis peregrinus es meritoque ignoras Thessaliae te consistere, ubi sagae mulieres ora mortuorum passim demorsicant, eaque sunt illis artis magicae supplementa’.
—Apuleius, Metamorphoses 2.21

I am alive—I guess
—Emily Dickinson

No discussion of burial rites in the Bellum Civile is complete without a comment on Lucan’s magnificent witch Erichtho. She appears in book 6, on the eve of the battle of Pharsalus, as Pompey’s son Sextus seeks her aid in unveiling the future events of war, his own fate, and

160 Ahl (1976): 224; Berti (2000): ad locc.; Auhagen (2001): 136; Narducci (2002): 245; Rossi (2005): 244. Homer’s description of Achilles approaching the walls of Troy as a noxious star is a mediating image here too (Il. 22.25-32), and, as Lucan is at pains to paint at the end of BC 9 and beginning of BC 10, further links Caesar to his ‘models’ Alexander and Achilles.
161 See similarly Hardie (2008): 314: ‘what is preserved in this subterranean place in Alexandria is the Alexander-tradition, the continuing inspiration for Caesar’s own behaviour in this book’.
162 Lowe (2010): 131-4 argues that Caesar, like other Romans conquered by the ‘savage and mysterious power’ of Libya (Aeneas, Curio, Pompey, Cato), is at the end of the poem similarly outmatched by this ‘uncontrollable continent’
163 The bibliography on Erichtho and Lucan’s necromancy scene in general is enormous. A good place to start is Finiello (2005), who provides an overview of much recent scholarship.
the fate of his father Pompey the Great. The figure of Erichtho is unavoidable, but I will try to focus on the corpse she resurrects and demands to prophesy for Sextus.

Erichtho is the über-witch of Thessaly, so vile and sinister that she scorns the ‘too pious’ actions of her witchy brethren (6.507-08). It is her specialization as a night-witch, dealing exclusively in the dead and rites associated with death that set her above—and morally below—the others. Lucan provides a list of her many atrocities aimed at corpses (6.529-69). Among these, she buries the living and revives the dead (529-32), she robs funeral pyres of half-burnt corpses (532-7), cannibalizes crucifixion victims (541-9), performs Caesarian-sections and hurls the foetuses on burning altars (558-9), and mutilates the heads and cannibalizes corpses at kinsmen’s funerals (564-9). She is also able to kill if need be (554-61), but her ‘joy’ comes from repurposing the dead for her dark arts (541-2 cf. 526, 604). In short (561): hominum mors omnis in uso est, ‘Every human death is to her advantage’.

Lucan describes all of this as a preamble for the necromancy Erichtho performs for Pompey’s son Sextus, who wishes to know the future on the eve of the battle at Pharsalus. While Aeneas and the Sibyl in Aeneid 6 descend to Hell for the purposes of consulting the ghost of Anchises for future knowledge (the main model scene for Lucan’s episode), Erichtho brings Hell to earth by summoning the ghost of a fallen soldier to prophesy. But it is

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164 On Erichtho as a ‘night-witch’, see Gordon (1987): 239-40 who describes Erichtho as a ‘night-witch, who can by definition never be seen, or accused, who has no social existence. She lives in nightmares only. The conceptual value of the night-witch is that she provides an image of malignant power, a permanent enemy of the bases of social existence: child murderer, cannibal, indiscriminate consumer of human vitals’. Similar points are made by Tomassi Moreschini (2005): 149-50, who claims Erichtho (and others practicing witchcraft) function as an anti-civic response to the Emperor’s claims to ordered/structured religious hegemony. See also Finiello (2005): esp. 160-3.

165 It is not entirely clear from the Latin (564: cognato in funere, ‘at a kinsman’s funeral’), whether Erichtho’s own kinsmen are meant here, or others burying their own relatives. See Finiello (2005): 161 and notes. Whatever the case, Lucan is playing up Erichtho’s horrible perversion of traditional funeral rites.
not simply an _umbra_ she seeks. True to form, Erichtho reanimates the corpse of a fallen soldier as a vessel for its soul, creating a zombie out of a body ‘denied a grave’ (626).

The process of her necromancy is arguably the most outlandish example of corpse abuse in the poem. After rummaging through the fields of the dead, Erichtho selects a corpse and drags the body to her workplace by a hook (_uncus_). Here Lucan distorts the role of a public executioner who was charged with dragging corpses with a hook to be dumped into the Tiber (often after an extended period of public exposure and mutilation). Erichtho will not drag this particular corpse to be disposed of, but rather ‘to live’ (637-9: _inserto laqueis feralibus unco | per scopulos miserum trahitur per saxa cadauer | uicturum_, ‘a hook sunk into the dead man’s rope, | the poor cadaver over rocks and stones is hauled to live | again’).

The enjambled catachrestic _uicturum_ spills over into the next line, delaying and perverting the standard trope that the corpse will be dumped like others dragged by a hook.

She then prepares the corpse, slicing open its chest and pouring boiling blood and lunar poison into newly created wounds (667-9). This scene is essentially a reverse-sacrifice that inverts the Sibyl’s animal sacrifice in the _Aeneid_ (6.248-9: cf. Ov. _Met._ 7.264-78; Sen. _Med._ 705-38). Into the corpse she heaps every assortment of foul substance: rabid dog foam, lynx viscera, hyena hump, the marrow of a snake-fed doe, to name a few (671-80). Along with these named substances, she adds ‘leaves drenched in spells unspeakable’ (682)

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166 Many ancient sources note the dragging of corpses by a hook, most famously, perhaps Juv. 10.66-7 of Sejanus: _Seianus ducitur unco | spectandus, gaudent omnes_, ‘all rejoice as Sejanus is seen dragged by a hook’. Cf. Ovid _Ibis_ 165-6. In 31 CE Sejanus’ corpse was left on the _Scalae Gemoniae_ for three days before being dragged to the Tiber by a hook (Suet. _Tib._ 61; Dio 58.11; Sid. Apoll. 1.7.12). The famous scene may have been on Lucan’s mind here. For a variety of further examples, see _OLD s.v. uncus_ b; Mayer (1979): _ad_ Juv. 10.66-7; Hinard (1984): 301; Kyle (1998): index s.v. ‘hooks, dragging by’. Note in particular the breathtaking senatorial decree contained in SHA _Comm._ 18.3-20.5, demanding the _post mortem_ abuse of Commodus with the repeated refrain of dragging by the hook (discussed in Kyle [1998]: 225-6). For possible gladiatorial overtones in _BC_, see Korenjak (1996): _ad_ 6.638, 639f.

and ‘venoms of her own creation’ (684). Erichtho then unleashes a torrent of cacophonous noises ‘utterly discordant with human speech’ (688-93). When the ghost hesitates to reenter its body, she beats the corpse with a live snake (725-9) and threatens the infernal gods (730-49). The scene is totally outrageous.

It is characteristic of Lucan to provide the sardonic twist that this surgically exacting corpse abuse—along with Pompey’s maltreatment the most grisly scene of post mortem corporal mutilation in the epic—manages not further bodily dissolution but actually to revivify the dead man, creating life from rotting flesh. But this life is largely signified by its liminality and its grotesque warping of actual life (755-62): the corpse is more dead than alive (758-9: nondum facies uiiuentis in illo, iam morientis erat, ‘there was in him the look of someone not yet living, already dying’; cf. 726-7). Erichtho had promised Sextus

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168 Erichtho’s mad-science recalls Sulla’s metaphorical venturing too far into the human frame to remove the disease in Rome’s rotten corpse (2.141-3). See Arweiler (2006): 54 n.125, similarly linking Sulla and Erichtho through pseudo-science/grave-robbing: ‘Der kurierende Arzt erweist sich als Totengräber’.

169 Masters (1992): 191 notes the ‘civil-warness’ of Erichtho’s voice, made up of a confusion of dissonance and discord (6.686-7). Dinter (2012): 70-1 argues that Erichtho’s ability to distil coherence from the multitude of voices forms part of Lucan’s larger association of Erichtho with Ovid’s personified Fama.

170 That this extended scene is Shelley’s source for Frankenstein’s creation of his monster seems quite clear. See Luck (2006): 212: ‘[In Erichtho] we may have the prototype of Frankenstein, for Mary Shelley probably knew of this passage through her husband, a great admirer of the Roman poet’. Also Joyce (1993): 140-1: ‘In 1815 [P. B.] Shelley professed to admire the Pharsalia more than the Aeneid…However seriously he made this statement, he would surely have discussed Lucan with Mary Shelley, who was then improving her Latin under his direction. It thus seems reasonable to me that Mary Shelley knew of Lucan’s poem before she read it in original form herself in 1821, for the parallels between her scene of Victor Frankenstein animating his monster and Lucan’s of Erictho calling the soldier’s corpse back to life are certainly striking’. Shelley seems, actually, to have begun reading Lucan in the original at least as early as August, 1819 (and not 1821, pace Joyce), as she herself states in her journal: see Morrison and Stone (2003): 259 s.v ‘Lucan, Marcus Annaeus’. We would be wise to give her much more credit than simply being ‘notified’ of Lucan by her husband. I have noted the deeper connections in a paper presented at Rutgers University, NJ in the Spring of 2010: ‘Creating the Grotesque: Zombification in Lucan’s Bellum Civile, Shelley’s Frankenstein, and Romero’s Day of the Dead’. Weiner (2015) reaches similar conclusions.


172 See Housman (1927): ad loc.: ‘facies nondum erat uiiuentis, iam coeperat esse morientis, quae, sicut
that new, true, genuine life would be restored to prophesy for him (660: noua...uera...uita figura). noua anticipates the strange novelty of Erichtho’s/Lucan’s creation, undercutting the claims that this will be ‘real life’, and setting us up for something much more strange. It is no surprise that a witch, who has mastered the arts of death and dying, would create a perversion of actual life. Death is all Erichtho—and Lucan—knows.

Liminality is a key feature of Lucan’s necromancy scene. Erichtho’s dealings with the dead are so entrenched that outwardly there is little separating her from a walking corpse herself. Her cave is a liminal place, somewhere between Hell and the upper world and resembles the entrance to the underworld in the classic description at Aeneid 6.236-41. Erichtho’s cave, like the Sibyl’s in the Aeneid, represents a liminal or marginal area between both worlds, but the boundaries have been so blurred that her abode might as well be in Hell (6.649-53).

The witch too spends her time navigating this middle space. She scorns civil society and, like a corpse, inhabits abandoned tombs (511-12: deserta...busta | incolit, ‘so in abandoned tombs she lives’). She is grata to the nether gods (513) and intrinsic to that element of Hell that has drifted into the upper world. Erichtho is corpse-like in appearance.

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Her skin is gaunt with decay and corrupted by hellish pallor\(^\text{177}\) (515-18). She eerily resembles the corpse she will raise from the dead to prophesy for Sextus (6.750-60): both are ‘grim’ (\textit{maestus}, -\textit{a}, -\textit{um}: Erichtho, 625; corpse, 776, 821) and tinged with \textit{pallor} (Erichtho, 517; corpse, 759). The living-dead corpse (758-59), similarly hovers caught between two worlds,\(^\text{178}\) and this state of liminality is precisely what Erichtho had requested for her necromancy (cf. 6.712-15, 777-9).

The Thessalian stain of death is infectious and Sextus Pompey too comes to resemble a corpse (658-9). He has lost the spark of life: \textit{trementem...exanimi defixum lumina uoltu}, ‘trembling with his gaze transfixed and lifeless face’.\(^\text{179}\) Like Erichtho, he takes on the appearance of the reanimated corpse: the ghost-soldier the witch summons will hesitate to enter its old, dead body, the lifeless confines (720-1: \textit{exanimis...carceris}) of its prior home. The word \textit{exanimis} is in Lucan only used in the context of corpses, real or metaphorical (the two examples in book 6, plus \textit{BC} 2.26, 2.302). As Dolores O’Higgins notes, even the soldiers pre-Pharsalus have faces tinged with the pallor of death; they are ‘death’ (7.129-30: \textit{multorum pallor in ore} | \textit{mortis venturae faciesque simillima fato}, ‘the paleness | of coming death is on many faces, a look like their fate’).\(^\text{180}\)

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\(^\text{177}\) Virgil had indicated the approaching death of Lausus by highlighting his ‘pale face’ (\textit{Aen.} 10.822: \textit{ora...pallentia}), adapting Lucretius’ designation of the pallor of corpses, generally (1.123). Erichtho has the pallor of someone about to die, but she lives in a limbo where the brief moment of death pallor is infinitely extended. The phrase also recalls \textit{G.} 1.477: \textit{simulacra modis pallentia miris}, among the indicators that civil war was about to be unleashed; this is an appropriate reference here in Lucan’s lead-up to the climax of his \textit{Civil War}, and his own depiction of troops before battle finds them similarly tinged with deathly \textit{pallor} (7.129-30, see below).


\(^\text{180}\) Note the pale faces of Cacus’ decapitated victims, pierced on pikes (\textit{Aen.} 8.196-7): \textit{foribusque adfixa superbis} | \textit{ora uirum tristi pendebant pallida tabo}. 208
This plays well with the distorted sequencing of events here, where dead soldiers litter the Thessalian plain before any actual fighting has taken place, a point bemoaned by scholars as evidence of Lucan’s ‘carelessness’,\textsuperscript{181} but better understood as a nod to the power of witchcraft to manipulate time (e.g. 6.461-5; book 6 in fact ends with Erichtho holding back the approaching day in a fog of night at 830).\textsuperscript{182} The battle of Pharsalus is bookended by mirrored descriptions of fields full of those slain surprisingly at Pharsalus (6.619-41; 7.786-845). They are in effect dead before the narrative depicting their physical deaths. This is also a pointed comment on the hopelessness of the war, and the withered Republican cause. The corpses stand for the already realized death of the Republic, while the ‘Imperial’ victors (Caesar and Erichtho) rummage through their/its uiscera (see further chapter 4.5).

Charles Tesoriero has compiled an extensive list of comparisons between Erichtho and Caesar, including their impiety toward the gods/state/family, their consumption by ira, the pleasure they derive from their crimes, the desecration of the bodies of the living and dead, tyranny, invocation of infernal powers, and so on. In short: ‘Erichtho is Caesar unmasked: pure wickedness, selfish excess, a figure who views the civil war as a means to acquire personal power’.\textsuperscript{183} Not surprisingly many of these comparisons concern, in one way or another, the maltreatment of corpses both encounter on the fields of Thessaly.\textsuperscript{184} The image that capped Caesar’s malevolence after Pharsalus was his denial of burial to the dead soldiers. Strangely Erichtho follows a different path. While we might be skeptical of her initial promise to offer proper burial rites to the reanimated corpse in exchange for the

\begin{footnotesize}
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\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{181}] E.g. Francken (1896-7): \textit{ad} 6.619; Håkanson (1979): 31. See contra (e.g.) Fratantuono (2012): 249-50.
\item[\textsuperscript{182}] See esp. Arweiler (2006) for Thessaly as a place removed from time and space.
\item[\textsuperscript{183}] Tesoriero (2004): 201-07. The quote is from p.203.
\item[\textsuperscript{184}] See also Arweiler (2006): 34, 56.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
delivery of his prophecy (6.763-70), the final lines of book 6 close with the only ‘successful’ burial in Lucan’s poem, administered by a witch championed for her abuse of the dead and disruption of traditional burial rites (820-8).\(^\text{185}\)

\begin{verbatim}
sic postquam fata peregit,  
stat uoltu maestus tacito mortemque reposcit.  
carminibus magicis opus est herbisque, cadauer  
ut cadat, et nequeunt animam sibi reddere fata  
consumpto iam iure semel. tunc robore multo  
extruit illa rogum; uenit defunctus ad ignes.  
accensa iuuenem positum strue liquit Erictho  
tandem passa mori, Sextoque ad castra parentis  
it comes…
\end{verbatim}

After so recounting destiny, he mournful stands with silent face and asks for death once more. Magic spells and drugs are needed for the corpse to die: the Fates cannot regain his soul, their power over him exhausted already at one go. Then the witch heaps up a pyre with plenteous timber; the dead man comes to the fire. Once the youth was laid upon the kindled heap, Erichtho left him, finally permitting him to die, and goes as Sextus’ companion...

Neil Coffee argues that Erichtho ignores basic codes of reciprocal behavior here since she deprives the corpse of the gift (6.724: *munus*) of not dying a second time, and offers a great payment (762-3: *magna…mercede*) to the corpse from whom she had snatched the gift of death.\(^\text{186}\) But this is to ignore the fact that the corpse was initially, and otherwise would have remained, unburied (626). The greatest disappointment of the corpse’s prophecy is that, because he was not buried, he could not descend far enough into the underworld to have seen anything noteworthy to report back (777-9).\(^\text{187}\) We might weigh the relative value of proper

\(^{185}\) So Zissos (1993): *ad* 6.820-27: ‘it remains a curious fact that the morally derelict Erictho should perform one of the relatively small number of “pious” acts found in the *Bellum Civile*’.


\(^{187}\) See Masters (1992): 198-9; Zissos (1993): *ad* 6.778. Lucan’s poem fights intensely against the traditional form of *katabasis* in epic. Erichtho brings Hell to earth instead of allowing Sextus a chance to descend, and the
burial with the misery of revivification, but Erichtho’s corpse, at least, will receive the more lasting burial rites denied to his fellow countrymen who remain unburied and rotting in the fields.

The cremation/burial is bizarre. Spells and potions, like those which brought the corpse back to life, are required to ‘kill’ it again (822-3: *cadauer* | *ut cadat* is wickedly paradoxical\(^{188}\)), while the ‘spent-man’ (825: *defunctus*) eerily walks up to his own pyre.\(^{189}\) But around the absurdity is proper protocol. Erichtho gathers up copious wood for the construction of a large pyre, and she leaves only after the corpse has been engulfed in flames.\(^{190}\) Lucan’s *tour de force* of epic corpse abuse and necromantic perversity ends with the *dénouement* of a somber funeral for a dead soldier.\(^{191}\)

Erichtho’s treatment here, and at 763-70, is ‘almost motherly’,\(^{192}\) as she, in the role of a mourning female, provides the last rites over the ‘youth’ (826: *iuuenem*). Here, the corpse is humanized for the first time (he is elsewhere variously a *corpus*, *cadauer*, *umbra*, *anima*\(^{193}\)). This touch adds a gentle *pathos* to the scene of burial and plays up the association of Erichtho as a grieving mother. Erichtho’s humanity is for the first time apparent here too,
as she leaves with Sextus as his *comes* (828: ‘companion’), overturning her earlier rejection of civil society.\(^\text{194}\) The entire episode has played with marginal and liminal spaces, blurring the distinctions between Hell and the upper world, life and death, humanity and inhumanity/monstrosity, but the final image is one of proper human decency and kindness. Despite their many points of contact in the poem, the mad witch Erichtho offers and oversees the burial Caesar denied to his fellow Romans and their embodiment as Rome’s Republic, and this is perhaps Lucan’s most shocking denouncement of the ills and inhumanity of Caesarism.

Scholars have argued that with Erichtho’s corpse-soldier Lucan is asking his audience to recall the story about the ‘undying’ prophetic Gabienus, a Caesarian soldier captured and executed by Sextus Pompey in Sicily (recorded in Pliny *HN* 7.52.178-9).\(^\text{195}\) Gabienus is beheaded, but his head hangs on by a thread (*iuussu eius incisa ceruice et uix cohaerente, iacuit in litore toto die*), and he somehow manages to deliver a message to Sextus that the cause against Caesar is worth fighting. This allusion provides wonderful texture for the scene looking beyond the confines of Lucan’s poem to Sextus’ death in Asia and the end of the Pompeian family line. But I want to consider briefly another corpse Lucan is recalling here in Erichtho’s corpse-zombie: Sextus’ father, Pompey the Great.

On an intertextual level, the link between Anchises (deliverer of prophecy) and Aeneas (receiver) in the model prophetic scene from the underworld in *Aen* 6, posits a parallel familial correspondence between the prophetic corpse and his addressee, Sextus

\(^{194}\) Lucan’s use of *comes* also, of course, parallels Virgil’s Sibyl who is Aeneas’ *comes* at *Aen*. 6.292 and 538, as Zissos (1993): *ad* 6.828 notes.

Pompey (who, I might add, styled himself *Pius*, adding a further link to the Aeneas model). Lucan plays with this familial association by calling the corpse *Pompeiana umbra* (6.717), essentially translating the famous tag-line of Pompey as *M/magni nominis umbra*, ‘shadow of a great name’ or ‘shadow of the name of Magnus’ (1.135). This signifier comes during Erichtho’s promise to deliver an accurate prophecy—(716-17): *ducis omnia nato | Pompeiana canat nostri modo militis umbra*, ‘Let the Pompeian ghost just recently among our soldiery foretell the future to the son of the leader’—that proves to be less helpful than expected. The corpse itself echoes Erichtho’s words when it promises an additional prophecy to come (813-14): *tibi certior omnia uates | ipse canet Siculis genitor Pompeius in aruis*, ‘a surer profit will foretell | all to you in the fields of Sicily, your father Pompey, himself’. Even then, this future ‘surer prophet’ will be unable to articulate anything specific to Sextus about his fate. The inexactness of each prophecy (the corpse’s and father Pompey’s *in futuro*) links them, as do the clear verbal cues: *omnia...canet* with *omnia...canat*; the ‘Pompeian shade’ (6.617) with Pompey’s (future) shade. Ultimately, it is difficult to differentiate much between the poorly prophetic corpse and the ghost of Pompey who will poorly prophesy for his son in some future outside of Lucan’s poem. Aeneas had met his father’s shade in the

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196 See examples of coinage containing this cognomen in Sydenham (1952): nos. 1041-5; *ILS* 8891.
198 My trans. The textual issues here have been discussed by Ahl (1976): 136, though I have trouble agreeing with his conclusions. *omnia* is surely preferable to *omina*, both stylistically and in light of the same phrasing 100 lines later of another prophecy to come (813-14): *omnia...canet* in the same metrical position: see Housman (1927): *ad* 6.716. The other sticking point is the function of *Pompeiana*: does it agree with *omnia* or *umbra*? Again, lines 813-14 can help here, where *Pompeius* is the subject of *canet*, and *Pompeius* (the man himself as a ghost) can be seen to play off of the earlier *Pompeiana umbra*. Anyway, as Ahl suggests: ‘The choice boils down to a matter of personal preference’. Cf. Korenjak (1996): *ad loc.*
199 I.e., where he will die, when, etc. (815-16): *ille quoque incertus quo te uocet, unde repellat, | quas iubeat uitare plagas, quae sidera mundi*, ‘even he uncertain where to summon you or drive you back, | which zones, which regions of the world to bid you shun’. Masters (1992): 196-204 expands on these points in more detail.
underworld; Sextus, in a scene outside of chronological structures, time and space, meets the zombie of the ‘shadow of Pompey’ in Thessaly’s Hell on earth.

Like Pompey, who is a ‘shade’ before the moment of his actual death, the corpse is both alive and dead, a zombie who, by the wiles of witchcraft, has died in a battle that has not yet happened. Commentators cite the rather fraught\textsuperscript{200} line about the corpse’s slit throat (637: \textit{traiecto gutture}) as a key feature linking this corpse to Gabienus,\textsuperscript{201} but it also looks ahead to Pompey’s demise, and his death and mutilation through decapitation off the Egyptian shore. Martin Korenjak notes that the odd combination of a slit throat with the ability to speak and indeed prophesy recalls (beyond the historical Gabienus model) the dying prophetic Hector at \textit{Iliad} 22.324-9, 356-60.\textsuperscript{202} His throat is slashed by Achilles but the windpipe remained intact, and he is able to deliver a prophecy that looks ahead to Achilles’ fall at the hands of Paris and Apollo. While Erichtho’s ability to make a corpse with a slit throat speak is certainly a sign of her skill at witchcraft (and the skill of witchcraft), a subtle gesture towards Hector

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{200} See Housman (1927): \textit{ad loc.}, who prints \textit{gutt ure}, but his attempt to explain Lucan’s meaning makes an even larger mess of things; Korenjak (1996): \textit{ad loc.} rightly squelches this interpretation. Hákanson (1979): 32-4, Shackleton Bailey (1988): \textit{ad loc.}, and Braund (1992): Iv, posit ‘pectore’ for ‘gutt ure’, translating ‘one with pierced breast’, in a reasonable attempt to avoid the issues posed by \textit{gutt ure} altogether (as well a connection to verses 722-3). But \textit{gutt ure} still seems best to me, and I think plays with the Gabienus and Pompey slit-throat allusions, and issues of ‘bad prophecy’: note an interesting parallel at \textit{Aen.} 10.348 (same metrical position), of one Dryops, who has his throat slashed as he is speaking, robbing him of life and voice together (10.345-8): \ldots\textit{Clausus | aduenit et rigida Dryopem ferit eminus hasta | sub mentum grauitur pressa pariterque loquentis | uocem animamque rapit traiecto gutture}, ‘Clausus [with a] stiff spear-shot strikes Dryops at long range | Under his chin. Its powerful force cuts clean through his windpipe, | Just as he’s speaking, and robs him of life as it robs him of language’. In a relatively rare Virgilian syllepsis, the snatching of life and voice together resonates with the corpse-soldier who was just previously dead, but also unable to speak upon initial request (6.760-2). When he does speak, the information he provides is rather useless to Sextus, since he predicts a future, better prophecy to come (he might as well be voiceless/‘throatless’).
\textsuperscript{201} E.g. Grenade (1950): 37-8.
\textsuperscript{202} Korenjak (1996): \textit{ad} 6.637. He also argues, \textit{ad} 639, that Erichtho’s dragging of the corpse is meant to recall Achilles’ dragging of Hector’s corpse to his chariot to further mutilate the body by dragging it around the walls of Troy.
\end{footnotesize}
here may strengthen the corpse’s association with Pompey, whom Lucan repeatedly models on the Trojan prince as the poem’s heroic victim.

The corpse’s bizarre continuation of life is patently clear, but so too is Lucan’s treatment of Pompey’s extended death. Even after decapitation Pompey tries to speak (8.682-3), and his truncus and caput become their own characters throughout the poem as Lucan repeatedly ‘revives’ Pompey in a cyclical rehashing of his death, abuse, and burial. Most striking are the lexical cues that tie Pompey’s half-death with the corpse’s strange rebirth.\(^{203}\)

Consider Pompey’s sputtering death at 8.682-3: *dum uiuunt uultus atque os in murmura pulsant | singultus animae, dum lumina nuda rigescunt*... ‘while features are alive and sobs of breath impel | the mouth to murmur, while unclosed eyes are stiffening...’ Now recall again the revivification of Erichtho’s corpse-soldier (6.757-62): *distento lumina rictu | nudantur. nondum facies uiuentis in illo, | iam morientis erat... | …sed murmure nullo | ora astricta sonant*, ‘uncovered are his eyes with gaping | stare: there was in him the look of someone not yet living, | already dying...| But his sealed | lips sound with no muttering’. This is a haunting reworking which beautifully threads together the major scene of death of Lucan’s poem with the equally famous zombie scene. In the end, in the narrative present (excluding the earlier example of Sulla’s burial in book 2) Erichtho’s corpse-soldier and Pompey’s are the only corpses to receive anything resembling a burial before/after Pharsalus, at the oddly tender hands of characters (Cordus and Erichtho) acting out the role of a grieving wife or mother. But through the bizarre circumstances of Lucan’s staging of their deaths,

both Pompey and Erichtho’s zombie have an afterlife, or better, an extension of the process of dying, and by linking them in this way Lucan further articulates the nightmarish repetitive cycle of death in and as civil war.

4.5. Some Conclusions

farewell goodnight last one out turn out the lights
and let me be, let me die inside
let me know the way through this world of hate in you
cause the dye is cast, and the bitch is back
and we’re all dead yeah we’re all dead
inside the future of a shattered past
I lie just to be real, I’d die just to feel
why do the same old things keep on happening?
because beyond my hopes there are no feelings...
—Smashing Pumpkins, ‘Tales of a Scorched Earth’

I want to linger on these last points about repetitions and the extension of the process of dying a bit longer, since I think they have powerful implications for Lucan’s conception of the symbolic death of Rome’s res publica, and his devious engagement with Augustan rhetoric championing monarchical rule as a ‘restoration’, a ‘rebirth’ of the Republican system and its intimate association with notions of libertas. We have seen how Lucan utilizes body of state imagery repeatedly in his description of civil war as an attack upon the metaphorical Roman (qua Republican) body. Civil war is self-eviscerating as we learn from the opening image of the poem, which functions as a constant refrain (1.1-2: canimus populumque potentem | in sua uictrici conuersum uiscera dextra, ‘…we sing of a mighty people | attacking its own guts with victorious sword-hand’). Lucan is not so much innovating as he is refining and repurposing a literary/rhetorical trope from the Republican period that
articulated the end(ing) of the Republic as the death and/or mutilation of a human body. In his very brief and caged statement on the civil war between Caesar and Pompey, Virgil, through the voice of Anchises, deploys the same analogy that Lucan uses as a launching-pad for his entire project (Aen. 6.832-3: ne, pueri, ne tanta animis adsuescite bella | neu patriae ualidas in uiscera uertite uiris, ‘No, my boys, no! Don’t accustom your spirits to wars of such scope, | Don’t use your strength and your vigour to disembowel your country!’).  

The nightmare of BC 7 depicting the battle of Phalsalus stages this extended metaphor in the most elaborate terms, as Caesar(ism) is shown tearing through the uiscera of the Republic’s last hope of ‘structural’ integrity: this is ‘the slaughter of the citizen body, and of citizen’s bodies’ (esp. 7.578-81, 721-3). Despite Pompey’s efforts to avoid imposing ‘wounds’ on Rome’s body before battle (7.91-2), Pharsalus is where the Republic dies and where Caesars take control of Rome (e.g. 7.387-99, 432-48, 617-47, 697; cf. 581-5, 597-8). While Lucan presents Pharsalus as a climax for the physical destruction of the Republic, imagery related to this destruction occurs throughout the poem. Sulla is described as hacking Rome to pieces like a surgeon cutting too deeply into already festering and rotting limbs (2.140-3). Cato’s funeral oration for Pompey (9.190-214) bemoans Pompey’s own foolishness for not recognizing that the Republic and libertas were long dead, the present Republican State a façade for monarchy. Earlier, Cato had positioned himself as a father

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204 Imagery of the Republican ‘body politic’ murdered and/or torn to pieces became a popular way of symbolizing the crumbling of the Roman State as constant civil wars seemed bound to spawn further tyranny, despotism, and dissolution. Cicero could describe the Republic as ‘dead’ as early as 59 BCE (Att. 2.21: tota periiit) and a lifeless corpse by 54 BCE (Att. 4.18.2): cf. Cic. Fam. 4.5.4-5, 5.13; Att. 15.13a.1; Phil. 2 (passim), Off. 3.83 for a range of murder, mutilation, and dismemberment metaphors. See further Walters (2011).
208 Gowing (2005): 92-4 with notes.
mourning the ‘corpse of Rome’ burning on a pyre, and with its death pursuing the ‘shadow of
the name’ of Libertas to the end (2.297-303):

ceu morte parentem
natorum orbatum longum producere funus
ad tumulos iubet ipse dolor, iuuat ignibus atri
inseruisse manus constructoque aggere busti
ipsam atras tenuisse faces, non ante reuellar
exanimem quam te conplectar, Roma; tuumque
nomen, Libertas, et inanem persequar umbram

As grief itself
bids the father robbed of his son by death conduct the long
funeral procession to the grave, he wants to thrust
his hands into the black fires, and on the pyre’s piled-high mound
himself to hold the torches black, so I will not be torn away
before embracing your lifeless body, Rome; and, Liberty,
your name, even an empty shade, I shall follow all the way.

Cato’s own metaphor anticipates his role as laudator in the (quasi-)funeral for Pompey in
book 9, though here he imagines the corpse as physically and viscerally present and not in absentia as Pompey had been, half-burnt and headless on the Egyptian shoreline. Pompey is
Lucan’s champion human embodiment of the Republic, so Cato’s metaphor has some
resonant power here when we consider the inevitable fall of each.

Concomitant with the loss of the Republic is the loss of ‘freedom’ (libertas), as Cato
makes plain (2.302-03). The terms in which he describes the loss of libertas echo again
Lucan’s own portrait of Pompey as a ‘shadow of a great name’209 (1.135: stat magni nominis
umbra; 2.302-03: tuumque | nomen, Libertas, et inanem persequar umbram) tying the man
to the last fleeting vestiges of what he and the Republic had stood for. That Rome dies and its
Freedom-shade flees from the corpse might make us think too of Turnus and the closing line

(and the closing word) of the Aeneid (12.952: *uitaque cum gemitu fugit indignata sub umbras*, ‘Life flutters off on a groan, under protest, down among shadows’).\(^{210}\) We might be tempted to read back into Virgil’s final image Lucan’s retrojected rewriting of the future-death of the Republic and Libertas—and the establishment of the principate—in Aeneas’ slaying of Turnus. Pompey’s death is synonymous with the death of the Republic, and the death pangs of each are elaborated throughout the epic. But it is symptomatic of Lucan’s entire project that all deaths in civil war are in effect self-inflicted wounds dealt to the State Body. These wounds proliferate, leaving the State in a constant state of ‘dying’, or, of being dead and putrefying. The poem is an extended funeral parade for Rome/The Republic, but its corpse (like Pompey’s) is never really allowed to be buried, it just keeps rotting.

Augustan Imperial ideology sought to reform this image of Rome’s civil war self-evisceration by claiming that the principate was merely a restoration of the *res publica* and (thus) *libertas*, that power had been transferred back to the Senate.\(^{211}\) If the inherent paradox of claiming a seamless continuity with the Republic through the establishment of an entirely

\(^{210}\) Henderson (1998): 203: ‘BC targets the *Aeneid*’s last word, *umbras*’.

\(^{211}\) E.g. Laudatio Turiae 2.25-26 (= *CIL* vi, no. 1527, p.333, l. 25): *pacato orbe terrarum res[tituta] re publica*, ‘with the whole world pacified, the Republic restored’; *Fasti Praenestini* for Jan 13, 27 BCE (= *CIL* i², p.231): *corona quern[a uti super iamam domus Imp. Caesaris] Augusti poner[etur senatus decreuit quod rem publicam] p. R. restituer[r]’. Cf. *ILS* 81, dedication to Octavian by SPQR, 29 BCE: *re publica conservata*; Aug. *RG* 34.1: *in consulatu sexto et septimo, postquam bella ciuilia extinixeram, per consensus uniuersorum potius rerum omnium, rem publicam ex mea potestate in senatus populi Romani arbitrium transtuli*, ‘in my sixth and seventh consulships, after I had extinguished the civil wars, receiving by universal consent the control of all affairs, I transferred the Republic from my own power to the will of the senate and the Roman people’; Vell. *Pat.* 2.89.3: *finita uestesimo anno bella ciuilia, seputa externa, reuocata pax, sopitus ubique armorum furor, restituta uis legibus, judiciis auctoritas, senatu maiestas, imperium magistratum ad pristinum redactum modum, tantummodo octo praetoribus adlecti duo. priscia illa et antiqua rei publicae forma reuocata*. ‘the civil wars were over after twenty years, foreign wars squelched, peace restored, madness of arms everywhere put to bed, strength restored to the laws, authority to the courts, dignity to the senate, the power of the magistrates restored to its normal limit, with the exception that two praetors were added to the eight. That old, traditional form of the Republic was restored’. Cf. *Vitr. praef.* 1-2; *Ov. Fasti* 1.589; Suet. *Aug.* 28.1; *Dio* 53.4.4. See Gowing (2005): 4-7 rightly, I think, on *res publica* in the early imperial period as properly ‘The Republic’ and not simply ‘the commonwealth’. See also generally on the Augustan ‘restoration’ project Galinsky (1996): 42-79.
new form of government seemed a tough pill to swallow, at least (perhaps) monarchy was justified by its ability to counterbalance what must have struck most as an endless cycle of internecine war and violence \( (\textit{pax et princeps}) \), e.g. Tac. \textit{Ann.} 3.28). For Lucan, Caesarism simply meant that ‘peace came with a master’, that Neronian Romans are ‘slaves’ to the principate \( (1.670: \textit{cum domino pax ista uenit}; \textit{cf.} 1.669-72, 3.112-14, 145-7, 4.221-7, 577-9, 7.442-7, 641-6, \textit{etc.})\).

Lucan’s poem re-stages the butchering of the \textit{res publica} because for him (or at the very least, his narratorial voice\textsuperscript{212}) this was the moment when everything went wrong and the origin of the present state of affairs in his Rome. Life under the false paradigm of a \textit{res publica restituta} \( \textit{cf.} \) Tac. \textit{Ann.} 1.2, \textit{Hist.} 1.1; Dio 51.1.1-2, 52.1.1) is a constant reminder of the death of the real Republic, where \textit{libertas} was not simply a fictive monarchal slogan. Lucan would not live to see it, but J. Julius Vindex and Ser. Sulpicius Galba (who would succeed Nero as emperor) championed the return of \textit{libertas} as they built their considerable case for Nero’s overthrow in 68 CE, explicitly associating his rule with the imposition of national slavery.\textsuperscript{213} The absurdity of the idea that Caesarism revived and restored the ‘free Republic’ gives Lucan the opportunity to retroject a perversion of the metaphor of the Republic’s corporeality back into his conception of its ‘death’ in the earlier civil wars. As narrator he expresses the wish to tear up Pompey’s so-called tomb and recover his bones, to

\textsuperscript{212} Even though we know Lucan was forced to commit suicide as a result of his involvement in the Pisonian Conspiracy aimed at overthrowing Nero, it is admittedly difficult to make arguments imposing biographical material onto Lucan’s narratorial voice in his poem, even if the fact of his falling out with Nero seems to allow this analysis. Lucan-as-narrator may be a safer way to approach these issues.

bring his corpse back to light (8.841-5); in a more macroscopic sense, his whole poem metaphorically ‘revivifies’ the dead Republic in order to replay its bludgeoning death and mutilation over again in grisly detail.

So, what does this have to do with Erichtho’s corpse-soldier? Much like Pompey’s role as a stand-in for the Republic, Erichtho’s corpse-soldier functions as a metaphor for or symbol of the vicissitudes of the res publica. Tesoriero, linking Erichtho’s treatment of the corpse with Caesar’s treatment of the corps(es) of Pompey’s last-stand Republican army at Pharsalus, provides a clear expression of what I am trying to argue here:

‘...the corpse represents the republican body politic—an “every-body”. What is noteworthy about the body is that, despite over 100 lines of effort lavished upon it by Lucan and Erichtho, it is never properly brought back to life...[T]he reanimated state of the corpse is a grotesque mockery of genuine life...The words nondum facies viventis in illo, / iam morientis erat [6.758-9] show the essential failure of the procedure in the sense that, though revivified, a corpse is more dead than alive (and indeed seems to be on the point of expiry). This is, in itself, a metaphor for the libera res publica after Pharsalus; not even the most strenuous efforts can bring about its proper resurrection. It will remain forever a ghastly image of its former self. The context in which this revivification is set adds a further dimension to this metaphor when so interpreted. Erichtho, who raises the corpse, in herself a most evil practitioner of the crime of necromancy, is a parallel figure to Caesar. This suggests that attempts by the reigning monarch to conceal autocracy beneath a pretense of res publica restituta will appear, like the corpse raised by Erichtho, as feeble imitations of an irretrievable past’.  

This is Rome’s civil war past, but also now its and Lucan’s present. If the Republic has been ‘restored’ under the Julio-Claudians, then like Erichtho’s zombie corpse, it is a perversion, half-dead, half-living. For Lucan’s narrator, life in this pseudo-zombie-Republican wasteland is a nightmare, a ghostly world of horror and servility. Like the State itself, with true libertas a distant memory, upper class citizens (Lucan and his Neronian audience) live but are not

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214 Tesoriero (2007): 191-2. See already Korenjak (1996): 29-30 for similar sentiments. Arweiler (2006): esp. 54-68 argues that the corpse-soldier, like other bodies/corpses in Lucan’s poem, is an ‘embodiment’ of the State, which Erichtho obsessively probes/cannibalizes analogous (though exaggerated) to the way Romans themselves obsess over their own viscera-probing self-destruction; his interests are more aesthetic than political.
really alive; they persist in a world without hope and without a future. The stripping of *libertas* entails slavery, and slavery is synonymous with death (e.g. Ulp. *Dig.* 50.17.209: *seruitutem mortalitati fere comparamus*). Romans subjected to a life without freedom as a product of tyrannical Caesarism and the disruption of the traditional laws of State, were like walking corpses moving through a socio-political space devoid of agency, definition, and boundaries, holding onto traditional titles/positions that were now extrajudicial and robbed of function and influence.

This is Lucan’s grim picture of his present, and we know this because he projects the universe of Neronian Rome back onto the framework of the civil wars that serve as an etiology for the conditions of his own time. Pharsalus pitted Caesar(ism) against *Libertas* (*7.695-6: sed par quod semper habemus*, | *Libertas et Caesar, erit*, ‘that pair of rivals always with us—— | Liberty and Caesar’), and Caesar won. Caesar always wins, which is why there cannot exist both Caesar and Freedom at once. This is why Lucan’s wrath is so palpable and why he is so conspicuously unobjective as an intruding apostrophic narrator: Caesar’s tyranny is still alive (*7.638-46*):

\[
\text{maius ab hac acie quam quod sua saecula ferrent}
\text{uolnus habent populi; plus est quam uita salusque}
\text{quod perit: in totum mundi prosternimur aeuum.}
\text{uincitur his gladiis omnis quae seruiet aetas.}
\text{proxima quid suboles aut quid meruere nepotes}
\text{in regnum nasci? pauide num gessimus arma}
\text{texitus aut iugulos? alieni poena timoris}
\text{in nostra ceruice sedet. post proelia natis}
\text{si dominum, Fortuna, dabas, et bella dedisses.}
\]

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215 Like Lucan, Seneca views tyranny not as an end of civil war, but as a continuation of it: cf. the horrors at Sen. *Clem.* 1.26.2-5.


From this battle the peoples receive a mightier wound than their own time could bear; more was lost than life and safety: for all the world’s eternity we are prostrated. Every age which will suffer slavery is conquered by these swords. How did the next generation and the next deserve to be born into tyranny? Did we wield weapons or shield our throats in fear and trembling? The punishment of others’ fear sits heavy on our necks. If, Fortune, you intend to give a master to those born after battle, you should have also given us a chance to fight.

By collapsing the temporal distance between himself and his subject universe, Lucan is able to project the image of Imperial ‘Caesars’ back onto Julius Caesar, Lucan himself and his socio-politically defunct contemporaries back onto the players in the civil war that ultimately created them. The timeless ‘deathscape’ that Lucan describes is populated with characters who, like Pompey, the rotting ‘trunk’ casting a shadow of its former efficacy (see 1.140, fulfilled at 8.698, 722, etc.), like the poor corpse-soldier, like the liminal Erichtho, occupy a space somewhere between living and dying.

Recall how Marius Gratidianus is mutilated, covered with wounds, dismembered, but not given the final death-blow: the aim was ‘to keep alive the dying man’ (2.180: \textit{pereuntis parcere morti}). Scaeva’s \textit{aristeia} ends with his body pin-cushioned with spears and arrows (6.191-206), half-blind (214-19), his comrades carrying his prostrate body away as if on a bier (250-9), and Lucan’s mock-eulogy of the fallen warrior (260-2), only to have the man miraculously return alive to see-off the poem (10.543-4). No one was a better shipman than Telo, the rough seas obeyed his ready hand; he was so skilled that even after multiple javelins pierced his heart, he managed to sail his vessel on (3.590-9). Nasidius is bitten by a

Prester serpent whose poison causes his body to expand exponentially (9.790-804). His compatriots would have buried his corpse in a tomb were he not still, in death, ‘expanding’ (804: nondum stante modo crescens fugere cadauer). Tyrrenhus is struck in the head with a lead bullet, blinded, expecting death, only to realize his limbs still possess strength (3.709-15). He demands his comrades make him into a corpse-ballista and aim him in the direction of the enemy so he can rifle off darts mechanically with what life remains in his ‘dead’ body.

He exhorts himself (718-21):

egere quod superest animae, Tyrrhene, per omnis bellorum casus. ingentem militis usum
hoc habet ex magna defunctum parte cadauer:
uiuentis feriere loco.

Tyrrenhus, spend what remains of life in all the hazards of war. This your corpse already largely dead has the heroic value of a soldier: it will be struck in place of a living man.

These are some of my favorite examples, but only a scratch at the surface. Lucan’s obsession is not with death per se, but with the process of dying and the space separating life from death. He explores the dissolution of the lines demarcating ‘dead’ and ‘alive’, and expands the boundaries of this space into a new state of existence. Nicola Hömke argues that Lucan places particular emphasis on human dying ‘as an independent phase of human existence’, arguing largely for aesthetic purposes. But it seems more focused and politicized than mere

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219 Hömke (2010): 103-04. Bartsch (1997): esp. 17-29 (whom Hömke does not consult), using the critical lens of Kristevan ‘abjection’, has already anticipated much of this: ‘[Lucan’s] epic likes to dwell on the abject, the by-product of transgression…the stage of death that lingers unpleasantly in the boundary between the living body and the purified skeleton…For as we read, we find that clean deaths are quite a rarity in the Civil War: either cremation is refused (Pompey’s troops after Pharsalus), or corpses are only half-consumed by the pyre (Pompey himself), or rotting corpses are brought back to life (the witch Erictho’s specialty); there can be no clear-cut division between life as presence, death as absence’ (21). Her later discussion (esp. p.67-72) of totalitarianism (she focuses in particular on the Nazi concentration camps’ attempt to destroy the individual identity and humanity of its occupants) as an ideological framework for reading Lucan’s perception of Imperial Rome has influenced what follows.
aesthetics. These living corpses function as visceral analogs for Lucan’s vision of an imperial slave-state, which at the same time attacks ideology claiming that monarchy was a ‘revived’ *libera res publica*.

Achille Mbembe has recently argued—expanding on Michel Foucault’s concept of biopower and biopolitics—that modern terror states (his focus is the ‘postcolonial’ state, which has inherited the techniques of violence and power passed on from the initial abuses of colonization), through mass violence and the orchestrated denial of basic human rights create ‘death-worlds, new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of *living dead*’. Mbembe calls this ‘necropolitics’, its implementation ‘necropower’. His argument largely extrapolates and globalizes the biopolitical ‘State of Exception’ of totalitarian internment camps, seen as the ‘central metaphor for sovereign and destructive violence’, which Hannah Arendt argues (building on Primo Levi’s analyses) created a situation of living ‘outside of life and death’. For Giorgio Agamben the internment camp is a site which visited upon its politically divested detainees an unparalleled ‘absolute *conditio inhumana*’, which determined ‘not so much that [the detainee’s] life is no longer life…but, rather, that their death is not death’. These inmates live beyond the threshold of life and ‘die’ before their

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220 Rights such as self-institution, self-autonomy, political agency, freedom, reason, etc.
223 Arendt (1966): 444. And further: ‘In comparison with the insane end-result—concentration-camp society—the process by which men are prepared for this end, and the methods by which individuals are adapted to these conditions, are transparent and logical. The insane mass manufacture of corpses is preceded by the historically and politically intelligible preparation of living corpses’ (447). See Bartsh (1997): 72. Cavarero (2011): 40-6 expands Arendt’s argument that the camps were a site of horror in their ability (and aim) to destroy the unique individuality of occupants.
physical deaths. Under conditions of necropower there exists a collapsing of formal
definitions of law and structure, which leaves the ruling party in a position to
determine/define historical narrative and identity, right and wrong, good and evil, humanity
and inhumanity, and life and death, without being subjected to scrutiny or requiring
justification. The result of this violent power vacuum is a muddying of social life which
explodes any possibility of cogent history.

This is an overstatement, of course—Rome under Caesars was definitely not a
totalitarian state or a ‘postcolony’, though writers often depict certain reigns as such—but
much of Lucan’s contention that the loss of critical societal agency that comes with a loss of
libertas, rendering life akin to living-death, has resonances with Mbembe’s portrait of the
necropolitical ‘death-world’. This position functions as a powerful statement of Imperial
dissent. That Lucan would even write a historical epic detailing the civil wars and the rise of
Caesarism flies in the face of Caesarian/Augustan/Virgilian attempts to overwrite or rewrite
historical narrative, to expurgate (see chapter 2.2), as well it counters later historical
narratives that may note the horrors of the civil wars, though in a way that highlights
Caesar’s or Octavian’s role in squelching the violence and establishing peace. But because
his poem not only articulates the brutalities, it makes them so viscerally and historically
present, makes the Bellum Civile a revolution. Negotiating the space between life and death
is symptomatic of Lucan’s portrait of living in a world disrupted by civil war, of still living in
that world.

negligible. Where the demarcation line between life and death has been eradicated, death is no longer an event,
a negation of life, a cleft between two states. The expressions “the living dead” and “the tottering corpses”
should be taken literally. They designate a specific modality of time. The Muselmänner embodied a creeping
death, a sequence and transition, not a point in time. Although still among the living, they were already dead.
Although they were corpses, they still moved’ (205); De Luna (2006): 207-10.
CHAPTER 5

CADAVRE EXQUIS: NON-BURIAL AND BURIAL DISTORTION IN STATIUS’ THEBAID

*It is difficult to put words to the smell of decomposing human. It is dense and cloying, sweet but not flower-sweet. Halfway between rotting fruit and rotting meat.*


This chapter examines burial rites in Statius’ *Thebaid*. As in chapter 4 on burial rites in Lucan’s epic, I am interested here in burial denial, perversion, and the innovative ways in which Statius reworks and expands upon model scenes of epic burial rites. The *Iliad* and *Aeneid* provide a variety of reference points, but Lucan’s reshaping of the epic landscape concerning the treatment of the dead also offers considerable material for experimentation, and he becomes a major point of reference and a canonical author for Statius.

I have divided the chapter into four sub-sections. The first sub-section (5.1) works outwardly from Creon’s burial ban in book 11, which formalizes the theme of burial abnegation that has been building throughout the entire poem. In sub-section 5.2 I look at battlefield burial perversions. Among these are Capaneus’ ‘burial’ of Hippomedon with his own and enemy armor in book 9 and Hopleus’ ‘corpse-burial’ of Tydeus in book 10. I also analyze Amphiaraus’ live-burial when he is sucked down into Hell in full armor through a chasm that opens on the battlefield on the first day of fighting in book 7 (and the relation between this scene and Oedipus’ ‘living-death’ in the poem), and finally the quasi-cremation of Idas in book 8, whose firebrand, stuck in his head after he is killed by Tydeus, supplies him with a bizarre quasi-cremation. This progression allows us to see the theme of perversion and distortion related to burial rites develop as it builds to a crescendo with Creon’s ban in
book 11. In 5.3 I look at non-military burials in the poem, focusing on the efforts of women to provide funeral rites for their fallen loved ones (Hypsipyle in books 5 and 6, Argia and Antigone and the Argive mothers and wives in book 12). The final sub-section (5.4) considers two scenes that problematize somewhat the picture of burial rites I sketch out in the previous sections: Iris’ ‘preservation’ of the Argive leaders’ corpses in book 11, and the strange case of the augur Maeon in book 3, who is denied burial by Eteocles, but whose corpse remains unspoiled and unmolested by scavenging birds and beasts.

5.1. House of 1000 Corpses

Ein Düngerhaufen Faulender Menschenleiber.
Verglaste Augen, blutgeronnen.
Der ballt verkrampfte Faust, die Brust zerfraß Schrapnell.
Zersperrte Hirne, ausgespiene Eingeweide.
Die Luft verpestet von Kadaverstank:
Ein einzig grauenvoller Wahnsinns-Schrei!
—Ernst Toller, ‘Leichen im Priesterwald’

and I don’t know just where our bones will rest,
to dust I guess,
forgotten and absorbed into the earth below...
—Smashing Pumpkins, ‘1979’

The dominant leitmotif of Statius’ Thebaid is the issue of the burial of dead heroes.¹ The most powerful statement of this theme comes after the mutual slaughter of the enemy-brothers Eteocles and Polynices in book 11, at which point Creon, who has now assumed the

Theban throne after Eteocles’ death, delivers a formal edict banning the burial of all slain Argives and their allies, including Polynices (11.661-4):

> primum adeo saeuis imbutus moribus aulæ
> (indiciae specimenque sui) iubet igne supremo
> arceri Danaos, nudoque sub axe relinquit
> infelix bellum et tristes sine sedibus umbras.

First hint and gauge of Creon’s reign (so steeped was he in the savage ways of the palace): he forbade Danaans to burn their dead, requiring luckless warriors to lie under open sky—homeless, unhappy shades.

Scholars have noted Creon’s inhumane cruelty here, as something specific to his gaining kingship and endemic in rulers at Thebes.

Both the narrator and Oedipus say as much, bookending the notice of Creon’s edict with scathing indictments (11.654-60; 11.677-82).

The point is again hammered home by Antigone who questions Creon’s actions as a product of hatred spawned by the power of kingship (11.724). Creon’s burial ban is his first act as king, and more telling still is the ban’s contrast with his own very recent concern for the unburied corpses on the battlefield when he confronts Eteocles at 11.276-80, urging him to end the war by accepting Polynices’ challenge to a duel. Though he rages back at Creon’s demand here, Eteocles anticipates that this bombast is a mask for Creon’s own ambition and ‘mad hope’ for the Theban throne (11.298-302), and this does come to pass.

Eteocles had earlier refused burial to the augur Maeon, the lone survivor of Tydeus’ massacre of the 50 ambushers in book 2, after he had denounced the king as a tyrant and immediately committed suicide as an act of libertas at the beginning of the following book.

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This earlier scene anticipates Creon’s ban, as he too will degenerate into royal madness and reject the rights of burial to the dead. But Creon eclipses Eteocles in the sheer scale of his immorality: instead of denying burial to one man, Creon refuses burial rites for an entire army (the Argive contingent and Polynices), following the footsteps of Euripides’ Creon in his Suppliants. Maeon will lie beneath the naked sky (3.112: *nudoque sub axe*) as Creon’s ban proposes for all of the dead Argives (11.663: *nudoque sub axe*, in the same *sedes*). Eteocles’ refusal of burial for Maeon is the first narrative appearance of this theme in the Thebaid which anticipates Creon’s edict—here and re-echoed at 12.94-103—his climactic act of criminal *nefas*.

Statius, as narrator or through the voices of his characters, repeatedly refers to Creon’s looming burial ban to the point of obsession. The prologue promises a song of kings’ bodies lacking burial (1.36-7: *tumulisque carentia regnum | funera*). Laius’ ghost presages a guilty decree delaying funeral fires (4.640-1: *ab igne supremo | sontes lege morae*). A prophetic Apollo spares the seer-warrior Amphiaraus the fate of lying naked and forbidden burial at Creon’s command (7.776-7: …*certe non perpessure Creontis | imperia aut uetito nudus iaciture sepulcro*, ‘You’ll not have to endure Creon’s orders | —that is clear—and lie exposed, sepulture forbidden!’), and Juno too waxes clairvoyant when she accosts Jupiter at

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5 We see this transference of burial denial in Eur.’s *Phoen.* 775-7, concerning the treatment of Polynices’ corpse, which sets the stage (as it were) for the action of his *Suppliants*. Eteocles demands from Creon that: ἢνπερ κρατήρ τάμια. Πολυνείκους νέκων | μήποτε ταφήναι τῷ Ῥημαίᾳ χθονί. | θηρᾶσαι δὲ τῶν θάφωντα. κἂν φίλων τις ἤ, ‘if my position wins out, never bury Polynices’ corpse in Theban land, and kill anyone who buries him, even if that person is a friend’.
6 Noted by Snijder (1968): *ad* 3.112.
7 Statius often plays with this meaning of *funus* for ‘corpse’ (*OLD* s.v. *funus* 2) in the odd context of non-burial, when the most common definition is ‘funeral rites’ or ‘obsequies’ (*OLD* s.v. *funus* 1).
the sight of the drowning Hippomedon (9.517-19): *certe tumulos supremaque uictis | busta dabas: ubi Cecropiae post proelia flamae, | Theseos ignis ubi est?*, ‘Surely you used to grant conquered men | tombs and funeral pyres? What’s become of Cecropian flame, | of Theseus’ fire for those dead in battle?’ Her words give the first (and only) indication of the role Theseus will come to play in the poem, when he comes from Athens, defeats Creon in battle, and reverses the burial ban.\(^8\) Yet even here little is assured, and we must wait a further three books for Athenian intervention.

The aged Aletes, lamenting the Theban ambushers slain by Tydeus in book 2, prays that he die right away (i.e. before the outbreak of the formal war in book 7) so that his corpse has an opportunity to be burned and buried, as he anticipates that this will not be available to him once the war begins (3.212-13): *ast ego doner | dum licet igne meo terraque insternar auita!, ‘As for me, I want | fire while it’s still allowed, my handful of ancestral dust!*\(^9\) The most important prefiguring of Creon’s ban is Dis’ injunction at 8.72-4, when he orders Tisiphone to stir cruel abominations in the hearts of both sides of the war. Among his list of atrocities is the demand that one deny the rights of burial to the dead, looking toward Creon without naming him explicitly (8.72-3): [*sit] quique igne supremo | arceat examines et manibus aethera nudis | commaculet, ‘let another deprive the dead | of fire for last rites and foul the air with naked | corpses’.\(^10\) While verbal cues tie all of these passages together, we should note here that Dis’ anticipation of the language of Creon’s initial ban (8.72-3: *quique

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igne supremo | arceat) is doubled by iubet igne supremo | arceri at 11.662-3,\(^{11}\) as Creon finally fulfills the criminality Statius has been teasing for the first ten and a half books. Dis’ words seal the fate of the Argives, but Statius’ audience has long seen this coming.

If this sort of pre-scripting was not already hammered home, Creon re-emphasizes—he literally repeats himself (12.93: iterat; 100: quare iterum repetens iterumque edico, ‘Wherefore, to repeat, I again proclaim’)\(^{12}\)—his burial ban at the beginning of book 12 during, of all things, the burial of his own son Menoeceus, who had committed suicide by throwing himself from Thebes’ walls (10.756-82). His madness now fully animalistic,\(^{13}\) Creon wishes he could do even more than simply leave the Argive bodies to rot on the plain. He would re-animate the corpses (like an Erichtho), heap more misery on them, and personally lead animals to tear at their flesh. The natural processes of decay and decomposition are a gift compared to what Creon would do if he had his way. But denying the dead interment will have to suffice (12.94-103):

saeuum agedum inmitemque uocent si funera Lernae
tecum ardere ueto; longos utinam addere sensus
corporibus caeloque animas Ereboque nocentes
pellere fas, ipsumque feras, ipsum unca uolucrum
ora sequi atque artus regum monstrare nefandos!
ei mihi, quod positos humus alma diesque resoluet!
quare iterum repetens iterumque edico: suprema
ne quis ope et flammis ausit iuuisse Pelasgos;
aut nece facta luet numeroque explebit adempta
corpora; per superos magnumque Menoecea iuro.

‘So? Let them call me a ruthless brute if I forbid Lerna’s dead to burn with you! I only wish I could make their remains sensate, clear Heaven and Hell

\(^{11}\) Noted by Venini (1970): ad 11.661 ss.
\(^{12}\) See Lovatt (1999): 134-5 on Creon’s repetitiveness as a comment on his character’s literary heritage, and Statius’ engagement here with Lucan’s Caesar in BC 7.
of their guilty souls, could myself round up and drive wild beasts and hook-beaked birds to this damnable flesh heap of kings! Too bad! Time and fostering Earth will rot them where they lie. Wherefore, to repeat, I again proclaim: let no one dare give Pelasgians last rites and flames, or else’ (he vowed) ‘to help me Gods Above and great Menoeceus, he’ll pay for his deeds with death and make the body count rise by one’.

Creon’s funeral eulogy for his dead son culminates in the savage paradox of a mass funeral ban, abolishing *humanitas* from the act of his son’s burial. This is brutality well beyond the threatening and boasting expressed in the *Iliad* (e.g. 21.122-7, 22.256-9, 22.335-6, etc.) and the *Aeneid* (10.557-60), and, as Helen Lovatt has shown, puts Creon on par with—or even worse than—Lucan’s Caesar, who denies burial to all the Pompeian dead at Pharsalus (*BC 7.787-798*). Both Creon and Caesar increase the scale of burial denial to encompass an entire army.

The scene calls to mind Aeneas’ granting of burial rites to both armies on the occasion of Pallas’ burial at the start of *Aeneid* 11, but shatters the humanity of that reference point since Creon only allows the corpses of slain Thebans to be cremated, leaving the rest to rot. In the context of a funeral scene, while the scale is significantly greater here, the scene also recalls Achilles’ promise to Patroclus at the latter’s funeral that he will not allow Hector’s corpse to be buried (*Il. 23.179-83*). Further linking the scenes is the hope in both passages that wild animals might have their way with the corpses of the dead men (cf. *Il. 23.182-3*: Ἐκτόρα δ’ ὄν τι | δόσω Πριαμίδην πυρὶ διαπέμεν, ἀλλὰ κύνεσσον, ‘But I will not

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15 See Parkes (2013): 168 on this and other examples in the *Thebaid* where Statius undercuts instances of interment with the paralleled denial of interment.
16 See Lovatt (1999).
| Give Hector, Priam’s son, to the fire, but the dogs, to feast on’). Menoeceus’ funeral also recalls the funeral of Hector in Iliad 24, but instead of the closure of the theme of corpse mutilation that Hector’s burial brings to Homer’s poem, Creon demands still more abuses.

Statius and Creon are all about more, about excess: more abuse and on a greater scale, more allusions to that abuse. It is an excessiveness on every level that is characteristic of the character and the poet, specifically built around the theme of non-burial. Earlier incarnations of Creon in Sophocles’ Antigone and Euripides’ Phoenissae were satisfied that Polynices alone remained unburied, but Statius’ version of the tyrant is unbounded in his sadism: he fills the role of Euripides’ Creon in Suppliants, but contrastingly he is very much ‘on stage’. Death should bring an end to hatred and rage, as indicated by Theseus’ comments to the Theban emissary at Suppliants 524-41. Statius allows furor to continue beyond the limits of life and death, as we were warned would happen at 1.35: nec furiis post fata modum, ‘fury unchecked after death’. That the crime of leaving bodies to rot without burial rites is, for Creon, the least horrible thing he can imagine is a clear indication of his excessive cruelty.

20 On ‘excessiveness’ as a crucial feature of the poetics of the Thebaid, see the excellent discussion in Hershkowitz (1998): 249-60.
22 Statius’ Creon follows the model of Creon in Euripides’ Supp., who denies burial to all of the Argive leaders. But Creon is not an actual character in Euripides’ play (his position is articulated through a messenger). This gives Statius room for considerable character development and manipulation, while following the parameters of Creon’s edict in the play. Formally, book 12 follows the general plotline of Supp., which focuses on the issue of the burial of the Argives, and Theseus’ intervention. For Statius’ broad array of sources, including the tragedians, see the helpful survey in Venini (1970): xii-xxvi. For Statius’ re-appropriation of images and themes from Supp., see esp. Bessone (2011): esp. 20-3, 131-5, 151-5, 218-19 [repr. from (2008)]. Her interpretations take cues from Braund (1997): 12-16.
We might expect, as in the final book of the *Iliad*, some reversal of the inhumanity associated with burial abnegation at the end of the *Thebaid*, and this is exactly the role Theseus plays when he arrives from Athens to put an end to Creon’s madness.\(^{23}\) The Argive women are told by Ornytus (an Argive survivor) to seek out Theseus’ aid in providing burial rites for their dead relatives (12.163-5), and Capaneus’ widow Evadne’s speech to Theseus at the Altar of Clemency is solely an appeal to the laws of humanity, articulated through the very Roman markers of *clementia* and *pietas*, which demand proper burial of the dead (12.546-86).\(^{24}\) Theseus does not hesitate. After hastening to Thebes and piercing Creon with a spear, he delivers a speech immediately undoing the burial ban which has echoed throughout the entire poem (12.779-81):


‘Now you are pleased to give your fallen foes the fire they deserve? Now will you cover the vanquished? Go! black judgments await you—though you are assured of a final resting place’.

Martin Helzle has shown how Theseus’ words not only undo Creon’s edict literally, by allowing the dead burial rites, but also lexically, as Theseus’ word choice avoids directly

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Creon’s phrasing from his speech in book 12. Theseus, it appears, is everything Creon is not, even down to word choice and syntax. His final word (seculcri) contrasts sharply with Creon’s denial of tombs to the dead, and his ultimate rewriting of the initial ban is his decision to ensure the dying Creon proper burial.

Statius is doing a number of interesting things here intertextually. He has disrupted/corrupted the Iliadic style ending he had set up by denying Creon the opportunity to rescind (like Achilles) his inhuman burial ban by introducing Theseus, who steers the poem back in the direction of human order. At the same time, Theseus’ killing of Creon offers Statius the opportunity to comment on the end of the Aeneid, as the scene is clearly modeled on Aeneas’ ‘sacrificial’ killing of Turnus (cf. Theb. 12.771-3, with Aen. 12.948-9).

But while the Aeneid leaves unanswered the fate of Turnus’ corpse—will Aeneas offer him the proper burial he requests?—Statius immediately answers that question with respect to Creon by giving Theseus the final speech Virgil denied to Aeneas.

In theory, the Thebaid ends like the Iliad does, with burial(s) and lamentation, but Statius warps the atmosphere of the predecessor poems by distorting these rituals. For one, the backdrop of the entire book is a field of rotting and/or smoldering corpses, supplemented by further bloodshed as Theseus enters the fray and immediately reactivates Statius’ war-song. Evadne immolates herself on the pyre of her dead husband Capaneus (12.800-02) and

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27 Theseus is attempting to restore natural and cosmic laws (12.642): terrarum leges et mundi foedera, ‘the laws of nations | and Heaven’s covenants’. This universality underscores the importance of burial in the poem.
Deipyle kisses her husband Tydeus’ mouth which, at last mention, was stained with Melanippus’ bloody brains (12.802-03, with 8.760-2).29

While *Iliad* 24 reverberates with speeches of lamentation in remembrance of Hector which serve as the impetus for public and private healing, the *Thebaid*’s close has no match for this: Statius cannot even bring himself to recount the songs sung for the dead, not if he had 100 voices and Apollo stirring his breast (12.797-809).30 Instead we get the wild onrush of Argive women from the woods to the city, described as mænads preparing for war (12.786-96). As scholars have noted, this imagery that at once distorts the traditional direction of Bacchic movement, also throws a scene of epic ending and funeral rites back into the sphere of madness and warfare; these women are the new warriors, preparing ‘Bacchic wars’ (791-2: *quales Bacchea ad bella uocate* | *Thyiades amentes*, ‘demented Thyiads they seem, called to the Wine | God’s war’).31 The women compete amongst each other as they search for the corpses of their loved ones with pious confusion (782: *pio…tumultu*). What for the *Iliad* was a return to humanity and the ritual healing associated with interment and lamentation is in the *Thebaid* a further nod to the perversions of burial and war and further wars to come.

29 Ganiban (2007): 230-1 argues along these same lines (he of course means Deipyle, not Argia). Franchet d’Espéry (1999): 313 claims that Deipyle and Evadne erase implicitly the earlier impiety displayed by the Lemnian women through their loyalty to their dead husbands. The claim is enticing, but says nothing of the frightening and disturbing way in which Statius presents this fidélité.


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The sense of incompletion here is akin to what Elaine Fantham and others have argued is particularly unsatisfying about the end of the *Aeneid*, where there too the poem lacks a formal lament. But this, at least structurally, is a result of Virgil’s powerfully chosen endpoint. Statius provides every opportunity for a formal lament, even teasing at it, but eschews it in favor of a convolution of epic style endings, none of which is particularly prioritized. This choice of ending was not a hasty one, as we know from Statius’ own comments regarding the ‘belabored’ composition of the *Thebaid*, particularly the conclusion of his epic (*Silv.* 3.2.142-3: *ast ego deuictis dederim quae busta pelasgis | quaeque laboratas claudat mihi pagina Thebas*, ‘but I [recount] what burial I have given to defeated Pelasgians, and what page closes my exhausted *Thebaid*’; cf. similarly *Silv.* 3.5.35; 4.4.87-92; 4.7.25-8).

Though they get there by different paths, Statius ends his epic like Virgil had by inspiring a similar pull of conflicting emotional responses in his audience, and the ambiguity has similarly inspired ‘readings’ of the poem that fall at opposite ends of the critical interpretive spectrum.

Although Statius certainly adheres to—and manipulates—the frameworks of the *Iliad* and *Aeneid* in their own treatment of the theme of epic burial, as Federica Bessone has shown, expanding on the observations of Susanna Braund, the specific mythological subject offered Statius a means of filtering epic conventions through the lens of the Theban stage.

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34 See esp. Braund (1997): 16-18 for the debates about the ending of the *Thebaid* largely mirroring those of the ending of the *Aeneid*. 
plays.\textsuperscript{35} My focus for the rest of this section will be Statius’ appropriation of epic models, and my project does not offer a deep engagement with Statius’ obvious borrowings from the tragic tradition,\textsuperscript{36} except to note that in terms of the \textit{Thebaid}’s engagement with the complexity of burial rites and socio-political upheaval, both structurally and atmospherically, Statius often looks to the Greek and Roman stage.\textsuperscript{37}

Crucial for our discussion of corpse maltreatment is Euripides’ \textit{Suppliants}. The final book of the epic can, as Helzle has shown,\textsuperscript{38} be read as a Tragedy independent of the previous eleven books, and in many ways the action subsequent to the mutual slaughter of Polynices and Eteocles in book 11 functions as an addendum. Scholars have observed that the duel between the brothers is a climactic reconfiguration of the duel that closes the \textit{Aeneid}.\textsuperscript{39} There Virgil left unresolved the issue of Turnus’ burial and corpse treatment, but Creon’s burial denial provides a specific reason for a twelfth book, which Statius structures entirely around the resolution of the issue of burial—this also positions his epic back in line with the \textit{Iliad}.\textsuperscript{40} Euripides’ \textit{Suppliants}, like the \textit{Thebaid}, concerns the rights of burial for the fallen Argives and their leaders. But like the \textit{Thebaid} it also struggles with the paradox of

\textsuperscript{35} See Braund (1997): 12-16 on Statius’ ‘Romanization’ of the Theseus character of earlier myth, including his portrayal in Euripides’ \textit{Supp}: he is something of a clement, \textit{proto-princeps, deus ex machina}; Braund (2006) prioritizes the influence of Theban myths in Rome, offering a view parallel to the Iliocentric mythic tradition; Bessone (2008) and (2011): \textit{passim} sees Thebes as a negative model for Rome and Athens (in her hero Theseus) as a positive model, though everywhere the darkness of Statius’ poem implies a potentiality for Rome to revert to the self-destructive Theban model. See also Venini (1965) on Senecan tragic allusion (and engagement with Lucan); Heslin (2008) on Statius’ use of Greek tragic models, and the important article by Fantham (1997) repr. in Fantham (2011): 577-606 on Statius’ manipulation of tragic expressions of hatred.

\textsuperscript{36} For which see Bessone (2011).

\textsuperscript{37} Feeney (1991): 344 n.107 articulates Statius’ ‘family-tree’ of influences: ‘Statius has two mighty progenitors, Vergil and Ovid, together with two godfathers, Seneca and Lucan, and a grandfather, Homer’. I am not too sure how we weave the Attic playwrights into this, but they deserve an invitation to the family reunion.

\textsuperscript{38} Helzle (1996): 146-59.


\textsuperscript{40} See Hardie (1997): 155 n.58: ‘…it is Creon’s “new madness” in refusing to allow burial that has occasioned this extra book after the end of the story of the two brothers’.
creating peace out of war and violence—readers of the *Aeneid* will be familiar with this issue as well. The play, like Statius’ epic, ends by compounding the issue with the imposition of martial imagery in scenes of funeral lament, as Athena offers a prophecy predictive of further warfare and bloodshed, while the Epigoni hold the ashes of their fathers whom they will later avenge (*Supp. 1183-1226*).\(^{41}\) In both the play and the epic, the ending aims uncomfortably at another beginning and another war, and we exit with a sense of future evils to come (even if, in the play, the war is divinely sanctioned). The seemingly endless repetition of war is underlined at the opening of Statius’ gates of war in book 7. Before the war in the *Thebaid* even formally begins, Jupiter looks ahead to a future war outside of the structure of the epic that almost certainly refers to the renewal of war by the Epigoni (7.219-21): *non hoc statui sub tempore rebus | occasum Aonis, ueniet suspicior aetas | ulioresque alii*, ‘I have not decreed an end to Aonian history at this time, a more dangerous hour shall come and other avengers’.\(^{42}\)

The Theban myths explore powerful issues related to civil war, monarchy and monarchical power, and dynastic succession, all of which resonated with early Imperial Rome. The distance provided by a mythic model gave Statius room to negotiate and explore more critically the ‘modern’ problems his Rome faced in ways he could less easily express in his

\(^{41}\) So Feeney (1991): 363: ‘The end of the *Seven Against Thebes* is the beginning of the story of the *Epigoni*’. Cf. Ahl (1986): 2897-8; Hardie (1993): 14; Bessone (2011): 33; Newlands (2012): 116-17. In Euripides’ play, the Epigoni look ahead to the potential for exacting vengeance in the future (*Supp. 1142-4, 1149-51*) while the Argive women lament the very idea of future evils, claiming to have had their fill of lamentation and sorrow (1146-8): with Morwood (2007): *ad locc*. The *exodos* begins with the agreement between Theseus and Adrastus that Argos will forever be grateful to Athens for her aid, and they prepare to part ways (1165-82). Athena’s appearance is aimed at solemnizing Ardastus’ promise to Theseus (with Collard [1975]: 406-07), and her prophesy of the Epigoni revenge actualizes the hope of the boy chorus and the despair of the Argive women from the close of the *kommos*.

\(^{42}\) Smolenaars (1994): *ad* 7.221 notes that Statius may additionally be alluding to Alexander the Great’s destruction of Thebes, though the war led by the Epigoni seems the more likely allusion here.
more panegyrical Silvae. The situation too is similar to the one Virgil faced when he composed his epic after Octavian/Augustus consolidated sole power in Rome out of civil war. Vespasian and the Flavians brought a renewed peace, styled explicitly on the Pax Augusta,\(^{43}\) out of the civil wars in 68-69 CE following Nero’s suicide, but (no doubt unintentionally) the association with Augustus and the Julio-Claudians provided a painful reminder of the cyclicity of the potential for tyranny, political dissolution, and renewed internecine struggle.\(^{44}\)

Vespasian, a ‘foreigner’ (non-Italian, non-Julio-Claudian), entered Rome bringing an end to Roman civil wars like the Athenian Theseus enters civil war-torn Thebes;\(^{45}\) but this still leaves (in both instances) issues related to political stability, succession, violent repetition, and tyranny. Political reality too often mirrored Lucan’s ‘tragic’ vatic conception of the principate as an endless cycle of repeated self-evisceration, and even Flavian Peace risked further negative repetitions, most notably the Saturninian revolt in 89 CE which sought to overthrow Domitian, called ‘civil war’ by Suetonius (Dom. 6.2). Domitian himself (at the very least, posthumously\(^{46}\) seemed a Nero-reborn, and in death, like Nero, he would bring an end to another Roman familial dynasty, with no heirs to fill the void.

Flavian authors recognized Virgil’s deep interest in tragic elements (e.g. Mart. 5.5.58, 7.63.5),\(^{47}\) and Statius takes this interest to its logical conclusion by crafting an epic

\(^{43}\) See e.g. McNelis (2007): 5-8 with notes.

\(^{44}\) Cf. the memorable statement by Tacitus at Hist. 1.50 of the civil wars in 69 CE as in a way replaying the war between Pompey and Caesar, only amplified.

\(^{45}\) Vessey (1973): 315 n.1; Ahl (1986): 2819; Henderson (1998): 220; Braund (2006): 271 n.27. Statius is explicit that he means not to link Roman history with events in Thebes (Theb. 17-31), but his audience cannot have missed the connections.

\(^{46}\) See e.g. Jones’ (1992) attempt to restore the image of Domitian against the views of our later biased sources attempting to curry favor with the Nerva and Trajan by tarnishing the former regime.

\(^{47}\) On Virgil’s use of Greek tragedy, see most recently Panoussi (2009).
completely around a tragic subject. Yet he goes further than Virgil by mapping a more
dismally tragic and Lucanian worldview of cyclical socio-political madness onto a Virgilian
epic framework, and the subject matter offered by the very ancient Thebes allowed him to
explore the more disturbing elements in Rome’s own recent history. We know too that
Theban themes resonated with poets writing from the Social Wars through to the Augustan
period, a time similarly plagued by civil wars in Rome.\footnote{See Braund (2006): 266.} Statius seems to be reactivating an
interest in Theban civil war themes as his own period was punctuated with a renewal of
internecine violence. However we choose to read the end of the Thebaid—and I think (as
with Virgil’s epic) the whole point is, ambiguously\footnote{This is essentially the thrust of Henderson (1998): 212-54. See also Feeney (1991): 362-3; Hardie (1993): 46-8. Braund (1997) takes a more positive view of the poem’s close but is clear that there exists ‘the presence of a
darker side to the poem’ (16) as a product of Lucan’s influence on Statius’ rendering of civil war epic.}—this is a poem wholly infected with a
darkness only ever feared in the Aeneid.

5.2. Dead and ‘Buried’

*bodies on top of bodies,*
*IVs on top of IVs*
*obviously…*
—Kendrick Lamar, ‘m.A.A.d. city’

The battlefield offers Statius a number of opportunities to play with the burial theme. In this
section, I discuss a few scenes of burial perversion which occur on the battlefield, all of
which look ahead to the burial denial Creon delivers in book 11. Among these perversions
are what I call ‘corpse-tombs’ or ‘corpse-burials’, where a dead body ‘buries’ another,
explicitly; Amphiaras’ live-burial or inadvertent *katabasis* in books 7 and 8; and Idas’
accidental self-cremation after he stabs himself with his own firebrand after being felled by Tydeus in book 8.

In lieu of the opportunity of granting a proper burial to Hippomedon—who was speared to death by a crowd of Thebans following his battle with the river-god Ismenos—Capaneus covers his comrade’s corpse with Hippomedon’s own armor which had been taken by Hypseus as war-spoils (9.540-6), as well as Hypseus’ armor, which Capaneus despoiled from him (9.560-5):

\[
\text{tunc ensem galeamque rapit clipeumque reuellit}
\]
\[
\text{Hypseos; exanimumque tenens super Hippomedonta,}
\]
\[
\text{‘accipe’ ait ‘simul hostiles, dux magne, tuasque}
\]
\[
\text{exuuias, uniet cineri decus et suus ordo}
\]
\[
\text{manibus; interea \textbf{iustos} dum reddimus \textbf{ignes},}
\]
\[
\text{hoc ultor Capaneus operit tua membra \textbf{sepulcro’}.}
\]

Hippomedon’s sword and helmet retrieved, he grabs Hypseus’ own shield, holds all three high over his lifeless comrade: ‘Great leader!’ (he cries) ‘receive your enemy’s spoils—and your own. Glory will come to your ashes and, to your ghost, its due rank; meanwhile, until we grant you your rightful fires, Capaneus, your avenger, tents your limbs with this tomb’.

That Capaneus refers to this armored covering explicitly as a tomb (565: \textit{sepulcro}) is a pointed comment on the difficulty in the \textit{Thebaid} of finding a proper burial. Though he cannot know it, Capaneus’ words anticipate Creon’s edict and are echoed by Theseus when he finally lifts the burial ban: the Athenian king will provide the fallen soldiers with the flames that are their due (12.779: \textit{iustos} \ldots \textit{ignes}, with 9.564, in same metrical position) and grant everyone, including Creon, a tomb (12.781: \textit{sepulcri}: the same word closes both speeches).

Statius builds on this picture of a corpse literally ‘buried’ by armor later when he creates a human tomb in the form of the armed soldier Dymas. After failing in his attempt to
rescue the corpse of Parthenopaeus, his squire Dymas commits suicide over his body and falls on top of him, offering these final words (10.441): *hac tamen interea nece tu potiare sepulchro*, ‘In the meantime, may you receive a tomb with this death’.\(^{50}\) Karla Pollmann notes that falling dead on a corpse is a relatively common epic trope (e.g. Nisus and Euryalus in *Aeneid* 9), but only Statius ‘gives this motif the significance of a surrogate burial’.\(^{51}\) I will demonstrate that this same motif does in fact appear in the *Punica*, most explicitly at 5.659-66, and it is repeated elsewhere in Silius’ poem (see below at 6.1), but the point about its rarity is important. The *Thebaid*’s particular obsession with interment denial has such a profound impact that any opportunity for burial is gleefully exploited (10.444: *letoque fruuntur*, ‘taking delight in death’), even if that form of burial would be in any other context unthinkable or perverse. The absurdity of this scene is set against the incredible loyalty Dymas has for the dead Parthenopaeus. He risks his own life in an attempt to rescue the corpse of his leader and when he fails, he sacrifices his body as a tomb (again, as at 9.565 and 12.781, a form of *sepulcrum* emphatically closes his brief speech). But even this minor victory over the theme of burial denial is double edged. By creating a corpse-tomb for his leader, he has also more literally created just another unburied corpse.\(^{52}\) As in the previous example, this scene should be read in light of Creon’s eventual treatment of all the Argive


\(^{52}\) So Lovatt (2005): 240: ‘Dymas fails to protect Parthenopaeus’ body, and his own body becomes a symbol of Argive defeat’.  

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corpses.⁵³ In the grim universe of the *Thebaid*, any semblance of burial is better than no burial at all.

Ruth Parkes has noted that the six Argive leaders who die in battle all suffer some form of ‘warped burial’.⁵⁴ In addition to Hippomedon and Parthenopaeus, the god-fighting Capaneus is ‘cremated’ by Jupiter’s lightning bolt rather than conventionally on a pyre (10.927-39), Polynices is killed and then covered by the body of his dead brother Eteocles (11.573) in a way that toys with the example of Dymas and Parthenopaeus, and Tydeus, whom Parkes does not mention, similarly is covered over by the corpse of his squire Hopleus (10.402-04):

labitur egregii nondum ducis immemor Hopleus,  
exspiratque tenens, felix si corpus ademptum  
nesciit et saeuas talis descendit ad umbras.

Hopleus sank down, his mind still trained on the fine leader he held as he died (a happy man, since he never knew they captured the corpse). Thus he went down to the savage shades.

This scene occurs moments before Dymas offers his own body as a tomb for Parthenopaeus, and should be read in concert.⁵⁵ Tydeus has earlier eschewed interest in his own burial rites (8.736-8: see further below), and so the lack of an explicit perversion of traditional funeral custom squares with his desire to be left unburied in the poem.

Amphiaraus’ death is worth considering in more detail. Amphiaraus is sucked down into the underworld at the height of his *aristeia* through a chasm in the earth at the climax of the first major battle of the epic (7.794-823). Statius does not offer any real reason for this

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⁵⁴ Parkes (2011): 87-8 n.29, and (2013): 168. See also van der Keur (2013): 334-7 on these warped or substitute burials.
form of death for Amphiaraus—or rather, he offers six possible explanations—but Apollo justifies it prophetically in terms of Creon’s impending burial denial edict. He tells Amphiaraus that at least this death is free from the horrors of burial abnegation that await the Argives (7.775-7). His death, Apollo says, is the will of the Parcae (774-5), but when Amphiaraus appears in the underworld everyone (including the Parcae) is shocked—and frightened—to see him there, and they only cut his life thread at 8.11-13. His descent becomes an unintentional katabasis, and this breach of boundaries drives Dis to declare open war on the Olympian gods, whom he blames for Amphiaraus’ unannounced visit to his realm (8.34-79).

Despite Apollo’s efforts, Amphiaraus’ death is hollow and perverse. He has left nothing behind for his people to mourn (8.111, 114-15). He has no ashes to return to his father (8.6, 113), no pyre or tomb (8.5-6, 114). He even strangely laments that he has left nothing for the Thebans to capture (112): anything, including corpse abuse, would be better than this current situation which amounts to being buried alive. He sums up the spectacular nature of his death succinctly in his tearful address to Dis, framed around the issue of his (now unattainable) burial rites (115): toto pariter tibi funere ueni, ‘I come to You as I am, a one-man cortege’. Although Apollo’s main objective was to remove Amphiaraus from the fate of a corpse unburied and decomposing, his actual fate is not all that dissimilar (8.176): sic gratus Apollo?, ‘Thus Apollo says “Thanks”? As he fades into death, his body, warm with sweat and bloody dust from the battlefield, begins to ‘decompose’ into the form of a shade (8.86-9):

57 Seo (2013): 164.
iam uanescentibus armis,
iam pedes: extinstco tamen indecerptus in ore
augurii perdurat honos, obscuraque fronti
uitta manet, ramumque tenet morientis oliue

his weapons now starting

to vanish; and yet in his lifeless face there lingered still,
undiminished, an augur’s gravity; the fillet—though dim—
still bound his brow, and he held a dying olive bough.

While his comrades die fighting for glory on the battlefield, Amphiaraus is buried alive.\textsuperscript{58}

Statius subtly links Amphiaraus’ ending to Pompey’s death in Lucan’s poem. During Amphiaraus and Melampus’ prophecy in Book 3 (they are looking for signs concerning the coming war with Thebes), an omen of eagles and swans matches identifiably with the specific characteristic of each of the Argive leaders’ deaths. Among these, Amphiaraus recognizes his own death and addresses Melampus, who weeps as he too understands the sign of Amphiaraus’ unavoidable doom (3.546-7): \textit{quid furtim inlacrimans? illum, uenerande Melampu, qui cadit, agnosco}, ‘Why these furtive tears? Revered Melampus, I well know | that one who is falling’. The final phrase, as Elaine Fantham has noticed,\textsuperscript{59} matches (in the same \textit{sedes}) the matrona’s prophetic anticipation of Pompey’s death in Lucan’s poem, at \textit{BC} 1.685-6: \textit{hunc ego fluminea deformis truncus harena | qui iacet agnosco}, ‘him I recognize, lying on the river sands, | an unsightly headless corpse’. The echo no doubt adds pathos, but it also plays upon imagery of corpse abuse and burial denial integral to the scene of

\textsuperscript{58} Seo (2013): 164-7 views Amphiaraus’ death as a divine reward of physical inviolability, as was certainly Apollo’s intention, along the lines of Maeon’s freedom from scavenging beasts (for the link between Maeon and Amphiaraus, see her p.156-60, 161, 165-7). But Amphiaraus’ own emphasis on the lack of proper burial rites makes the gift decidedly hollow (Statius anticipates this for us at 7.692: \textit{deceus...ineae}, ‘hollow glory’), particularly in a poem obsessed with the granting of these rites. Ripoll (1998): 226 argues that all the divine efforts to provide heroes with a glorious death in the \textit{Theb.} are unsatisfactory; cf. Lovatt (2005): 238-9. Apollo’s confession after the death of Amphiaraus says much (9.657): \textit{nec tenui currus terraeque abrupta coegi, | saevus ego immertilusque coli}, ‘I stayed not his chariot nor forced gaping Earth shut, | savage that I am and undeserving of worship!’

Pompey’s death. Pompey was mutilated and half-burnt on a funeral pyre; Amphiarus will be denied the rites of burial as his mortal frame withers away in Hell.

This blurring of lines between living and dying expressed in Amphiarus’ bizarre death scene is mirrored by the figure of Oedipus—the first character to appear in the *Thebaid*—who exists in this state of half-life, half-death, hovering between both worlds, symbolized by his blindness and his hollowing out a place for Hell in the upper world (1.46-52):

impia iam merita scrutatus lumina dextra
merserat aeterna damnatum nocte pudorem
Oedipodes longaque animam sub morte trahebat.
illum indulgentem tenebris imaeque recessu
sedis inaspectos caelo radiisque penates
seruantem tamen adsiduis circumuolat alis
saeua dies animi, scelerumque in pectore Dirae.

His impious eyes already searched out by hands that made amends, Oedipus had plunged his guilty shame in night everlasting and now held his soul in a lingering death. But, while he indulged in darkness deep in his dungeon retreat, while he kept his hearth out of sight of sky and sunbeams, yet, in his mind, on persistent wings, savage light hovered, as, in his heart, did his crimes’ Avengers.

This liminal state of living like a corpse between both worlds recalls and adjusts Amphiarus’ liminal state of dying as a living man in Hell (also doubled by his death-scene straddling the *limen* of books 7 and 8). Moreover, Oedipus’ rejection of the upper world and embracing of the lower and his liminality between both signals his intimate ties to Lucan’s liminal Erichtho. Like her, he will direct an appeal to the infernal gods (not the *superi*) for intervention (1.56-87), precipitating civil war. The translation above does not fully do justice

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the disturbing death-in-life Oedipus is leading: he is dragging along (*trahebat*) his life in an extended death (48). Tiresias further articulates Oedipus’ existence as an ‘extended funeral’ (4.414-17). Hardie notes the similar liminal status of Seneca’s Oedipus at *Oed.* 949-51, and Seneca expands upon this living-death state of Oedipus in his *Phoenician Women,* which both poetically and structurally works as background material for Statius’ action. From the play’s opening speech Oedipus laments that he has long-since been a ‘cadaver’ (*Phoen.* 35-6: *olum iam tuum | est hoc cadauer*), that his death has only been granted part-way, and he ‘drags along’ (*traho*) life that is merely the idle delays (*languidas moras*) of death (44-8; cf. 141-3, 169-71, 181). As in Statius’ poem, for Seneca’s Oedipus, life is a protracted funeral, as he complains to Antigone (*Phoen.* 94-6: *funus extendis meum | longasque uiui ducis exequias patris. | aliquando terra corpus inuisum tege*, “You are extending my funeral and prolonging the death-rites of your living father. At last, bury this hateful body in the earth”). He is a living corpse that requires burial (97-8: *pietatem uocas | patrem insepultum*), though how much life actually exists in his body, he does not know (113-14: *in cinerem dabo | hoc quidquid in me uiuit*, “I will turn to ash whatever still lives in me”).

The final appearance of the disgraced king in Statius’ poem completes this image of his zombie-like liminal status. After the mutual slaughter of Polynices and Eteocles, Oedipus emerges from his cavernous hovel to inspect the corpses of his sons (11.580-4):

```latex
\texttt{at genitor sceleris comperto fine profundis}
\texttt{erupt tenebris saeuque in limine profert}
\texttt{mortem imperfectam: ueteri stat sordida tabo}
\texttt{utraque canities, et durus \textcolor{red}{\textit{sanguine crinis}}}
\texttt{obnubit furiale caput}
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The one who begat the crime just completed burst up from shadows below and, at the grim threshold, displayed his imperfect death: grizzled hair and beard—both stiff with moldering filth, the locks matted with blood—cloud his hag-ridden head…

His death is ‘imperfect’ (mortem imperfectam) and incomplete. His emergence from the shadows is like a return from Hell, and his appearance recalls the shade of Hector that comes to visit Aeneas at Aeneid 2.277: squalentem barbam et concretos sanguine crinis. His appearance here is the first time he has come out into the upper world in the poem, and so this is in some sense a return to the world of the living from his state of perpetual death in life; directionally, he moves in opposition to Amphiaraus, whose death is akin to a perverse unintended katabasis. The zombie-like Oedipus begins the Thebaid by praying to the infernal gods for vengeance and cursing his sons (1.46-87), and later Statius brings Laius’ ghost out of Hell to level a curse against his grandchildren Polynices and Eteocles that leads to full-blown civil war (Theb. 2.102-24). The dead and the death-like do not disappear from the Thebaid, they haunt it; they generate it.

My favorite example of Statius’ perverse play on the burial theme comes during the aristeia of Tydeus (my favorite character). The warrior Idas breaks through the Argive ranks wielding a smoking torch and comes face to face with Tydeus. Bad idea (8.466-73):

ibat fumiferam quatiens Onchestius Idas lampada per medios turbabantque agmina Graium, igne uiam rumpens; magno quem comminus ictu Tydeos hasta feri dispulsa casside fixit. illae ingens in terga iacet, stat fronte superstes lancea, conlapsae ueniunt in tempora flammæ. prosequitur Tydeus: ‘saeuos ne dixeris Argos, igne tuo, Thebane, (rogum concedimus) arde!’

Onchestian Idas, shaking a smoky torch, charged straight at the heart of the Greek squadrons, throwing them into turmoil,
forcing his way with fire; a hard thrust at close range from
fierce Tydeus’ spear dislodged his helmet and ran him through.
The huge man lay on his back, the lance sticking straight up
out of his forehead; his torch toppled, catching his hair on fire.
Tydeus flung at him:

‘Don’t you call Argos “savage”—
look! we grant you a pyre! Burn in your own fire, Theban!’

As far as post mortem boasts go, this one is hard to beat.62 Tydeus jumps at the
ridiculousness of the circumstance—the torch that gave Idas an opening and caused such
turmoil to the Argive troops sets the man himself on fire as he dies—while also confronting
the main issue of burial denial that will come to a head in book 11.63 Like Capaneus, whose
body is ‘burned’ by the lightning of Jupiter, Idas receives a quasi-funeral fire inadvertently,
through a warping of traditional rites, with his killer Tydeus acting the part of a sarcastic
eulogizer offering the final words over the corpse. Though he could not possibly know it yet,
as with other characters in the poem, Tydeus’ words anticipate Creon’s edict, and his own
corpse will have to await Theseus’ intervention to receive fire and a tomb.

‘Huge Idas’ (ingens), felled by a wound to his head, lies stretched out on his back like
the headless Priam at Aeneid 2.577: iacet ingens litore truncus, and like Pompeius Magnus
in BC 8, modelled (as we have seen repeatedly) on Virgil’s scene of Priam’s demise. Tydeus
recognizes his impending doom through the pregnant allusion to, again, the matrona’s
prophecy of Pompey’s death (BC 1.685-6; Theb. 8.753, cf. 9.2, 9.17, noted in chapter 3.2).
Like Priam and Pompey, Tydeus will lie unburied, unlike the mocked Idas who receives
something like a cremation here, albeit a (typically in the poem) distorted cremation. But

62 Tydeus is an aestheteician of this sort of brutal one-liner aimed at a fallen enemy: e.g. the glorious
‘emasculating’ of Atys (there is surely play with Catullus 63) at 8.588-91. On taunting in the Theb. and in epic
generally, see the discussion in Dominik (1994a): 180-8.
while Tydeus understands the importance of funereal rites—Argos would be, like Thebes will be, saeuus not to allow them (8.472)—this scene jars with his own dying request at the end of this book. Tydeus is the only character in the poem who actively rejects the importance of burial rites (8.736-8): non ossa precor referantur ut Argos | Aetolumue larem: nec enim mihi cura supræmi | funeris, ‘I don’t ask that my bones go back to Argos | or home to Aetolia—funeral pomp is of no interest | to me’. His cannibalism of Melanippus’ severed head will forfeit him immortality when his divine protector Athena flees in horror at his crime, while with his words he denies his hated body (738-9) even the most basic of rites in death. Tydeus is saeuus extraordinaire: his savagery denies his own burial, and anticipates his animalistic cannibalism of Melanippus’ brains. As well as Lucan’s Scaeva (also noted in chapter 3.2), his Caesar at BC 5.668-71 is certainly a model for Tydeus here since Caesar also denies his own burial rites during Lucan’s sea-storm in book 5. With Tydeus, though, pathos rips through the madness and theomachic savagery of Lucan’s scene because, while Caesar may have anticipated his own apotheosis in BC, Tydeus does not care about, nor does he receive his.

5.3. Mater Lachrymarum

O Frauen Deutschlands!
Frauen Frankreichs!
Säht Ihr eure Männer!
Sie tasten mit zerfetzten Händen
(Gebärde, leichenstarr, ward zärtlich brüderlicher Hauch)

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64 Silius’ Hannibal at Pun. 17.559-61, similarly, should also be read in concert (see 6.3 below).
65 See Dinter (2012): 86.
66 The denial of ‘humane’ burial rites is an indicator of Tydeus’ fall from humanity, but may also points to his Stoic denial of the importance of burial. See Ripoll (1998): 298 n.205: L’héroïsme viril de Tydée, tout homérique qu’il soit par ailleurs, n’est donc pas sans intégrer quelques traits stoïciens.
Nach den verquollnen Leibern ihrer Feinde.
Ja, sie umarmen sich!
O schauerlich Umarmen!
Ich Sah es an und bleibe stumm.
Bin ich ein Tier, ein Metzgerhund?
Oder stammlle...
Stammlle:
Geschändete!
Gemordete!
—Ernst Toller, ‘Leichen im Priesterwald’

Statius does depict a few scenes of burial in the poem that outwardly seem to provide a bit of relief to the theme of burial denial and perversion. But even in cases where cremations or burials occur (Hypsipyle’s funeral rites for her father Thoas in book 5, the lengthy burial for the slain child Opheltes in book 6, and Argia and Antigone’s cremation of Polynices in book 12) there is an overwhelming emphasis on the same sort of perversion that characterized the mock-burials in the militaristic sphere. These burials tease at the semblance of propriety, but are ultimately undercut by the promise of more misery and abuses to come.

As the Argive army regroups in Nemea, they come across the Lemnian refugee Hypsipyle, who recounts her miserable tale of the Argonauts’ visit to Lemnos and the madness Venus imposed on the Lemnian women who murdered all of the island’s men. Only Hypsipyle managed to avoid Venus’ curse, and she describes the events of the night she provided an escape for her father Thoas, amidst the murder and conflagration that gripped the other Lemnian women, who are described as caught up in a storm of divinely induced madness. Hypsipyle’s mock-burial of her father (who is not actually dead) constitutes paradoxically one of the most successful burials in the poem (5.313-19):

ipsa quoque arcanis tecti in penetralibus alto
molior igne pyram, sceptrum super armaque patris
inicio et notas regum uelamina uestes,
ac prope maesta rogum confusis crinibus asto
ense cruentato, fraudemque et inania busta
plango metu, si forte premant, cassumque parenti
omen et hac dubios leti precor ire timores.

I too, in the hidden inner court of our house, pile
a pyre high with fire, throw onto it Father’s scepter,
his weapons and robes—the well-known garb of kings; as the fire—
eddies, I stand grieving beside the bier with bloodstained
sword, lamenting this sham, this empty tomb in fear lest,
by chance, they pursue me; I prayed, Let the omen prove
hollow for Father, and so may my vague fears of death disappear!

Her deception is necessary because the other Lemnian women had carried out the actual
murder of their husbands, fathers, and sons, in one blow robbing the island of her once
famous ‘arms and men’.67

Although the women cremate and bury the men, these are manifestly ‘impious
crimes’ (5.300-01: impia...scelera). Hypsipyle must feign the burial rites for her father so as
not to be seen as dissenting from the other women. It is a twisted play on the codes of
morality in the poem that her crime is protecting her father, her pietas the (assumed) act of
patricide.68 For her deception and the appearance of wickedness, she is gifted the throne of
Lemnos, which her father had vacated by fleeing, or, in the minds of the other women, which
Hypsipyle had taken from him through patricide (320-5):

his mihi pro meritis, ut falsi criminis astu
parta fides, regna et solio considere patris
(supplicium!) datur. anne illis obsessa negarem?
accessi, saepe ante deos testata fidemque
inmeritasque manus; subeo (pro dira potestas!)
exangue imperium et maestam sine culmine Lemnon.

67 5.305 (armisque uirisque...). The arrival of Jason and the Argonauts restores for a time the arms and men
killed by the Lemnian women (353: armaque...uirum; 447: arma...uirum). That the Lemnian men die not in war
but at the hands of women is a twisted play on Virgil’s incipit. On the post-Virgilian appropriation of Virgil’s
For these meritorious deeds (since the ruse of my feigned crime gained credence), my father’s kingdom and throne are given to me—torture! And yet, beset as I was, could I refuse them? I yielded—I who had often called Gods to witness my good faith and innocent hands! I take up—dread power!—
a drained empire, a Lemnos grieving without her Eminence.

Victoria Pagán notes how Hypsipyle’s ‘mock burial of her father is so empty and so contrary to the purpose of the ritual that it becomes a pointed commentary on the final, essential theme of the Theban legend, the refusal of burial by Creon’.69 Kingship and skewed burial rites are inseparable in the *Thebaid*.

But it is the care and mournful touch she puts into a feigned burial that resonate here. Mourning women seeking burial for their men elsewhere in the *Thebaid*, both Thebans and Argives, are hysterical to the point of Bacchic madness.70 In the aftermath of Tydeus’ slaughter of the 50 Theban ambushers, Theban wives and parents fill Cithaeron with howling and compete with one another in their woe (3.116-17). The whole crowd rages (*furit*) at the sight of blood (124-5) as they attempt to reattach limbs and severed heads in a grim inverted Bacchic *sparagmos*. The point is driven home as a ‘Pentheus’ lies among the fallen (170), and the story of Agave is invoked by the old man Aletes (188-190) among the deathly reminders of recent Theban (mytho-)history. Later, at the poem’s close the Argive women, finally able to bury their dead husbands, brothers, and fathers after Theseus’ intervention, are explicitly compared to Thyiads rushing into Bacchic wars. The recovering and burial of their husbands is akin to an offensive (in both senses) Maenadic rampage (12.790-6). The scenes

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70 For more on the Bacchic nature of the *Thebaid*’s women, see Panoussi (2007); Augustakis (2010): 87-91.
pervert the traditional forms of female lament and burial rites through the imposition of maenadic imagery of a particularly militaristic slant.\(^71\)

Maenadic behavior characterized all the Lemnian women as they raged, killing their fathers, husbands, and sons before ultimately burying them (5.90-5, 148-51).\(^72\) That is, all the Lemnians act like maenads except Hypsipyle, even though ironically it is she who is the granddaughter of Bacchus. The burning of her father’s \textit{arma} and clothes as a surrogate for his actual body is reminiscent of Andromache’s mournful substitute funeral for Hector at \textit{Iliad} 22.510-14:

\begin{quote}
‘...ἀτάρ τοι έμιατ’ ἐνι μεγάροις κέονται
λεπτά τε καὶ χαρέντα τετυγμένα χερῶ γυναικῶν.
αλλὰ ἦτοι τάδε πάντα καταφλέξω πυρὶ κηλέω
οὐδὲν σοι γ᾽ ὀφέλος, ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἔγκεισαι αὐτῶι,
ἀλλὰ πρὸς Τρώων καὶ Τρωϊάδων κλέος εἶναι.
Ὡς ἐφάτο κλαίοντες, ἐπὶ δὲ στενάχοντο γυναικεῖς.
\end{quote}

‘...though in your house there is clothing laid up that is fine-textured and pleasant, wrought by the hands of women. But all of these I will burn up in the fire’s blazing, no use to you, since you will never be laid away in them; but in your honour, from the men of Troy and the Trojan women’. So she spoke, in tears; and the women joined in her mourning.

The sentiment is similar here but the context is, of course, completely different. Andromache’s substitute funeral is aimed at ritual completion for the corpse of her husband still in Achilles’ possession. Hypsipyle’s funeral rites are an attempt to convince her raging coterie that she is as bloodthirsty as they are, while her father safely flees the island. Mass Bacchic madness distorts what would otherwise be the \textit{Iliad’s} scene of mass ritual mourning and lamentation associated with Andromache’s substitute funeral, and we likely have a

\(^{71}\) Lovatt (1999): 144-5.
\(^{72}\) See further Chinn (2013): 329-31, with reference to Statius’ appropriation of Valerius Flaccus’ account of Hypsipyle.
further nod to Dido’s divinely induced ‘madness’ as she immolates herself on the substitute pyre of Aeneas’ possessions as he flees Carthage at the end of *Aeneid* 4. There is a hint of Cornelia’s substitute burial for Pompey at Lucan BC 9.174-9 (already modelled in part on the substitute burial from *Iliad* 22: see section 4.2), which is also bizarrely one of the more successful ‘funerals’ in his poem which everywhere fights against proper funeral observance. Similarly in Statius’ epic, only a burial that is not even real comes close to adhering to the codes of morality.

But even here, this burial is outside of the timeline of the main narrative, since it is recounted by Hypsipyle who assumes the role of narrator for nearly 450 lines (5.49-498). And, while the action of Hypsipyle’s narrative is certainly contaminated by Venus’ curse against the Lemnian women, it is uninfected by the stain of Thebes. Hypsipyle’s substitute funeral comes from a place of moral rectitude—better to not kill your father and lie to your divinely possessed comrades—but ultimately it is cited as the act that inspires divine retribution in Jupiter’s enormous snake’s killing of the infant Opheltes (5.534-9), with whom Hypsipyle had been entrusted as nurse (5.628). While Hypsipyle tells her story to the Argives, the child she is supposed to be watching is crushed by the accidental flick of the snake’s tale.

When Hypsipyle and the Argives realize Opheltes has been killed, they prepare funeral rites and dedicate games in his honor. Yet even these rites are corrupted by their insistent anticipation of the horrible events of the second war-filled half of Statius’ poem.


The child’s mother, Eurydice, attempts repeatedly to throw herself on the remains of Opheltes (6.35-6), and later (6.169-73) demands the Argives place his nurse Hypsipyle alive on the pyre to burn with her son as a form of sacrifice. Even this is not enough. She wants to burn together with Hypsipyle and Opheltes on the pyre, with the lasting satisfaction of revenge for Hypsipyle’s negligence sated (6.169-73, 174-6):76

‘illam (nil poscunt amplius umbrae), illam, oro, cineri simul excisaeque parenti reddite, quaeso, duces, per ego haec primordia belli cui peperi; sic aequa gemant mihi funera matres Ogygiae’. sternit crines iteratque precando:

‘reddite, nec uero crudelem auidamque uocate sanguinis: occumbam pariter, dum uulnere iusto exsaturata oculos unum impellamur in ignem’.

She tore her hair and repeated her plea:

‘Make that woman, I beg—his shade wants nothing more!—make her your gift to his ashes, and to his slain mother. My lords, I implore you, by the source of the war I gave birth to. May Ogygian mothers lament deaths as I do!’

While Statius allows none of this distorted funereal madness to happen, he is however preparing us for the end of the poem when Evadne will, in fact, immolate herself on her husband Capaneus’ pyre (12.800-02). The expressed vitriol over the burial of a loved one has resonances with the ‘duel’ over the burial rites of Polynices between Argia and Antigone.77 Argia and Antigone also threaten to throw themselves on the joint pyre for Eteocles and

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Polynices if the brothers’ ghosts do not stop their fighting which breaks out when their remains are accidentally combined on a single pyre (12.446).

Eurydice even takes direct blame for the coming war between the Thebans and Argives: it is her ‘spawn’ (6.171-2, cf. 6.143-7). This image of the child as the spawn of war alludes to the prophecy that Opheltes (he is refashioned as ‘Archemorus’) will be the first death and ‘first offering’ of the war (5.647). Eurydice is, then, the first grieving mother in a series of grieving mothers the coming war and violence will produce, as she vengefully hopes for and forecasts (6.172-3). The lighting of Opheltes’ pyre initiates an omen of impending disaster, as the seer Amphiaraus recognizes in the approaching war that will amplify the paroxysms of misery he and the Argives are witnessing at the funeral for a small child (6.221-6). This first offering (Archemorus) for the war is only a microcosm of the many victims that will follow.78

The funeral games for Opheltes/Archemorus that directly follow the cremation risk everywhere spilling over into actual civil warfare.79 Statius threatens activating too early the horrida bella that initiated Virgil’s change of subject matter in book 7 of the Aeneid. As competitiveness grows to violence during the chariot race, Statius comments (6.457-8): bella geri ferro leuius, bella horrida, credas | is furor in laudes, ‘Such was their | frenzy to win, you’d think war—horrendous, iron-waged war!— | a less weighty matter’. The phrasing echoes the Sibyl’s comments in the Aeneid about the looming war in Italy, but her speech is prophetic and outside of a military context (Aen. 6.86-7: bella, horrida bella, | et Thybrim multo spumantem sanguine cerno, ‘I see warfare, | Hideous warfare, the Tiber frothing with

79 E.g. 6.618-20, 625-6, 513-17, 531-9, 734-7: with Lovatt (2005): 270.
torrents of bloodshed’). The more natural narrative intertext is the narrator’s words at the start of *Aenid* 7, which signal the change of tone and the onset of war and Virgil’s war-song (7.41: *dicam horrida bella. | dicam acies actosque animis in funera reges…*, ‘I’ll speak about hideous warfare | I’ll speak of battles, of kings who were driven to death by their courage’).

By initiating Virgil’s language here in a pseudo-military context before the actual fighting has begun, Statius uncomfortably straddles the line between the games and the oncoming war,\(^80\) between his ‘delay’ tactics of the first 6 books,\(^81\) and the Ennian/Virgilian-style ‘beginning’ of the war in book 7.\(^82\)

The entire funeral and games honoring Opheltes/Archemorus are in the end completely undercut by Jupiter who in the opening to book 7 passes over these rites due to the dead as—metapoetically—nothing more than a waste of time, a further (narrative) ‘delay’. Jupiter even quips that you would think the war had already been fought, given how engaged the Argives are in funerary concerns (7.18-19): *credas bello rediisse, tot instant | plausibus, offensique sedent ad iusta sepulcri*, ‘You’d think they’d returned from war, they cheer | so heartily, hunkering down for the Rites of the Outraged Tomb!’ Jupiter is being sarcastic here, but his point is clear enough: the sequence of events is all skewed.\(^83\) Funerals like this\(^84\) should be occurring after war not as a prelude to it, and this sequencing issue is

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\(^82\) McNelis (2004): 276: ‘By the time Statius was writing the *Thebaid*, the Roman epic norm had established that the seventh book (re)introduces a war and provides a new direction for the poem’.


further compounded by funeral games that all too easily spill over into the semblance of warfare.

The most important and climactic funeral scene in the poem is Argia and Antigone’s midnight meeting over the corpse of Polynices. The efforts to bury the rotting Polynices 
(12.209: *te tabente per agros*, ‘rotting in enemy fields’), against the edict of Creon, are definitively pious (12.186, 384, 458), and so their motivations come from a positive place in relation/reaction to the *nefas* of Creon’ burial ban. Yet their attempts at *pietas* literally reignite the fratricidal madness that set the war in motion, when they accidentally mingle the body of Polynices with his enemy-brother Eteocles on the same pyre. As soon as Polynices’ remains come into contact with Eteocles’ smoldering ashes, their duel begins anew, they are ‘brothers again’ (12.429-36):

> ecce iterum frater! primos ut contigit artus
> ignis edax, tremuere rogi et nouus aduena busto
> pellitir; exundant diuise ueste flammeae
> alternosome apices abrupta luce coruscant.
> pallidus Eumenidum uelutti commiserit ignes
> Orcus, uterque minax globus et conatur uterque
> longius; ipsae etiam commoto pondere paulum
> secessere trabes.

Behold! brothers once more! As devouring fire first licked his limbs, the timbers shook, pushing the newcomer off the pyre. Flames billowed forth and, as a tip split in two, each crown in turn glittered, each had its light torn away. As though pallid Orcus had set two Eumenidês’ brands to brawling, each fireball threatened, each strove to outclimb the other; the whole structure shifted its weight and moved

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apart a little.

As in Hypsipyle’s mock burial of her father, the scene plays with the confusion in this poem of *pietas* and *nefas*. Through a concerted act of love and piety, the sisters-in-law come together to bury Polynices, but the act morphs into a renewal of the crimes of fratricide (12.441): *uiuunt odia improba, uiuunt*, ‘It lives—their loathsome hatred lives on!’

The scene reworks an earlier death-scene and cremation linking brothers in a bloody embrace. As the Theban mother Ide scans the field of battle after Tydeus’ annihilation of the 50 Theban ambushers, she finds her twin sons locked in death, pierced together by a spear through each heart (3.147-9). Ide mourns her loss and promises her sons an eternal fraternal bond on the pyre and in a funeral urn (3.165-8):

> quin ego non dextras miseris complexibus ausim
diuidere et tanti consortia rumpere leti:
> ite diu fratres indiscretique supremis
> ignibus et caros urna confundite manes.

> I’d never dare part your hands, entwined in this pitiful clasp, no, nor break up the partnership of such death.
> Go as you’ve long been, as brothers inseparable, even in flames of the pyre, and, in the one urn, conjoin your dear ashes.

Ide promises—the funeral is only here anticipated in the narrative—that she will purposefully unite her sons on the pyre, and their fraternal *pietas*, ‘unsevered’ (*indiscreti*), will last forever. This prefigures and contrasts the fraternal *nefas* of Polynices and Eteocles and their accidental reunion on the pyre which fractures in two as their smoldering corpses compete with one another past the limits of life and death.

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86 See esp. Ganiban (2007): 208-12 on the issues of *pietas* and *nefas* in this scene.
Charles McNelis has shown how the renewal of brotherly strife between Polynices and Eteocles on the pyre perverts the sentiments of Achilles and Patroclus (via the request of the latter’s ghost) in the *Iliad* that their bones be mingled together in death (Il. 23.82-92) and that a burial mound be constructed to hold both of them (23.243-8). 88 We are prepared for some allusion to the *Iliad* scene just before this when Argia is driven to find Polynices’ corpse and offer funeral rites by the image of her husband’s ghost demanding burial (*Theb. 12.191-3*): *sed nulla animo uersatur imago| crebrior Aonii quam quae de sanguine campi| nuda uenit poscitque rogos*, ‘But no image haunts her mind more | than that which comes, a ghost from Aonia’s blood-soaked field, | naked and crying out for interment’. The scene replays Patroclus’ ghost appearing to Achilles to demand burial at *Iliad* 23.59-107. 89 Patroclus wants his bones mingled with Achilles’ (whose impending death is assured at Troy) in a fraternal bond. Argia (and Antigone) will inadvertently mingle her husband’s remains with his brother in fraternal strife.

Statius’ play with the sentiments in the *Iliad*, I add, finds a further engagement with and perversion of how those sentiments play out in the complementary passage in *Odyssey* 24, when the ghost of Agamemnon describes the funeral rites the Achaeans provided for Achilles at Troy. Agamemnon describes the cremation of Achilles and his funeral rites, including the mingling (*μίγδα*) of Achilles’ white bones with those of Patroclus in a golden urn (Hom. *Od. 24.76-7*): ἐν τῷ τοι κεῖται λεύκ’ ὀστέα, φαίδμι’ Ἀχιλλεύ, | μίγδα δὲ Πατρόκλοιο Μενοιτιάδαο θανόντος. 90 By alluding to a moment representing profound

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90 On these lines and their dialogue with the scenes from *Iliad* 23 and Patroclus request for burial with Achilles, see Heubeck (1992): *ad* 24.76-9; Burgess (2009): 16-17, 104-06.
friendship in the *Iliad*, and the execution of Patroclus’ and Achilles’ demand to have their bones mingled in the *Odyssey*, Statius destroys the sentiments of the model scenes and highlights the boundless madness of his own depiction of fraternity. While Achilles and Patroclus sought to cement their bond beyond their worldly lives, Polynices and Eteocles’ enmity proves equally limitless.

Scholars have noted how the brothers’ hatred ‘infects’ Argia and Antigone,\(^91\) who, when Creon’s guards apprehend them, begin fighting with one another to take the blame for the crime of cremating Polynices (12.456-63):

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\[460\]

\[
nusquam illa alternis modo quae reuerentia uerbis, iram odiumque putes; tantus discordat utrimque clamor, et ad regem qui deprendere trahuntur.
\]

Courting savage destruction, they burned with a heartfelt desire for death: one boasted she’d stolen her brother’s, one her husband’s remains, vying by turns:

‘My proof is the corpse’.  
‘Mine the flames’.  
‘I was led by devotion!’  
‘And I by love’.

They insisted on harsh treatment and happily thrust their wrists onto the cuffs.

Gone the respect that had colored their speech just now, replaced—you’d swear!—by hatred and rage, so shrilly did these two women wrangle, dragging their captors the while before the king.

Whatever love and piety led the women to the corpse of Polynices and allowed them to work together to cremate him is suddenly blown apart. Their mutual respect descends into anger and hatred and in their madness they hurry to claim the reward of death for defying Creon’s edict. Like Menoeceus’ burial at the start of book 12 that ended with the re-emphasis of the inhuman burial ban by Creon (see 5.1), Polynices’ burial only brings a continuation of the fraternal strife that ignited the war in the first place. Time and again Statius highlights the perverted blurring of misery and violence as scenes of grieving everywhere spill over into violent acts, confrontations, and open warfare. Nowhere is this more apparent than in scenes of funeral rites that repeatedly accomplish little more than a continuation of militant savagery and chaos. Burial in the Thebaid brings anything but a peaceful resolution.

5.4. Some Exceptions?

the empty bodies stand at rest
casualties of their own flesh
afflicted by their dispossession
but no bodies ever knew
nobodys
no bodies felt like you
nobodys
—Smashing Pumpkins, ‘Bodies’

And yet, there is a sense that Statius will not allow things to get too far out of hand. Two scenes cut against the themes of burial denial seen throughout the poem, but which still share Statius’ interest in burial perversion and corpse maltreatment. First I will briefly consider Iris’ ‘refreshing’ of the corpses of the Argive leaders in book 12, before looking in a bit more detail at the death of Maeon and Eteocles’ order that his corpse be left unburied in book 3. In

the case of Maeon’s death, this was the moment that instigated the narrative theme of non-burial and corpse abuse in the *Thebaid*, and so it is of particular programmatic importance in the poem. It stands out more for its differences when set against the non-burials that follow. Maeon’s suicide and Eteocles’ denial of burial for him are also likely Statian mythic innovations, allowing the poet space for improvisation and innovation.

We might recall that despite the insistence that the gods have averted their gaze from events on earth at the beginning of Book 12—a product of the impiety of the fratricidal duel between Polynices and Eteocles—Statius describes a series of goddesses sharing in the misery of the Argive women and assisting in their journey to Athens to seek aid from Theseus at the Altar of Clemency (12.129-40). Capping this list is Iris, who is tasked with ‘refreshing’ the decaying corpses of the Argive leaders as they await burial rites (12.137-40):

\[\text{nec non functa ducum refouendi corpora curam} \\
\text{Iris habet, putresque arcanis roribus artus} \\
\text{ambrosiaeque rigat sucis, ut longius obstent} \\
\text{expectentque rogum et flammnas non ante fatiscant.}\]

And indeed, Iris took care to replenish the leaders’ lifeless bodies—her secret dews and ambrosial juices so firmed their putrid flesh as to gain them time as they wait for the pyre, not rotting away before the flames claimed them.

The scene is subtly introduced but shocking to the thematic picture of corpse abuse and burial denial (as well as divine action) that Statius’ poem has incessantly expounded. The heroes are rotting (*putres ... artus*), but they will be preserved (*rigat*) in their present rot, not allowed to rot ‘too much’ (140). There is an odd mixture of the preservation of heroes in the *Iliad* like Sarpedon (*Il. 16.680*), Patroclus (*19.38-9*), and Hector (*23.184-7, 24.411-23*),

whose corpses are preserved, importantly, from even reaching a point of decay by ambrosia, divine oils, and nectar, and made pristine again for burial, and the sort of arcane nefarious ‘magic’ that preserves Pompey’s severed head in its state of mutilation (BC 8.688-91) and reanimates Erichtho’s soldier-corpse in Lucan’s epic (6.667-84). The use of refoueo here teases at a macabre Lucanesque ‘revivification’ of rotting flesh.

The poem ends with an extended discourse on humanitas, as gods give way to human actors in book 12, and humans play out the final action of the poem and provide their own form of resolution. Here Statius creates an epic universe that suddenly nods to Lucan’s portrait of a godless realm. No god interferes with Theseus’ actions, no god forces his hand. But before they become abstractions, the gods’ last truly ‘divine’ action concerns the treatment of those dead and rotting bodies strewn on the Theban plain.

The first act that set the stage for the leitmotif of burial denial in the poem was Eteocles’ refusal of burial rites for Maeon, the lone survivor of Tydeus’ annihilation of the Theban ambusherers (3.97-8: [Eteocles] uetat igne rapi, pacemque sepulcri | impius ignaris nequiquam minibus arcet, ‘[Eteocles] bars the corpse’s cremation, decrees “No grave, | no peace!” Pointless sacrilege: the ghost paid him no heed’). Eteocles’ act is reprehensible, but Maeon’s bravery in facing the tyrant and his suicide in the face of tyranny allow Statius room to bestow considerable praise upon the dead man as a form of narratorial laudatio funebris (3.99-113).

\[
\text{tu tamen egregius fati mentisque nec umquam}
\]
\[
\text{(sic dignum est) passure situm, qui comminus ausus}
\]

\[100\]


95 The text is corrupted somewhat here and/or a line may have dropped out after 105. See Hill (1983): ad loc.
uadere contemptum reges, quaque ampla ueniret libertas, sancire uiam: quo carmine dignam,
quo satis ore tuuis famam uirtutibus addam,
augur amate deis? non te caelestia frustra
edocuit lauruque sua dignatus Apollo est,
* * *
et nemorum Dodona parens Cirrhaeaque urgo
audebit tacito populos suspendere Phoeb. nunc quoque Tartaro multum diuisus Auerno
Elysias, i, carpe plagas, ubi manibus axis
inuis Ogygiis nec suntis iniqua tyranni
iuessa ualent; durant habitus et membra cruentis
inuiolata feris, nudoque sub axe iacentem
et nemus et tristis uolucrum reuerentia seruat.

Maeon: you outdid us all in death and resolve!
ever—and this is your due—will you suffer decay, for you dared scorn kings outright and make sacred a way whereby Freedom might come in full. With what hymn, what speech can I add to your virtues the fame they so richly deserve, augur beloved of the Gods? No waste of time, the celestial lore you got from Apollo—you earned the laurels He gave you; Dodona, mother of oak groves, and Cirrha’s virgin will dare—now your Phoebus is silent—to keep the nations in suspense. Well away from deepest Avernus, go! claim Elysian regions whose sky is closed to the view of Ogygian shades, where the guilty tyrant’s wicked commands lack force. Bloodthirsty beasts have spared your robes and flesh; in death, preserved by the sad reverence of birds, by your leaves of laurel, you lie—intact—beneath open sky.

Again, like the corpses Iris preserves or solidifies in their decay, Maeon is kept in a state of perpetual preservation. He is not buried or cremated and so Eteocles’ command is upheld, but the aim of this command is denied since Maeon’s corpse will remain intact, unmutilated by beasts, and even protected by birds that elsewhere in epic serve as the (threatened) agents of corpse abuse, instigated by the proem of the *Iliad* at 1.4-5 (Maeon was an augur, after all:}
3.104). Tydeus’ corpse can later be said to avoid the abuse by beasts and birds (even funereal fire), but only because his animal savagery makes him impervious and opposed to natural law (9.101-02). Maeon will remain a corpse but he will not be subject to the normal, natural fate of corpses on account of his tyrant-defying heroism. He is preserved physically and this preservation is doubled by Statius’ makarismos that immortalizes him in this state of inviolability. He is splendid of fate and soul, never to suffer oblivion (99-100: tu tamen egregius fati mentisque nec umquam |...passure situm).

The extension of the ‘life’ of Maeon’s corpse nods to Lucan’s interest in BC in the processes of death and dying, preservation and decay, and the makarismos overall has a Lucanian Stoic political tinge. Statius’ praise of Maeon derives from his ability to carve out a space for ‘ample freedom’ (101-02: ampla...libertas) through his challenge to tyranny and his Stoical suicide. This interest in libertas set in opposition to broadly defined ‘kings’ (3.101: reges) is very much a Lucanian flourish and largely atypical of Statius’ poetic program. It might strike us as a touch bold for Statius to glorify exuberantly (he is nearly speechless, 102-04) a character set in opposition to a monarch, no matter how despotico.

Lucan had explored the ‘vatic’ power of characters doubling as voices for the poet himself or

96 See Hutchinson (1993): 306: ‘We had learned before the outburst that Eteocles had forbidden burial (96-8); now we are told that Mæon’s body is miraculously spared the standard violation from beasts and birds. This happens in part through the tristis uolucrum reuerentia, the “sad reverence of the birds”. The tyrant is thwarted once more, but with an alluringly clever use of the augur’s profession’.


98 Though, note the case of Aletes. After Mæon’s speech and suicide, Statius inserts the vitriolic speech of an elderly Theban named Aletes, who condemns the unjust actions of Eteocles (3.179-213). Statius as narrator questions from where this man conjured such libertas, here something like ‘freedom of speech’ (3.216: unde ea libertas?). Statius quickly answers his own question: the man is acting so boldly because he is old and close to death. He might have been killed or forced to suicide like Mæon, but his own natural death is approaching; he has no fear (216-17: iuxta illi finis et aetas | tota retro, servaeque decus uelit addere morti, ‘What was the source of this freedom? His end was at hand, his life all | behind him—he’d like to acquire glory now, at the last’).
for poetry-makers in his epic (uates as both ‘seer’ and ‘poet’, OLD s.v. 1-2), and Statius goes out of his way to identify Maeon as a magnanimus uates (82) the moment before he plunges his sword into his own side. Is there a deeper political comment at work in here? Is Maeon acting out a role relatable to a Roman and/or Flavian context?

Donka Markus has argued that Maeon acts as a metaphorical/metaliterary stand-in for Statius, and that his suicide mirrors the silent-protests that characterized political discourse in the Flavian period. There is much to recommend this reading, but I am also tempted to read Maeon as a Statian prototype for his poetic predecessor Lucan, particularly when set against Statius’ own praise of Lucan in his post mortem genethliakon (‘birthday poem’) for the dead poet at Silvae 2.7. This poem—presenting a newborn Lucan in the arms of the muse Calliope who sings of his poetic genius and grim fate—glorifies Lucan as a Neronian uates (2.7.39-40) acting out a role in life that mirrored the efforts of the champions of Republican libertas that he depicts in his poem. In Silvae 2.7, Lucan’s Pompey-like ‘great shade’ (116: magna...umbra, cf. Luc. BC 1.135) will reminisce in Elysium with Pompeys and Catos, a hero and man of action like they were, one of Rome’s summi uiri (111-15). Together they watch the tortured shade of Nero pale at the torches brandished by his mother in Tartarus (117-19). Lucan’s song was silenced by Nero’s ‘tyrannical wickedness’ (100), and Statius symbolizes this by cutting short and punctuating Calliope’s song predicative of

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102 See Newlands (2011): 441.
Lucan’s brilliant but abbreviated life with Lucanian apostrophic furor, condemning the poet to silence: tacebis (100-04):

sic et tu (rabidi nefas tyranni!)
iussus praeceptum subire Lethe,
dum pugnas canis arduaque uoce
das solacia grandibus sepulcris,
(o dirum scelus! o scelus!) tacebis.

Thus you too—wickedness of a crazed tyrant!—ordered to plunge headfirst to Lethe, while you sing battles and give comfort to grand tombs with a mighty voice—o horrible crime! o crime!—you will be silent/silenced.

The phrase rabidi nefas tyranni is a virtual tagline for both Lucan’s and Statius’ epics, and the poems are further linked by their interests in (perversions of) ‘tombs’, as well as ‘crimes’. The description here points also directly to Statius’ presentation of Maeon’s suicide before the ‘face of a savage tyrant’ (Theb. 3.82: ora trucis tyranni).

The uates Lucan plunged headfirst into the Pisonian conspiracy, aiming to overthrow the emperor Nero but was, along with his poem, silenced in the face of a tyrant. In the bizarre staging of Maeon’s suicide, Statius has Maeon cut short his own speech with a suicidal sword-blow that brings him down. He kills himself mid-prophecy, silencing a song ready to predict the duel that destroys Eteocles and his brother Polynices (Theb. 3.85-8):

‘uado equidem exsultans ereptaque fata
insequor et comites feror exspectatus ad umbras.
te superis fratrique—’ et iam media orsa loquentis
absciderat plenum capulo latus…

‘I depart rejoicing, pursuing the doom
snatched from my grasp—carried away to my welcoming comrade shades.
As for you, to Gods and your brother—’

Here he himself
cut speech short, sword over its hilt in his side.
A suicide that cuts short a vatic verse predicting civil war has resonant parallels with Lucan’s (physical and poetic) demise following the botched Pisonian conspiracy. Claims to *libertas* and a Stoic release from tyranny through suicide also point to Lucan, and to the claims of the victorious conspirators Vindex and Galba who championed the return of *libertas* following the overthrow of Nero in 68 CE (see section 4.5).

Lucan was silenced by his forced suicide, but also the recitation of his poem before Nero famously caused the emperor to walk out, prompting a subsequent universal ban on the performance of his poetry (see Suet. *Vita Lucani* 332.11-13 Hosius; also Tac. *Ann.* 15.49.3).

Whatever political claims Statius is making here, he reserves singularly ‘excessive and overly enthusiastic praise’¹⁰³ for Maeon which balloons into an interest in his corpse’s special preservation. Like Lucan in Statius’ praise poem, Maeon’s *umbra*, joined with other like-minded shades, escapes the assaults of tyrants in Tartarus through its access to Elysium. Maeon is not buried in the *Thebaid*, but like Lucan in *Silvae* 2.7, he achieves something more: poetic immortality in song, matching his corporeal preservation in death.

Helen Lovatt has claimed that Statius presents himself in the *Silvae* (with implications for the *Thebaid*) as a failed post-Augustan *uates*, unable to achieve the goals of a ‘political poet’ effectively in Flavian society. This failure is indicated in his poetry, which implicitly bemoans the political silences he is forced to deploy as a product of a poetics by necessity structured around the rhetoric of monarchical praise.¹⁰⁴ My reading is not quite so pessimistic and grants Statius a bit more poetic and political freedom and effectiveness. Still, this

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argument is a powerful one and is a useful guide for unpacking Statius’ interests in heroic political-suicides like Maeon and Lucan.

Silvae 2.7, a programmatic poem among Statius’ ‘occasional’ poetry (it closes book 2), stages a dialogue concerning the poetics of political engagement, presenting Lucan’s bombastic ‘Republican’ political defiance to Neronian tyranny as something worthy of praise but ultimately personally, artistically, and politically disastrous, and quite literally suicidal for the man and his art. As Carole Newlands argues, Statius’ birthday poem for Lucan presents this form of politico-poetic engagement as unsuccessful and extremely dangerous. There were better ways to confront or critique Roman politics that did not result in the silencing of one’s poetic voice: ‘In the Silvae, as well as in the Thebaid, yet in an entirely different way, Statius attempts to avoid silence, the fate of Lucan. He establishes and maintains his poetic authority through a “poetics of Empire” that constitutes the art of obliquity practiced in extravagant and stylish ways’. There is at least some understanding in Statius’ ‘poetics of Empire’ of Seneca’s warnings about avoiding the wrath of kings through one’s own expressions of wrathful dissent (e.g. De ira 2.14.4, 2.30.1, 2.33.1), warnings Lucan seems not to have heeded.

Maeon and Lucan ‘unsheathe’ their tyrannicidal weapons (Theb. 3.81: sed iam nudauerat ensem; Silv. 2.7.53: carmen...exseres togatum), but these are both (Lucan’s war-making poem, Maeon’s sword) self-destructive implements that cut short their wielder’s (political) voices. Statius immortalizes both vatic figures through the praise of his songs, which hint at the inviolability and preservation of each: Lucan will return from death for one

107 Thanks to Jayne Knight for the De ira references.
day to his widow Polla (2.7.120-23), he will be worshipped not in the image of a false god but as ‘himself’ (126: ipsum...ipsum), and protected by his widow like the reverence of birds preserves Maeon’s corpse (124-30). He will be a semi-divine figure. Moreover, ‘Deaths’ are banished from a poem about a dead man (131-2: securae procul hinc abite, Mortes: | haec uitae genitalis est origo, ‘get far from here, carefree Deaths: here is the source of birthday life’). These men are in a sense deathless through their efforts to (re-)attain libertas and through Statius’ commemoration of them in song, but they are also dead and silent, their voices severed before their songs reach an endpoint.

Open political dissension is courageous in the face of tyranny because it necessitates death, and this courage must be honored and respected. But it is not Statius’ path. Statius will find a voice of dissent, but often, cleverly, this dissension is refracted through anti-tyrannical voices like Lucan’s (more literally Calliope’s prophecy of Lucan), Maeon’s, like the vitriol of the elderly Aletes in book 3, or the endless mourning and grieving voices of women in his poems, all of which serve to destabilize any univocal politicized reading of Statius’ poetry. Statius chooses a safer but still sharply critical path, a path that will not by necessity leave the treatment of one’s corpse and poetic corpus to the whims of a mercurial tyrant.

CHAPTER 6
GRAVE ENCOUNTERS: NON-BURIAL AND BURIAL DISTORTION
IN SILIUS’ PUNICA

‘Don’t come near my work!
[He who draws near it—
    I will cut short his life and prolong his death agony’
—Kabti-ilani-Marduk, ‘Erra and Ishum’ (trans. Foster)

In this chapter I look in detail at a number of scenes in Silius’ Punica relating to burial rites
and funeral perversions. As was the case with Lucan and Statius, Silius approaches funeral
rites from an oblique angle. Rarely does the Punica present a standard Homeric or Virgilian
style funeral/burial, and even when there are elements of traditional epic motifs, Silius
undercuts them. I start (6.1) with Silius’ take on corpse-tombs. I examine the burials of
Flaminius in book 5, Bruttius in book 6, and Paulus and Piso in book 10, all of whom are
‘buried’ by the corpses of their comrades on the battlefield. These four scenes depict
characters who defy the demarcation of death, and so (as we have seen in both Lucan and
Statius) Silius teases at the suggestion of living-deaths. Sub-section 6.2 analyzes Hannibal’s
burials for fallen Roman generals: Gracchus in book 12, Marcellus in book 15, and Paulus (to
whom I devote the most detailed discussion) in book 10. I consider the ways in which
Hannibal’s burials for three Roman generals ape proper Roman practice and serve as a
springboard for Hannibal’s attempt to gain praise and glory through the false exemplarity of
humanitas. In sub-section 6.3 I examine Hannibal’s interest in his own burial rites in book
17, the pointed convolution of epic intertexts in this concluding book of the Punica, and the
dual triumphal/funereal parade that closes the epic and looks forward, somewhat
uncomfortably, to Flavian Rome. I argue that Silius blends scenes of funeral and triumphal
parade, warping the sentiments of each, with a view towards his historical present that has witnessed and suffered the repetition of triumphant monarchs at the expense of brutal death-dealing civil wars.

6.1. Dead and ‘Buried’ 2

_A consultation last year found that most people would accept ‘double-decker’ graves, though a significant minority remained opposed._
—_The Telegraph, June 6, 2007_

This section deals, once more, with the motif of corpse-burial. As seen in my discussion of Statius’ _Thebaid_ (at chapter 5.2), the excessively loyal Dymas kills himself after failing to rescue the corpse of Parthenopaeus and falls on top of him, offering his own body as a ‘tomb’ (_Theb._ 10.441): _hac tamen interea nece tu potiare sepulchro_, ‘This, at least for the meantime, you may use for your tomb’. Dymas articulates explicitly the act of burial or entombment here, but the image is exploited elsewhere in the _Thebaid_: Capaneus covers Hippomedon’s corpse with Hippomedon’s own armor as well as the armor of Hypseus as a temporary ‘tomb’ (9.562-5); Hopleus dies covering and embracing Tydeus’ corpse moments before the scene on Dymas and Parthenopaeus (10.402-04); Polynices is killed and dies covered by the corpse of his brother Eteocles (11.573) and the brothers die embracing each other and are (accidentally) cremated together (12.420-46). The same image appears proleptically (though with a positive slant) at 3.147-68 of twins killed by Tydeus with one blow, now embraced in death and entrusted to a single pyre by their grieving mother Ide (3.167-8): _ite diu fratres indiscretique suprems | ignibus et caros urna confundite manes_, ‘Go as you’ve long been, as brothers inseparable, even in flames | of the pyre, and, in the one urn, conjoin your dear ashes’.
As always, it is difficult to determine influence one way or another between the *Punica* and *Thebaid* as their compositional lives intertwined,¹ but Silius also employs scenes of corpse-burial, and he is more innovative than Statius in this respect, as we shall see. The first example appears with the death of the Roman consul Flamininus, whose recklessness leads him and his army into Hannibal’s trap at Lake Trasimene in book 5.² Despite this disaster and the Roman army’s inevitable defeat in battle, Silius grants Flamininus a glorious speech begging his soldiers to stay and fight, before he attacks the enemy alone (*Pun.* 5.640: *solus*) and is ‘buried’ by missiles (656: *obruitur telis*) and dies (*Pun.* 5.633-58). The fighting stops and the soldiers take the issue of Flamininus’ burial into their own hands (5.658-66):

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nec pugna perempto
ulterior ductore fuit. namque agmine denso
primores iuuenum lacua ad discrimina Martis
infensi superis dextrisque et cernere Poenum
uictorem plus morte rati super ocius omnes
membra ducis stratosque artus certamine magno
telaque corporaque et non fausto Marte cruentas
iniecere manus. sicdensi caedis aceruo
ceu tumulo texere uirum.
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When the leader was slain, the fighting ceased. For the foremost soldiers closed their ranks; and then, enraged against Heaven and themselves for their defeat, and thinking it worse than death to see the Carthaginians conquer, they hastened eagerly to pile over the body of Flamininus and his prostrate limbs their weapons, their bodies, and their hands red with the blood of defeat. Thus they covered him with a close-packed heap of corpses for a tomb.

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¹ The issues of dating and direct influence between the two epics is a perennial scholarly issue: see note from chapter 3.3 for bibliography.
³ The play on the various meanings of the verb is clear here (like English’s ‘bury’): *OLD s.v. obruo* esp. 1-4.
Flaminius’ implicit ‘burial’ under enemy weapons is then dramatically re-articulated and elaborated by the mass suicide of his men who explicitly heap themselves on top of his corpse to form a tomb (tumulo).  

This recalls the actions of Hopleus and Dymas in *Thebaid* 10, but the effect is amplified by including the sacrifice of multiple comrades to aid the quasi-burial of their leader. The Gallic leader Deucarius identifies Flaminius as a sacrificial offering to the ghosts of the Boii, whom Flaminius defeated earlier in battle (5.652-63; with 5.107-13, 130-9). He is the one victim, the head (5.653: *caput*) sought to appease the dead Boii, but his death precipitates the mass suicidal deaths of his soldiers. His death as a singular sacrifice to many inverts his own claim earlier in the same book to define Hannibal as a single victim to appease the mass of Roman dead (5.153): *unum hoc pro cunctis sat erit caput*, ‘That one head will make amends for all our slain’. Both images recall and rework the Virgilian passage in which Palinurus is identified by Neptune as the one sacrificed for the many at *Aeneid* 5.814-15: *unus erit tantum amissum quem gurgite quaeres; | num pro multis dabitur caput*, ‘One only shall there be whom, lost in the flood, you will seek in vain; one life shall be given for many’.

The circumstances of Flaminius’ death and burial have resonances with the fall of Paulus at Cannae in *Punica* 10. Paulus too implores his men to stand and fight (10.6-10), leading them to certain defeat/death. His death, or rather his act of dying, is certain (cf. the

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4 Marks (2005b): 138-9 argues that Silius is blending scenes from the historical sources here depicting Flaminius’ death (Poly. 3.84.6; Livy 22.6.3-4) and the death of Decius in Livy 8.9-10. He argues this elaborates the details of Flaminius’ death (and Paulus’, as he continues) to an evocation of the heroic *deuotio*. See also Cowan (2007b), with some important modifications.

prophecy at 8.666-7), but it is here extended for some 70 lines (10.237-305), during which Silius repeatedly calls attention to his demise, before allowing Paulus further acts of martial valor.\(^6\) This heroic ‘deathlessness’ is an important and odd feature of Silian exemplarity,\(^7\) and not typical of epic deaths which are generally swift.

Paulus is finally conquered by a wave of spears from all sides (10.303-04): *sed uincere uirum coeuntibus undique telis* | *et Nomas et Garamas et Celtae et Maurus et Astur,*

‘he was overcome by a shower of darts from every side, from Numidians and Garamantians, from Gauls and Moors and Asturians’. Like Flaminius, Paulus is noted for his singular importance to his army which falls like a body lacking its head (309-11): *postquam spes Italum mentesque in consule lapsae,* | *ceu truncus capitis saeuis exercitus armis* | *sternitur,*

‘The hope and courage of the Romans fell with their general; the army, like a headless thing, was overthrown by fierce assaults’.\(^8\) Flaminius was similarly the *caput* which, with its fall, brought down the body of his troops (664: *corpora*). Like Flaminius, weapons and corpses heap over Paulus’ body (10.503-12):

\[
\begin{align*}
talia&:\quad dum\ pandit,\ uicinus\ parte\ sinistra \\
&:\quad per\ subitum\ erumpit\ clamor,\ permixta\ ruina \\
&:\quad inter\ et\ arma\ uirum\ et\ lacerata\ cadauera\ Pauli \\
&:\quad eruerant\ corpus\ media\ de\ strage\ iacentum. \\
heu&:\quad quis\ erat!\quad quam\ non\ similis\ modo\ Punicas\ telis \\
&:\quad agmina\ turbanti,\ uel\ cum\ Gauls\ and\ Moors\ and\ Asturians. \\
&:\quad ut\ eruit\ et\ Illyricus\ sunt\ addita\ uincla\ tyranno! \\
puluere&:\quad canities\ atro\ arentique\ cruore \\
&:\quad squalebat\ barba,\ et\ perfracti\ turbine\ dentes
\end{align*}
\]

\(^6\) Hutchinson (1993): 289-94 draws out the bizarreness of Paulus’ extended death scene well.

\(^7\) On exemplarity in the *Punica*, see esp. Albrecht (1964): 47-89; Tipping (2010).

\(^8\) Marpicati (1999), Marks (2008): 70-5 and (2011): 138-9, and Cowan (2007b): 31-2 link the imagery of decapitation here (not explicit decapitation, but the death of Paulus as the metaphorical loss of his military body’s ‘head’) with the description of Priam’s decapitation in *Aen.* 2 and of Pompey’s decapitation in Lucan’s *BC* 8 (see further below). Flaminius’ *caput* is the focus of Deucarius’ attention (5.653), and, even more explicitly than in Paulus’ case, we learn at 17.295-6 that he has in fact been decapitated.
While Cinna told this tale, a sudden shout was heard not far away on their left hand. From a disordered heap of weapons and mangled corpses they had drawn forth the body of Paulus in the centre of the pile. How changed, alas! how unlike the Paulus whose prowess lately disordered the ranks of Carthage, or the Paulus who overthrew the kingdom of the Taulantes and bound the king of Illyricum in chains! His grey hairs were black with dust, and his beard defiled with clotted gore; his teeth were shattered by the impact of the great stone; and his whole body was one wound.

Silius perverts Virgil’s *incipit* ‘arms and the man’ (*Aen*. 1.1: *arma uirumque*; *Pun*. 10.505: *arma uirum et*), as it is mixed (*permixta*) with images of mangled corpses and weapons which surround and cover the Roman general.⁹ Flaminius, in Silius’ narrative, remains buried under corpses in accordance with Livy’s and Plutarch’s claim that Hannibal was unable to locate his body though he wished to bury the consul.¹⁰ Hannibal’s soldiers conversely uncover Paulus and effectively exhume him from his corpse-tomb.

Paulus’ appearance resembles that of Hector’s ghost as it appears to Aeneas at *Aeneid* 2.270-9: both barely resemble their living forms (*Pun*. 10.507: *heu quis erat! quam non similis modo...*; *Aen*. 2.274-5: *ei mihi, qualis erat! quantum mutatus ab illo* | Hector, ‘Oh, how he looked! How changed, alas, from the Hector I’d once seen...’); their hair/beards are matted with dust and gore (*Pun*. 510-11: *pulvere canities atro arentique cruore* | *squalebat barba*; *Aen*. 272-3, 277: *aterque cruento* | *pulvere...squalentem barbam et concretos sanguine crinis*, ‘Blackened with gore-clotted dust... | Filth now covered his beard and his

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⁹ Silius has a particular interest in repurposing Virgil’s *Aen*. intro, as Bassett (1959): 13-14 and Cowan (2007b): 26 n.91 have documented; Cowan offers further bibliography on *arma uirumque* as a heroic leitmotif.

¹⁰ Livy 22.7.5: *Hannibal captiuarum qui Latini nominis essent sine pretio dimissis, Romanis in uincula datis, segregata ex hostium coacervatorum cumulis corpora suorum cum sepeliri iussisset, Flaminii quoque corpus funeris causa magna cum cura iniquitum non inuenit*, ‘Hannibal freely dismissed the prisoners of the Latin name and put the Romans in chains. He ordered that the bodies of his own dead be separated from the heaps of the enemy and buried, he would have also buried the body of Flaminius, but though he searched for it with great care, he could not find it’: with Spaltenstein (1986): ad 5.666. Cf. Plut. *Fab*. 3.3. Polybius mentions nothing about what happens to Flaminius’ body. Val. Max. 1.6.6 contrastingly claims that Hannibal found Flaminius’ corpse and buried it properly: *consulis obtruncati corpus ad funerandum ab Hannibale quaesitum*. 280
clumped hair, matted and blood-caked’); and their bodies are covered by wounds (Pun. 512: *tum toto corpore uulnus*; Aen. 278: *uulneraque illa gerens...plurima*, ‘he wore only the numerous wounds he’d received...’). Additionally, Paulus appears later as a ghost to Scipio Africanus during Scipio’s *katabasis* in *Punica* 13. Paulus, like Hector in his exchange with Aeneas in *Aeneid* 2, hands the reins of epic heroism over to his successor, whose *Martia facta*, ‘martial feats’ (13.707) cast him as the one worthy of orchestrating Roman victory. The full effect of Paulus’ association with Hector’s ghost is felt over the expanse of 4 books (Pun. 10-13).

As Robert Cowan argues, Paulus’ association with Hector highlights Paulus’ synecdochic relationship with his army, his fall with theirs, in the same way Hector’s fate is equated with Troy’s in the *Iliad*. He expands upon this association by finding cues linking Silius’ depiction of Paulus with Virgil’s Priam and Lucan’s Pompey who, as I have similarly argued (see 2.2, 3.1, 4.2), also stand as synecdoche for the larger whole. I should add, with

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12 There is a cyclicality in the association linking Paulus with Hector’s ghost in *Aen*. 2, and Paulus’ confrontation with Scipio in *Pun*. 13. Aeneas identifies Hector as the ‘lux Dardaniae’, ‘light of the Dardan land’ (2.281), and Silius reactivates this image during the meeting of Paulus and Scipio, but it is Paulus (the shade) who identifies Scipio as the light of the Italian land (13.707: *lux Italum*), not the dead hero synonymous with his city’s fall—or his army’s, in the case of Paulus—but the light that will lead Rome out of the darkness of defeat in the war with Hannibal. The synecdochic relationship is inverted in the sense that Scipio’s success will bring victory to Rome at the expense of Hannibal’s and Carthage’s fall. On the synecdochic relationship between Scipio and Rome, see Marks (2005a): 82-92.

13 Note also that Hannibal sets up a further parallel between Hector and Paulus at *Pun*. 17.264-5, when he bemoans not being able to die on the battlefield at Cannae like Paulus, a scene modeled (in part) on Virgil’s description of Aeneas’ similar regret that he too did not die on the battlefield like Hector. Paulus in Silius’ scene doubles Hector in Virgil’s: *Aen*. 1.97-9: *mene Iliacis occumbere campis | non potuisse, tuaque animam hanc effundere dextra, | saevus ubi Aeacidae telo iacet Hector...*, ‘why could I not have fallen on Ilium’s | Plains, spilled forth my soul under your right hand? That’s where savage | Hector was killed by Achilles’ spear’; *Pun*. 17.264-5: *at mihi Cannarum campis, ubi Paulus, ubi illae | egregiae occubuere animae, dimittere uitam | non licitum..., ‘But I was not suffered, either to breathe my last on the field of Cannae, where Paulus and many another hero fell’.

Raymond Marks,\textsuperscript{15} that Paulus’ description after he is uncovered also resembles Lucan’s
description of Pompey after his defeat at Pharsalus, already modeled on Virgil’s Hector (\textit{BC}
8.56-7: see chapter 3.1): \textit{deformem pallore ducem uultusque prementem | canitiem atque atro
squalentis puluere uestes} (‘the general disfigured by pallor, the white hair covering | his
face, his clothing dirtied by black dust’), is recapitulated at \textit{Pun}. 10.510-11: \textit{puluere canities
atro arentique cruore | squalebat barba} (‘His grey hairs were black with dust, and his beard
defiled with clotted gore’). Silius’ description is a perfect blend of Virgil’s Hector and
Lucan’s Pompey. Lucan imagines Pompey after the defeat in battle as a walking corpse. His
death is assured like that of his army, but it will come a bit later in Egypt, and his remaining
time of life is akin to a living-death. Lucan reserves Pompey’s death to the tragedy of his
book 8 where, like Silius’ Paulus, his death scene is extended for an impossibly long stretch
of narrative.\textsuperscript{16}

Paulus recalls both Hector and Pompey, but he is no ghost (not yet, at least) or
zombie. He is a corpse—like Priam—only buried beneath his army and then exhumed by the
Carthaginian enemy. Like these earlier epic models, like Flamininus, Paulus’ singular death
brings destruction to the whole he represents (in this case Rome’s army at Cannae), and
Silius draws this ‘one for the many’ association out most emphatically by entombing Paulus’
corpse among the corpses of Paulus’ own army. Hannibal articulates this situation as he
rejoices at the exhuming of Paulus’ corpse (10.521-2): \textit{quantus, Paule, iaces! qui tot mihi

\textsuperscript{15} Marks (2009): 139. He does not comment on the link back to Hector’s ghost in \textit{Aen.} 2.

\textsuperscript{16} I discuss the extension of Pompey’s death in \textit{BC} at chapter 3.1. Note also, like Lucan’s Pompey, Paulus’
anima rises up from his funeral pyre (10.576-7): \textit{atque repens, crepitantibus undique flammis | aetherias anima
exultans euasit in auras}, ‘and suddenly, mid the crackling of the flames all round, the spirit of Paulus sprang
forth and rose triumphant to the sky’, with \textit{BC} 9.1-4: with Spaltenstein (1990): \textit{ad loc.}
milibus unus | maior laetitiae causa es, ‘How great is Paulus in death! The fall of so many thousands gives me less joy than his alone’. 17

There are still more examples of corpse burial in the Punica. Moments before Paulus’ death at Cannae, Silius offers the bizarre case of Piso (10.250-9):

**obrutus** hic **telis** ferri per **corpora** Piso
rectorem ut uidit Libyae, conixus in hastam
ilia cornipedis subrecta cuspidis transit
collapsaque super nequiquam incumbere coeptat.
cui Poenus, propere collecto corpore, quamquam
cernuus inflexo sonipes effuderat armo:
‘umbraene Ausoniae rediuiua bella retractant
post obitum dextra nec in ipsa morte quiescunt?’
sic ait atque aegrum coeptanti attollere corpus
arduus insurgens totum permiscuit ensem.

When Piso, buried beneath weapons, saw Hannibal riding over the dead, he raised himself with an effort on his lance and stabbed the horse’s belly with his uplifted point. When the beast fell, he tried in vain to bestride it. But Hannibal picked himself up in a moment, though the horse had thrown him when it fell sprawling on its head; and thus he spoke: ‘Do the Roman ghosts come back again to life, to fight a second time? Can they not rest even in death?’ With these words he rose to his full height and, while Piso tried to lift his wounded limbs, plunged his sword in up to the hilt.

Piso is ‘buried beneath weapons’ (**obrutus**...**telis**) like Flaminius (5.656: **obruitur telis**).

Further, he is buried beneath weapons and corpses (**telis**...**per corpora**), like Flaminius (5.654: **telaque corporaque**), but unlike Flaminius, he breaks free of his ‘tomb’ to attack Hannibal. He rises as Paulus had from the heaps (the scene explicitly anticipates Paulus’ exhuming), but he is still alive. If we had hesitated, as before in the case of Flaminius, to impose a burial context on **obrutus** (is he not simply ‘covered’?), Hannibal clarifies for us (10.256-7): ‘Do the Roman ghosts come back again to life, to fight a second time? Can they

17 Hannibal eventually re-buries Paulus and oversees his funeral rites (10.558-77). This scene itself is full of further perversions, as I discuss in detail at chapter 6.2.
not rest even in death?’ Piso, it seems, has come back from the dead, breaking free from his tomb to fight again.

Silius may be re-staging the scene from *Iliad* 21 when Achilles mocks Lycaon who has surprisingly emerged alive from the Xanthus and its litany of corpses (*Iliad* 21.53-63). But more directly, Silius had planted the seed earlier in his description of a Piso (surely the same man: cf. 10.403) leading the front line of soldiers ‘contemptuous of death’ (8.463): *duc* *Piso uiros spernaces mortis agebat*, ‘These death-defying warriors were led by Piso’. The word *spernax* is a hapax in all of Latin literature (*OLD s.v. spernax*), so we are invited to linger on this obscure description of Piso a moment, and Silius wittily recalls the memorable description two books later when Piso literally rises from (among) the dead, ‘spurning death’ to continue the fight.

The scene demands to be read in conjunction with Silius’ extended death-scene for Paulus which frames the description of Piso. Paulus is repeatedly at the point of death only to rise again, foiling our expectations that he has met his end (esp. 10.231-2, 283, 287-8, 292-308). In an extended scene playing up Paulus’ exemplary deathlessness (283-5: *amplius acta | quid superest uita, nisi caecae ostendere plebi | Paulum scire mori?*, ‘My life is ended; and nothing remains but to prove to the ignorant populace that Paulus knows how to die’), an intermediary ‘deathless’ fighter in Piso clinches Silius’ oddly construed championing of Roman perseverance in the face of death.

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The final scene I want to consider under the rubric of corpse-burial is the equally strange exemplum of the standard-bearer Bruttius that opens book 6.\textsuperscript{21} This is the masterstroke of Silius’ treatment of bizarre battlefield burial, and in many ways the other scenes I have examined build from the motifs that appear in this one. Before we learn about Bruttius, Silius opens book 6 with a panorama of slaughter (6.5: strages) after the battle of Trasimene and Rome’s terrible defeat at the hands of Hannibal (6.6-13):\textsuperscript{22}

\begin{verbatim}
   simil arma uirique
   ac mixtus sonipes dextraeque in uulnere caesi
   haerentes hostis, passim clipeique iubaeque
   atque artus trunci capitum fractusque iacebat
   ossibus in duris ensis. nec cernere de
   frustra seminecum quaerentia lumina caelum.
   tum spumans sanie lacus et fluitantia summo
   aeternum tumulis orbata cadaura ponto.
\end{verbatim}

...a medley of arms and men and horses, and hands that still clung to the wound of a slain enemy. The ground was littered with shields and helmet-plumes, with headless corpses and swords that had broken against tough bones; and one might see the eyes of half-dead men looking in vain for the light. Then there was the lake foaming with gore, and the corpses floating on its surface, for ever deprived of a grave.

Again, Silius dismembers Virgil’s arma uirumque trope, parading not Roman glory but defeat, here adding slaughtered horses to the mass pomp of the dead, blurring the lines between man and beast that will reach fruition in the cannibalistic actions of Laevinus, who is discovered among the dead having gnawed on his Carthaginian enemy after losing access to weaponry (6.41-53). Statius had incorporated centaur-style imagery in his articulation of the madness of war (chapter 3.2), and Silius’ scene seems also to offer something of an

\begin{verbatim}
\footnotesize
\end{verbatim}

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'aftermath’ of Virgil’s construction of the entangling of men, arms, and horses in one of the more brutal passages detailing the war in Italy between Aeneas’ Trojan refugees and the Rutulians (Aen. 11.634-35): armaque corporaque et permixti caede uirorum | semianimes uoluuntur equi. ‘Deep in the pooling blood, and when, mingled with carnage of humans, | Half-dead horses writhed’.

The phrase ‘Hands that still clung to the wound of a slain enemy’ (Pun. 6.7-8) picks up on Hannibal’s stunned description of dead Romans still ‘fighting’ in death at the close of the previous book (5.670-1): premit omnis dextra ferrum, | armatusque iacet seruans certamina miles, ‘each hand still grasps its sword, and the warrior lies in his armour, and still maintains the strife’. Further, half-dead men (6.11: seminecum) could be seen searching for the light.23 The implicit image of post mortem bodily function (hands still ‘clinging’; fallen soldiers still ‘fighting’ and ‘staring’) — perhaps a poetic license gifted from the phenomenon of rigor mortis — is particularly faddish in Imperial poetry,24 and again sets the stage for the sudden appearance of Bruttius. The lasting image before the general horror of battle switches to individual endeavors is one of Roman corpses (13: cadauera) forever deprived of tombs.

Book 5 ended with Flaminius’ death and his suicidal troops forming a tomb with their bodies on top of him. Now a soldier emerges from those same heaps and masses (6.15-18):

Bruttius ingenti miserandae caedis aceruo
non aequum ostentans confosso corpore Martem
.extulerat uix triste caput truncosque trahebat
.per stragem neruis interlabentibus artus

24 See esp. the overview in Dinter (2012): 37-49.
Bruttius, whose wounded body showed his ill-fortune in the battle, slowly raised his head from a huge pile of hapless corpses, and dragged his mutilated limbs through the carnage with muscles that failed him from time to time.

Flaminius’ soldiers had covered his corpse in a heap of slaughter (5.665: caedis aceruo, same metrical position\(^{25}\)) to form his tomb, so Bruttius’ emerging from this slaughter can be read/understood as an exhuming. Moreover, his movements are sub-human, he drags not a body, but a trunk and failing limbs (neruis interlabentibus artus). The phrase caput truncosque ‘reanimates’ the headless corpses which littered the battlefield (trunci capitum, 9), forming the slaughter (6.5: strages; 6.18: stragem) from the book’s opening nightmarish set piece.

Like Paulus, Bruttius’ body is, in effect, a single wound (cf. 10.512). Silius plays with chronology a bit: we are given what appears to be a simple/typical epic epitaph for a dying soldier (6.19-26), but this morphs into a description of his efforts during the battle on the previous day. Overwhelmed by weapons (31: uictus telis; note Paulus too is conquered by spears at 10.303: uincere...telis, later to be removed de strage at 10.506), and anticipating defeat, Bruttius attempts to bury the legionary eagle standard he has been entrusted with (6.30-2):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{oculere interdum et terrae mandare parabat.} \\
\text{sed subitis uictus telis labentia membr} \\
\text{prostrauit super atque iniecta morte tegebat.}
\end{align*}
\]

[H]e tried to bury it in the ground for a time...But a sudden wound made him throw his failing limbs over his charge; and death lay over it to hide it.

The scene recalls Flaminius’ soldiers dying over their commander to ‘bury’ him. With his death (morte) he conceals his charge.

Edward Bassett does not much like Silius’ use of *morte* here, since we know Bruttius lives into the next day.\(^{26}\) I would argue however that Silius is building on imagery he has constructed of Bruttius as a walking-corpse, through lexical allusions to both Flaminius and his suicidal soldiers, as well as to the heaps of dead littering the battlefield at the outset of book 6 who show signs of continued function in/after death. The sequencing of Silius’ narrative adds to this effect: \(^{27}\) Bruttius rises from ‘the dead’, we flashback to the scene of what, by all accounts, is his death (it was his honor to guard the sacred bird at 26-7: *hinc causam nutriuit gloria leti. namque necis certus*, ‘and this distinction was the cause of his death. He was sure to die’), he ‘dies’ atop the bird, burying it with his body, only to rise again the next day to continue the odd burial rites for an inanimate object.

The extension of life through the prolongation of a death-scene anticipates the deaths of Paulus and Piso in book 10, where Silius similarly plays with audience expectation of the finality of death. From the flashback we jump back into the narrative present: defying his own death, we return to the moment of Bruttius’ initial emergence from the pile of corpses 6.34-40):

\[\text{uicini de strage cadaueris hasta erigitur soloque uigens comamine late stagnantem caede et facilem discedere terram ense fodit clausamque aquilae infelicis adorans effigiem palmis languentibus aequat harenas. supremus fessi tenuis tum cessit in auras halitus et magnum misit sub Tartara mentem.}\]

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\(^{27}\) For the temporal play between verses 21-38, particularly in Silius’ use of verb tenses, see Fröhlich (2000): 90-2.
[H]e raised himself on a spear taken from the nearest corpse; then exerting all his strength for the effort, he dug a hole in the earth with his sword; and the ground, drenched in blood all round, parted easily. Next he bowed before the buried effigy of the luckless eagle, and smoothed the sand over it with strengthless palms. Then his last feeble breath went forth into the air, and sent a brave heart to Tartarus.

Again Bruttius rises from the slaughter (34: *de strage*), propping himself up on a spear (as Piso will after he returns from the dead to engage Hannibal at 10.251: *conixus in hastam*), and carries out the final funeral rites over the eagle-standard. The scene is absurd, no matter how much a Roman audience recognized and appreciated the importance of protecting a legionary standard.

The literal worshipping of the unlucky eagle (37: *infelicis*)—Bruttius buries it and prostrates himself before it (*adorans*)—has disturbing resonances with Cicero’s description of Catiline and his followers’ worshipping of a ‘fatal’ (*funestam*) legionary eagle.\(^{28}\) Trasimene ended with Roman suicides, and this has an air of civil war, as Lucan had construed it: the *locus classicus* of civil war as inherently suicidal is *BC 1.2-3: populumque potentem | in sua uictri conuersum uiscera sua...* (‘a mighty people | attacking its own guts with victorious sword-hand’). An evocation of Catiline and his civil-warmongering brood seems not unreasonable here. The *Punica* is permeated with the flavor of civil war,\(^{29}\) and

\(^{28}\) Cic. *Cat.* 1.24: *quamquam quid ego te inuitem, a quo iam sciam esse praemissos, qui tibi ad Forum Aurelium praestolarentur armati, cui iam sciam pactam et constitutam cum Manlio diem, a quo etiam aquilam illam argenteam, quam tibi ac tuis omnibus confido perniciosam ac funestam futuram, cui domi tuae sacrarium sceleratum constitutum fuit, sciam esse praemissam? tu ut illa carere diutius possis, quam uenerari ad caedem proficiscens solebas, a cuius alteribus saepe istam impiam dexteram ad necem ciuium transtulisti?*, ‘though, why should I be pressing you, since I know that you have already sent armed men ahead to wait for you at Forum Aurelium. I know that you have agreed and set a day with Manlius. I know that you have even sent ahead that silver eagle, set up in a wicked shrine in your home, which will bring death and destruction to you and all your people. Can you be separated any longer from that eagle which you used to worship ahead of your acts of murder and from whose altar that criminal hand of your often passed to the slaughter of citizens?’ Cf. Cic. *Cat.* 2.13; Sall. *Cat.* 59.3. The Cicero passage is noted by Fröhlich (2000): *ad 6.37f*, in passing.

boundary breaching of the sort represented by a man who defies the limits of life and death is typical of the way epic engages with broader themes of ‘boundary-breaking’ civil war.\(^\text{30}\)

Erichtho and her zombie seem surely to be on Silius’ mind here,\(^\text{31}\) considering the blurring of life and death, bizarre time sequencing, and *locus horridus* atmosphere of death and festering corpses.

Even during the battle Silius notes that the Roman troops lacked fear because they were already half-dead, sending down to Hell victims as sacrifices to their own (impending) shades (5.212-13): *uelut erepto metuendi libera caelo| manibus ipsa suis praesumpta piacula mittit*, ‘free from fear as if life was lost already, they send down before them victims to make atonement to their own ghosts’. This imagery of half-dead soldiers recalls the Pompeian soldiers pre-Pharsalus at *BC* 7.129-30, whose pale death-like faces double their looming doom. The field of battle from which Bruttius emerges is a nightmare of death and slaughter recalling the Thessalian fields Erichtho peruses to select her corpse\(^\text{32}\) (*Pun.* 6.12-13: *fluitantia summo | aeternum tumulis orbata cadauera ponto*, ‘corpses floating on [the lake’s] surface, forever deprived of a grave’; *BC* 6.625-6: *pererrat | corpora caesorum tumulis proiecta negatis*, ‘she wanders through the corpses of the slain, thrown out, denied a grave’).

Just as Erichtho occupies a space overwhelmed by the creeping influence of Hell into the upper world, so too during the battle Hell invades the field of war, as an earthquake opens up

\(^{30}\) Scholarship has found links between boundary violation and civil war in Lucan’s poem particularly worthy of investigation: see e.g. Henderson (1998): 191-2, 205-06; O’Gorman (1995); Myers (2011); Dinter (2012). Marks (2009) notes some connections linking Lucan’s use of boundary violation as a sign of civil war with similar imagery in the *Pun*.

\(^{31}\) Noted by Bassett (1959): 15.

\(^{32}\) Bassett (1959): 15.
a chasm revealing the depths and shades below (Pun. 5.611-26). In Statius’ Thebaid 7, as we have seen (chapter 5.2), during battle a chasm sucks Amphiarous into Hell along with his horses and chariot, in full armor. His presence there alive but fading from life blurs the lines between life and death in a scene that similarly disrupts traditional boundaries in the context of civil war. There seems reasonably to be some engagement between Statius and Silius here.

Like Lucan’s and Statius’ poems, the Punica is inundated with an atmosphere of death ‘infecting’ life and the living. Paulus, Piso, and Bruttius are obvious examples of this phenomenon, but the evidence is there from the very beginning of the poem. The Punica is instigated by the ancient curse of Dido in the Aeneid, and begins with the child Hannibal swearing an oath of vengeance against Rome in a tumulus-shrine for the long-dead Dido in the center of Carthage (Pun. 1.81-122). Silius’ characters live with a constant anticipation of death and its aftereffects, most viscerally illustrated through an ever-present obsession with rites of burial. The fear of burial denial becomes so palpable that warriors offer their own bodies as tombs for the dead and even the inanimate, despite the perversity of this form of sacrifice.

Bruttius’ emerging from the pile slowly dragging back to life mutilated limbs recalls the ‘rebirth’ of Erichtho’s corpse-soldier (BC 6.750-60). Silius may be playing with the

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33 Cf. Livy 22.5.8: tantusque fuit ardor animorum, adeo intentus pugnae animus, ut eum motum terrae qui multarum urbis Italiae magnas partes prostravit auertitque cursu rapidos amnes, mare fluminibus inuexit, montes lapsu ingenti proruit, nemo pugnantium senserit, ‘and such was the ardor of their minds, and so intent their spirits on the battle, that an earthquake which overthrew significant parts of many Italian towns, diverted the course of swift streams, carried the sea into rivers, and collapsed mountains in huge landslides, was not felt by any of the fighters’. Livy has nothing of Hell and the shades of the dead, of course, as this is a more poetic gesture. Cf. Pliny HN 2.200 for a similar account.
theme here in a battle that Rome lost through its own folly more than Hannibal won it. Silius himself identifies the combined efforts of Bruttius and Laevinus (also a major boundary violator through his cannibalism) as a display of tristis uirtus, ‘hideous valour’ (6.54), so this cap to the story should lead us to pause on Silius’ distorted rendering of military endeavor and exemplarity. Silius’ concluding summary is overkill, highlighting the jarring contrast of burying not the countless Roman dead that soak the soil with their blood (36-7), but an inanimate object symbolic of the Roman army’s defeat. The scene offers an exemplum, but one of Roman virtue skewed in the sense that the fear of losing a standard proves to be more important than the burial of Roman soldiers, even of soldiers already buried (however bizarrely). The burial of the standard replaces the burial the soldiers fighting under it are denied, and this is decidedly unsettling.

The ill-omens that had initiated the war come full circle here in Silius’ grim epilogue on the battle of Trasimene. Among the inauspicious pre-battle signs Flaminius ignores is one related to Roman military standards (5.66-9):  

signa etiam affusa certant dum uellere mole,  
taeter humo lacera nitentum erupit in ora  
exultans cruor, et caedis documenta futurae  
ipsa parens miseris gremio dedit atra cruento.

35 On the oddity of the oxymoron tristis uirtus, see Fröhlich (2000): ad loc., with more examples of Silius’ warping of ‘virtue’: with Albrecht (1964): 49-51. Note that Flaminius identifies himself as an exemplum as he rushes to death at Pun. 5.638-9: ...disce mori. dabit exemplum non uile futuris | Flaminius, ‘...learn how to die. Flaminius shall set a worthy example to coming generations’. Here too there is a skewed sense of exemplarity considering the problems posed by Flaminius’ character in the Pun. and in the historical record.

36 Cf. Livy 22.3.12-13 for the standards, but without blood: ...insuper nuntiatur signum omni ui moliente signifero conuelli nequire. conuersus ad nuntium ‘num litteras quoque’ inquit ‘ab senatu adfers quae me rem gerere uetant? abi, nuntia, effodiant signum, si ad conuellendum manus prae metu obtorpuerit’, ‘[the alarm] was intensified through the report that, although the standard-bearer was exerting all his strength, the standard could not be pulled up. He turned to the messenger and said, “are you also bringing me a dispatch from the senate, forbidding me to wage war? Go, tell them to dig up the standard, if their hands are too numb with fear to pull it up”’. On Flaminius’ relationship with the gods, read with Statius’ Capaneus in mind, see Chaudhuri (2013) revised in Chaudhuri (2014): 214-30.
Again, when they tried to wrench the standards from their mounds of soil, noisome blood spouted forth in their faces from the broken ground, and Mother Earth herself sent forth from her bleeding breast dreadful omens of coming slaughter.

The standards are removed from the blood-soaked soil presaging the blood of Roman soldiers destined to spill at Trasimene and, through Bruttius’ efforts, the standard(s) return there at the battle’s close (6.35-7): *late | stagnantem caede et facilem discedere terram | ense fodit*, ‘he dug a hole in the earth with his sword; and the ground, drenched in blood all round, parted easily’. The framework here heightens the element of self-destruction initiated by Flaminius’ ignorance; again, this battle is less Carthaginian victory than Roman defeat. Like Flaminius, who alone among his troops receives burial through the soldiers who offer their corpses as a tomb, the standard is buried by the body of another fallen soldier initially, and then gifted a more ‘proper’ burial the next morning, amid the unburied corpses fighting under its banner.

### 6.2. Bury Me Deep

‘I’m your number one fan. There’s nothing to worry about. You’re going to be just fine. I will take good care of you. I’m your number one fan’.

—Annie Wilkes, in Stephen King’s Misery

Our ancient historiographers provide evidence that Hannibal on occasion went out of his way to oversee funeral rites for dead Roman generals. The claim is made for three generals killed in battle against the Carthaginians during the Second Punic War: Lucius Aemilius Paulus, Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus, and Marcus Claudius Marcellus. Livy’s accounts are full

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37 Livy 22.52.6, tersely: *consulem quoque Romanum conquiritum sepultumque quidam auctores sunt*, ‘Some writers say that the Roman consul was also sought out and given burial’.

38 Livy 25.17.4-7. Livy offers a variety of different accounts of the burial of Gracchus, none of which he
of contradiction—he offers a variety of conflicting source information without coming down on a particular side (as typically)—and he provides little explanation for Hannibal’s motivation in seeking out the bodies for burial. A more helpful, though strangely under-analyzed, source for Silius’ handling of these scenes of burial is Valerius Maximus (5.1.ext. 6), who provides a detailed analysis of Hannibal’s burying of the three Roman generals.

After cataloging Hannibal’s funerals for Paulus, Gracchus, and Marcellus, Valerius elaborates:

ergo humanitatis dulcedo etiam in <ef>ferata barbarorum ingenia penetrat toruosque et truces hostium mollit oculos ac uictoriae insolentissimos spiritus flectit. nec illi arduum ac difficile est inter arma contraria, inter dextricos conminus mucrones placidum iter reperire. uincit iram, prosternt odium hostilemque sanguinem hostilibus lacrimis miscet. quae etiam Hannibalis admirabilem uocem pro funeribus Romanorum ducum miscet. nam ut optabilius in patria, ita speciosius pro patria conlapsae supremi officii decus infelicitate amissum uirtute recuperastis.

Therefore the sweetness of humanity [humanitas] even penetrates the savage nature of barbarians, softens the wild and fierce eyes of enemies, and deflects the excessive pride of victory. It is not hard and difficult among enemy arms, among swords bared in conflict, to find a path to kindness. Kindness conquers wrath, it lays-low hatred, and mixes enemy blood with enemy tears. It even brought Hannibal to deliver an admirable speech when he decided what funeral honors to give to Roman leaders. In fact, Paulus, Gracchus, and Marcellus brought him even more glory through their funerals than did his victories over them, since he had deceived them with Carthaginian cunning but honored them with Roman gentleness. But you brave and loyal spirits, you did not receive obsequies you would be upset about: you

particularly favors over the other (though he says most sources believe Hannibal conducted the funeral rites). Cf. Dio. Sic. 26.16.

39 Cic. Cato Maior 75; Livy 27.28.1-2; Appian Hann. 50; Plut. Marcellus 30.1-2. The accounts all contain inconsistencies.

40 Burck (1981) does not mention Val. Max., and in his later abbreviated discussion of the scene, relegates the source to a footnote, Burck (1984): 66 n.274; Tschiedel (2011): 240 n.25 notes Val. Max. in passing. Stocks (2014): 29, 31 notes the passage as an example of Valerius’ blending of positive and negative features of Hannibal, equating the positives with ‘Roman’ qualities and the negatives with ‘Punic’, in what she rightly argues is a complex construction of Hannibal as an exemplum, par excellence, of the enemy ‘who is also a reflection of Rome at its ideological best’ (32). She does not however consider this particular passage in terms of Silius’ own accounts of the burials of Roman generals.
might have hoped to have died in your country, but it was even more splendid to die for your country, you lost the glory of a proper funeral through bad luck, you regained it through your courage.\footnote{Valerius also, in contrast to other extant sources, claims that Hannibal recovered the corpse of Flaminius and oversaw the burial rites (1.6.6). Silius follows Livy 22.7.5 and Plut. Fab. 3.3 in claiming that Hannibal was unable to find Flaminius’ body.}

Much of this squares with Silius’ descriptions of these funeral rites in the *Punica*. Hannibal seems to fight through his enmity for the leaders, displaying kindness and *humanitas* through recognition of the importance of burial (esp. *Pun*. 10.518-20; 12.473-4; 15.385-7, 394-6). Silius puts into words the *laudatio funebris* Valerius mentions Hannibal provided as part of the funeral services, in the case of Paulus and Marcellus, and Hannibal’s words in each echo Valerius’ own claim that the men should not be ashamed of these atypical rites, that they died proudly for their country, and gained honor in death (10.572-4; 15.383-5).

The point of departure here, and what Silius seems to latch onto, is the issue of the ‘glory’ Hannibal attained through these funerals. Valerius says nothing about Hannibal’s motivation, only the result of his actions: glory achieved through the very ‘Roman’ way in which he honored the dead (via *humanitas* and *mansuetudo*), set in contrast to his specifically ‘Carthaginian’ cunning and guile in acquiring military victory. Silius warps the sentiments of Valerius’ account by making Hannibal’s goal through these funeral rites the glory and praise which he is shown repeatedly lusting after.

The source, I think, of Hannibal’s inspiration to offer burial rites for the Roman generals is L. Cornelius Scipio’s (Scipio ‘Maior’) treatment of the Carthaginian Hanno’s corpse (from the First Punic war) depicted in *ekphrasis* in *Punica* 6. Silius prepares us for all of these later burial rites (and Hannibal’s particular motivation) during the famous scene at Liternum, as Hannibal views images of Roman glory from the First Punic War immortalized

\footnote{Valerius also, in contrast to other extant sources, claims that Hannibal recovered the corpse of Flaminius and oversaw the burial rites (1.6.6). Silius follows Livy 22.7.5 and Plut. Fab. 3.3 in claiming that Hannibal was unable to find Flaminius’ body.}
on the temple walls of an unidentified deity. Among the scenes is the elder Scipio’s funeral for Hanno (6.670-2): 42

cernit et extremos defuncti ciuis honores:
Scipio ductoris celebrabat funera Poeni,
Sardoa uictor terra.

Here Hannibal saw too the last honours paid to a dead countryman; for Scipio, victorious over Sardinia, was conducting the funeral of a Carthaginian general.

Gesine Manuwald has argued that the scenes on the temple walls are described from an omniscient Roman perspective, though we view them initially with Hannibal as he looks on (6.653-7). Only with the description of Scipio’s funeral for Hanno does the perspective shift back to Hannibal, as he becomes the focalizer for the images we are viewing: ‘…this focalization underscores how Hannibal is confronted with Roman conduct and Roman power’. 43 The shift of focalization marks the importance of this particular image as Hannibal learns that piety or humanitas—in this case through offering an enemy proper funeral rites—can earn glory and praise as lasting as military triumph. Silius does not explicitly tell us that Scipio’s actions are a sign of humanitas, but again Valerius provides a model that identifies Scipio’s intent (5.1.2): 44

atque ut ab uniuersis patribus conscriptis ad singulos ueniam, L. Cornelius consul primo Punico bello, cum Olbiam oppidum cepisset, pro quo fortissime dimicans Hanno dux Carthaginiensium occiderat, corpus eius e tabernaculo suo ampo funere extulit nec dubitauit hostis exequias ipse celebrare, eam demum uictoriam et apud deos et apud homines minimum inuidiae habituram credens, <quae> quam plurimum humanitatis habuisset.

44 The passage is also noted by Fowler (1996): 68-9.
And, that I might move from the senate as a whole to individual members of it, L. Cornelius (Scipio), consul in the First Punic War, when he captured the city of Olbia, Scipio gave the Carthaginian general Hanno, who died fighting bravely in its defense, a full military funeral from his own tent. He himself did not hesitate to attend the obsequies of an enemy, believing that that victory would elicit the least envy from both gods and men which involved the greatest humanity.

Scipio’s actions are grounded in a deep respect for the gods and a fear of overreaching, which might result in divine and human envy (invidia). Respect for the gods and fear of overreaching are not things we can easily associate with Hannibal in Silius’ poem; his speech in fact after viewing these Roman images on the Liternum temple ends with a promise to construct his own Carthaginian victory monument whose coup de grâce will depict Jupiter hurled down from the Tarpeian rock (6.713: deiectum Tarpeia rupe Tonantem). Hannibal has recognized the immortal power of humanitas, but has warped its sentiments and purpose. The scenes of the temple monumentalize, and thus immortalize, Roman victory, piety, humanity, and glory, and consequently Hannibal orders them to be destroyed (714-16). But these images become a model for Hannibal’s own imagined monument once his (unrealized) defeat of Rome is complete (700-13).

Keeping this scene from Liternum in mind, we can look in a bit more detail at Hannibal’s funeral rites for Paulus, Gracchus, and Marcellus, particularly the ways in which Hannibal attempts to appropriate the sort of humanitas that yielded fame and glory for Scipio Maior, as a calculated means of bringing lasting fame to his own name. In this way we will be able to see that Silius distorts the claims of ‘Roman kindness’ Valerius ascribes to Hannibal, setting the Carthaginian leader up as an emblem of false exemplarity.

45 From the outset, Hannibal is construed as a contemptor diuum, like Mezentius, Caesar, and Capaneus: Pun. 1.58: armato nullus diuum pudor, ‘Once armed he had no respect for Heaven’.
46 Kißel (1979): 106 n.14 is right that Scipio Maior’s burial of Hanno is the only obvious burial in the poem without a clear negative connotation (though it does not occur in the narrative present).
It is worth stressing, first, that leading up to Hannibal’s visit to Liternum the issue of burial rites for Roman soldiers has been building steadily in the poem. The first action attributed to a Carthaginian in real-time in the poem is Hasdrubal’s (the son-in-law of Hamilcar) abuse and display of Tagus’ corpse and denial of burial (1.152-4): ...

Tagum superumque hominumque | immemor erecto suffossum robose maestis | ostentabat ouans populis sine funere regem, ‘Tagus...Hasdrubal, defying gods and men, fastened high on a wooden cross, and displayed in triumph to the sorrowing natives the unburied body of their king’. This scene follows a lengthy prophecy by Juno predicting the Roman losses at Ticinus, Trebia, Trasimene, and Cannae, whose rivers and lakes will be inundated with Roman corpses and severed limbs (1.43-54). Cannae will be the ‘grave of Italy’ (50: tumulum Hesperiae), even though Hannibal will leave the Roman bodies unburied: Italy herself will be forced to subsume the corpses of the dead (cf. 15.530-1).

A second prophecy predicts similarly fields and rivers covered with corpses (1.125-6). We have seen the Saguntine Theron’s denial of burial rites by Hannibal (chapter 3.3) and the mass suicidal pyre of the Saguntine citizens that ends book 2 (a funeral of sorts, but wholly distorted by the infection of Tisiphone’s intervention). Flamininus is haunted by an army of ghosts of the unburied Roman soldiers from Trebia (5.127-9), and is himself only granted a tomb through the corpses of his own suicidal troops (above at 6.1). The horror of post-battle carnage at Trasimene eclipses even Juno’s own predictions for the same battle (esp. 6.1-61), and the only real burial recorded is Bruttius’ bizarre burial of the Roman legionary eagle. The first six books of the poem offer little comfort to the dead, and until he views the scene of Hanno’s burial by Scipio at Liternum, Hannibal shows no interest at all in the corpses of his enemies.
In the case of Gracchus’ funeral in book 12, Silius as narrator is most scathing. After destroying a Roman blockade in his defense of Capua, Hannibal and his troops ride over the bodies of fallen Romans (12.471-2), and only halt their horses when they come upon Gracchus’ corpse (12.473-4, 477-8):

exequiae tantum famam nomenque uolentem
mitificae mentis tenuerunt funere laeto.
...
Gracchus caeco circumdatus astu
occiderat, laudemque Libys rapiebat humandi.

Seeking a reputation for humanity, he gave burial to Gracchus, though rejoicing at his death…encompassed by hidden guile [Gracchus] had been murdered, and Hannibal snatched at the credit of giving him burial.

Trampling over the corpses of the dead in order to offer burial to only one of them is disturbing, but that the sole burial comes as a means of self-aggrandizement and personal gain betrays Hannibal’s lack of interest in the rites themselves and in Gracchus in particular.47

Silius is a bit less damning of Hannibal in his description of Marcellus’ funeral in book 15, though here too the rites are more literally geared towards Hannibal’s interest in his own reputation and praise and glory than that of the dead Roman. Hannibal equates himself with Marcellus as his ‘peer in battle’ (15.385-6), the pyre prepared for Marcellus might have brought some to imagine that ‘Hannibal himself had fallen’ (389-90), and Marcellus’ death is a bringer of laus (‘praise’) to Hannibal and his men (392). Before Hannibal’s eulogy, Silius offers his own praise speech to Marcellus, but again bemoans the glory that his death brought

to Hannibal (339): *heu quantum Hannibalem clara factura ruina*, ‘How great, alas, that fall, that was to bring fame to Hannibal!’ Scholars have noted that the scene is full of contradictions, and it is hard to square Hannibal’s apparent magnanimity here with his calculation of the importance of glory expressed explicitly in his earlier funeral for Gracchus and will be again at the funeral for Paulus.⁴⁸ Hannibal performs the rites over Marcellus, but his own interests are of chief concern.⁴⁹

Paulus’ burial is the most detailed and the most fraught. My analysis of the scene will also provide further insights into the two other burials I have described above. The extended scene can be broken down into four units: (1) Hannibal’s troops discover Paulus’ corpse after the battle of Cannae and a joyous Hannibal immediately announces that the Roman leader (as well as Hannibal’s troops and allies) must be granted proper funeral rites (*Pun.* 10.503-23); (2) Hannibal orders funeral pyres to be constructed, which precipitates a typical epic tree-felling scene,⁵⁰ and the bodies of the Carthaginian corpses are cremated (524-43); (3) Hannibal burns an offering of collected armor to Mars, the ‘first fruits of battle’, as payment for the god’s hearing his prayers (547-57); (4) finally, Hannibal oversees the rites for Paulus, offering a *laudatio funebris* over the corpse before the flames take Paulus’ body and his spirit rises triumphant into the sky (558-77).

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⁴⁹ Whether Marcellus was buried at all has been seriously questioned. Livy’s story (27.28.4-12) about Hannibal’s attempt to use Marcellus’ signet ring as a ruse—in order to trick Roman allies with false instructions—makes it highly unlikely that his body or ashes were returned to Rome, since he would have needed to pretend Marcellus was still alive to pull off the hoax. Later ‘retellings’ of Marcellus’ death and burial rites may have been the result of his family’s attempt to ‘rehabilitate the memory’ of Marcellus: see Flower (1996): 146-7 for details.
Erich Burck has detailed Silius’ borrowings in this scene from the early action of *Aeneid* 11. Both Aeneas and Hannibal offer funeral rites to the dead, dedicate war spoils to Mars, and personally oversee the extensive rites for a fallen individual (Aeneas for Pallas; Hannibal for Paulus). Silius’ acknowledgment of Virgil’s scene is clear, but the atmosphere is distorted. Aeneas had allowed both sides of the conflict (his own and the Rutulian contingent) to gather and provide funerals for the dead during an agreed upon ceasefire. The model is a similar scene from *Iliad* 7, wherein a truce allows Trojans and Achaeans to collect and cremate their dead *en masse*. Hannibal says and does nothing about the Roman corpses here, but makes explicit his plan to construct pyres for his own dead soldiers.

Silius had made much of Paulus’ ‘one-for-all’ relationship with Rome in the lead-up to and during the battle of Cannae (see above at 6.1), and Hannibal rearticulates that association here (10.521-2): *qui tot mihi milibus unus | maior laetitiae causa es*, ‘The fall of so many thousands gives me less joy than his alone’. This scene prepares us for the burial Hannibal performs over Paulus’ corpse at the expense of, or in place of, the thousands of Roman dead Hannibal and his men trample underfoot and leave to rot. As in Gracchus’ case, while we may be excused for reading Paulus’ funeral as similarly a synecdochic funeral for all of his soldiers, the issue of rotting Roman corpses looms large (e.g. 10.449-54).

While the *Aeneid* 11 model provides a meaningful backdrop that Silius is aiming to distort, the stain of Lucan’s Caesar in *BC* 7 becomes another powerful intertext for Silius in his efforts to add elements of perversity to the burial rites. Lucan had chosen this precise moment of Hannibal’s campaign (his burial of Paulus after Cannae) to highlight Caesar’s

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52 With Cowan (2007b).
mania at Pharsalus, comparing the Roman general unfavorably to Rome’s greatest historical enemy (BC 7.799-801).\textsuperscript{53}

\begin{verbatim}
non illum Poenus humator
consulis et Libyca succensae lampade Cannae
compellunt hominum ritus ut seruet in hoste

The Carthaginian who buried
the consul and Cannae lit by Libyan torches do not compel him
to observe the customs of humanity towards an enemy.
\end{verbatim}

Caesar is made to look worse than a ‘humane’ Hannibal—a Hannibal similarly praised by Valerius Maximus—though evidence for Caesar’s denial of burial for the dead Pompeians at Pharsalus is not corroborated anywhere in our sources. Lucan’s scene is both a deliberate corruption of an epic topos (humanitarian ceasefire and funeral rites for the dead) and a historical fabrication aimed at building Caesar’s monstrousness. Silius, utilizing the allusion instigated by his epic predecessor, turns the comparison back implicitly, retrojecting Caesar’s feasting his eyes on the slaughter post Pharsalus (BC 7.728-824, esp. 786-95) on Hannibal’s bloodthirsty scanning of the battlefield after his victory at Cannae (10.450-4).\textsuperscript{54}

\begin{verbatim}
lustrabat campos et saeuae tristia dextra
facta recensebat pertractans uulnra uisu
Hannibal et magna circumstipante caterua
dulcia praebet trucibus spectacula Poenis.
quas strages inter…
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{53} Lucan crystallized Caesar’s association with Hannibal very early on in his poem, comparing Caesar’s approach on Rome as potentially even more frightening than Hannibal’s crossing of the Alps (BC 1.303-05: non secus ingenti bellorum Roma tumultu | concititur, quam si Poenus transcenderit Alpes | Hannibal, ‘By warfare’s vast commotion Rome is shaken | just as though the Carthaginian were crossing the Alps, | Hannibal’).

Hannibal was riding over the battlefield, reviewing his dreadful handiwork and feasting his eyes upon wounds. A numerous staff surrounded him, and the sights he showed them were welcome to the cruel eyes of the Carthaginians. Amid these heaps of dead…

Both of these scenes play up the grim spectacle and the leaders’ lust for viewing it. Both Caesar and Hannibal ride over the fields of battle (Pun. 10.450: lustrabat campos; BC 7.795: lustrare...campos); Hannibal’s surveying eyes (451: pertractans uulnera uisu) match Caesar’s eyes which cling to the deathly fields of Pharsalus (BC 7.788-9: feralibus aruis | haerentis oculos); and the slaughter is pleasing to them (Pun. 10.453: dulcia...spectacula, with BC 7.797: laeta...spectacula).

Further, as scholars have noted, Silius had already created a link between his battle at Cannae and Lucan’s climactic battle at Pharsalus. Among many allusions, Silius inserts soldiers into his Italian catalogue whose names evoke the major participants of Rome’s civil wars (Pun. 8.352-621); he includes a prophetic soldier (Pun. 8.656-76) reminiscent of Lucan’s ‘matrona’ who predicts the future civil bloodshed (BC 1.673-95), as well as pre-battle omens (Pun. 8.622-5) which mirror those at BC 1.522-83 and 7.151-213 (both anticipating Pharsalus as the nadir of the civil war). The battle itself is replete with allusions to civil war, generally, and to Lucan’s depiction of it more specifically. Caesar left Pharsalus full of unburied Roman corpses, as Hannibal likewise leaves Cannae, but both single out the opposing leader for special burial rites. Caesar’s burial of Pompey comes at the

56 See e.g. Tipping (2010): 36-9, 42-3 for details.
57 Note the Stoical touch at Pun. 10.536, after Silius notes that the Carthaginians were building funeral pyres for their dead: officium infelix et munus inane peremptis, ‘a mournful duty and a tribute that means nothing to the dead’. The expression hints at Lucan’s ekpyrotic philosophizing at BC 7.809-19 on the uselessness of burial rites in the greater scheme of the impending cosmic conflagration.
end of BC 9 when he is presented with Pompey’s severed head in Egypt and demands that it receive special treatment and proper disposal (esp. 9.1089-93). Lucan assures us that Caesar veiled his joy at the sight of Pompey’s head (1035-41, 1062-3), and that the rites over it, including a quasi-funeral speech (1064-1104), and his indignant tears function as a contrivance of his infamous clementia. Caesar’s main concern is his own reputation (1080: famae cura uetat), and the appearance of humanitas. No one believes him (1104-08; see 4.3 for details on this extended scene).

This scene at the end of BC 9, coupled with Lucan’s description of the battle of Pharsalus in book 7, is crucial to Silius’ handling of Paulus’ death and Hannibal’s treatment of his corpse. Silius casts Paulus as a double for Lucan’s Pompey (chapter 6.1) through their synecdochic association with the collective state body: they are the ‘heads’ of Rome’s military corps(e). But Silius creates a more detailed association that scholars have observed, which bears on the issue of burial rites and corpse treatment and deserves deeper engagement.

Paolo Marpicati and others have argued that Silius’ epitaph for Paulus (Pun. 10.305-11) evokes Lucan’s Pompey through the imagery of decapitation, and through direct lexical ties to Virgil’s epitaph for Priam (Aen. 2.554-8), a scene already by Silius’ time understood as implicitly referencing the historical Pompey’s death in Egypt. Paulus is not decapitated, of course, but his death is articulated through analogy to the severing of his army’s head (10.309-11): postquam spes Italum mentesque in consule lapsae, ceu truncus capitis saeuis exercitus armis sternitur, ‘The hope and courage of the Romans fell with their general; the
army, like a headless thing, was overthrown by fierce assaults’.® There exist details beyond this to link Paulus to Lucan’s Pompey,® including Paulus’ nomen climbing up to the stars (10.308), doubly referencing Pompey’s apotheosis at BC 9.1-14 and Lucan’s (and Pompey’s own) insistence on the importance of Pompey’s famous nomen in the poem. Moreover, Paulus’ ghost does, like Pompey, literally rise from his tomb and fly into the sky (Pun. 10.577).® A Lentulus advises Pompey after his defeat at Pharsalus to seek Egypt’s aid (BC 8.328-455), as does a Lentulus who encourages Paulus to flee Cannae (Pun. 10.267-75). Like Pompey (BC 8.622-35), Paulus uses his death as an opportunity for exemplarity, to show future ages how a hero ought to die (Pun. 10.283-5): amplius acta | quid superest uita, nisi caecae ostendere plebi | Paulum scire mori? ‘My life is ended; and nothing remains but to prove to the ignorant populace that Paulus knows how to die’. Silius’ Egyptian boat simile (Pun. 10.321-5) recalls Pompey’s death in a boat in Egypt. The deaths of each man are drawn out to almost operatic lengths. And Paulus’ corpse, uncovered by Hannibal’s troops beneath a pile of corpses, recalls Pompey’s corpse-like appearance at Lesbos following his loss at Pharsalus (Pun. 10.510-11, with BC 8.56-7: see above at 6.1).

These allusions prompted Raymond Marks to comment: ‘Silius wants us to read the defeat at Cannae and, especially, the death of Paulus there in relation to the death of Pompey and, in doing so, invites us to see Paulus as a kind of Pompey figure or, perhaps, Rome as the Pompey figure and Paulus as the equivalent of Pompey’s head’.® I think this assertion can be strengthened, particularly its positing of Paulus as Pompey’s ‘head’, when we examine

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® For some of these and other allusions Silius creates between his Paulus and Lucan’s Pompey, see esp. Marks (2008): 70-5; Cowan (2007b): esp. 27-32.
® Marks (2011): 139.
Paulus’ funeral rites. I mentioned that Hannibal’s troops recover Paulus’ corpse in the aftermath of the battle at Cannae in book 10, but the manner in which he is found casts an immediate element of perversion over the subsequent burial rites that Hannibal oversees (10.504-06):

permixta ruina
inter et arma uirum et lacerata cadauera Pauli
eruerant corpus media de strage iacentum.

From a disordered heap of weapons and mangled corpses they had drawn forth the body of Paulus in the centre of the pile.

As I have argued, Silius here, and in other places in his epic, constructs bizarre corpse-tombs, heaps of dead men and weapons which functionally form tumulus-like structures over fallen generals or warriors, when the opportunity for a proper burial seems remote. When Hannibal’s soldiers find Paulus, they effectively ‘exhume’ him from a tomb constructed of the ‘arms and men’ (505: arma uirum) he stands for; he is the army’s caput entombed in its own corpus.

Paulus’ distorted double burial resonates with the multiple quasi-burials of Pompey in BC, burials that do not work individually but collectively come some way toward a unified whole (see 4.2). Lucan articulates the inadequacy of Pompey’s individual funerals most poignantly through his use of negative enumeration, whereby Lucan as narrator or his characters describe in detail the sort of funeral display or paraphernalia or custom that is traditionally conducted over a Roman corpse, as a means of highlighting the paucity of Pompey’s actual funeral. Different scenes focus on different missing elements, including the roles of the widow and family, an enormous mourning crowd, the funeral pomp and procession, and so on (e.g. BC 7.37-44, 8.729-35, 739-42, 806-15, 9.55-62). We find the
same system at work during Paulus’ funeral, where the negative enumeration of traditional rites contrasts sharply his actual funeral conducted by Hannibal (Pun. 10.565-68):

non coniunx natiue aderant, non iuncta propinquo sanguine turba uirum, aut celsis de more feretris praecedens prisca exequias decorabat imago, omnibus exuuiis nudo...

No wife was there, no sons, no gathering of near kinsmen; no customary masks of ancestors were borne on high litters before the corpse to grace the funeral procession. Bare it was of all trappings...

The list Silius offers condenses the series of negative enumerations Lucan provides for Pompey over the course of 3 books (BC 7-9), and highlights the jarringly odd circumstance of Paulus’ burial at the hands of his Carthaginian enemy.

Paulus’ corpse may lack all the traditional elements of a Roman funeral, but Silius tells us ‘Hannibal’s praise was glory enough’ (10.568-9): iamque Hannibal unus sat decoris laudator erat. Nods to Aeneas’ funeral for Pallas in Aeneid 11 abound here, but again it is Lucan’s Caesar who provides the most immediate model, structurally and atmospherically. Pompey’s truncus is left, half-burnt on the Egyptian shore, but his head finds its way to Caesar who assumes the singular role of witness, laudator, and mourner over Pompey’s final funeral rites (BC 9.1089-1104), a duty he performs over the remains of his enemy. The oddity of these rites, their nontraditional nature, is surpassed only by the oddity of Caesar’s eulogy which shifts the focus from the deceased to the eulogizer. This is typical of Caesar’s megalomania in Lucan’s poem, as he everywhere steals the focus of attention, but it stands out here in a funereal context, where the focus should naturally fall upon the dead man.

62 For details, see Burck (1981): 462; Spaltenstein (1990): ad locc.
By Silius’ own analogy, Paulus is the head severed from its military *truncus* (left to rot on the battlefield) which is recovered and brought to the victorious Hannibal by his minions. Like Caesar’s rites over Pompey’s head, those provided for Paulus by Hannibal aim to impress upon the reader the absurdity and abnormality of the situation. Hannibal alone (10.568: *Hannibal unus*), the victorious enemy, usurps the role of witness, *laudator* (explicitly at 569), and mourner. But again, as was the case during his funerals for Gracchus and Marcellus, the focus (as with Caesar) is wholly self-centered with a view to the future (573-75): *tibi gloria leto | iam parta insigni. nostros Fortuna labores | uersat adhuc casusque iubet nescire futuros*, ‘To you fame is secured already by a glorious death, but I must struggle on as Fate drives me, and she hides future events from my knowledge’.

Lucan pulls no punches in his description of Caesar’s agenda when he demands burial for Pompey’s severed head. Caesar sheds crocodile tears (9.1037-41, 1104-06), his scorn and derision a ploy to conceal his brimming joy at the sight of Pompey’s head, and the funeral rites granted to Pompey and his *laudatio* an attempt to gain credence and recognition for his *clementia* and *humanitas*. Contrastingly in the *Punica*, in the scene itself, Silius offers little overt criticism of Hannibal’s actions, and only subtly hints at a deeper agenda. We might be tempted to read sarcasm into the claim that Hannibal’s praise alone was enough to compensate for the lack of traditional Roman elements in his funeral, but Silius is not explicit. He tells us Hannibal was ‘proud’ (10.559: *iactabat*) to honor his dead enemy Paulus, and we should read this pejoratively (*OLD s.v. iacto* 11-12). But is Hannibal boasting of
killing Paulus, of honoring him, or of showing off by honoring him? The most we can say for certain is that Hannibal seems courteous, if a bit self-aggrandizing too.

Yet this all changes as we keep reading. We are confronted with Hannibal’s treatment of Gracchus’ corpse (12.472-8), which Silius denounces explicitly as aimed solely at enhancing Hannibal’s reputation for humanitas, in language strongly reminiscent of Caesar’s motivations in Egypt in BC 9. And then we meet Paulus one more time in the underworld during Scipio Africanus’ katabasis, where Silius fills in the gaps left unsaid in the initial funeral scene. Paulus’ shade approaches Scipio, drinks the blood offering, and asks what he is doing in Hell, to which Scipio replies mournfully (Pun. 13.711-17):

‘armipotens dductor, quam sunt tua fata per urbem<br>lamentata diu! quam paene ruentia tecum<br>traxisti ad Stygias Oenotria tecta tenebras!<br>tum tibi defuncto tumulum Sidonius hostis<br>constituit laudemque tuo quaesuiit honore’.

dumque audit lacrimans hostilia funera Paulus,<br>ante oculos iam Flaminius, iam Gracchus...

‘O mighty captain, how long did all Rome mourn your death! How nearly you carried down the Roman city in your fall to Stygian darkness! Also the Carthaginian, our foe, built a tomb for your dead body and sought to gain glory by honouring you’. While Paulus shed tears to hear of his burial by the enemy, Flaminius came in sight, and Gracchus...

Despite his seemingly pious actions, Hannibal’s aim, like Caesar’s, is glory through a reputation for humanitas. This is Hannibal’s attempt at mimicking L. Cornelius Scipio who—less calculatingly or sinisterly—gained immortality at Liternum in Punic 6 for his funeral rites over the Carthaginian enemy Hanno. Hannibal’s calculation contrastingly casts a

E.g. Spaltenstein (1990): ad 10.558: ‘Sans le contexte, on pourrait penser qu’Annibal se vante (vers 559) d’avoir tué un ennemi, non de l’honorer par ces funérailles...c’est de l’ostentation’.

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shadow over his actions. Moreover, Paulus’ tears make it clear that Hannibal’s presence was little comfort, despite Silius’ earlier claim (10.568-9).

Paulus’ tears (13.716) may betray a deeper loss: Hannibal’s appropriation of praise (715: laudem) from Paulus, whose laus should have come via a traditional Roman funeral. Just before Scipio meets Paulus, he speaks with the shades of his father and uncle. In stark contrast to the funeral for Paulus, Scipio describes the state-sponsored funerals Rome granted his kin (13.658-60):

quantos funeribus uestrís gens Italia passim
dat gemitus! tumulus uobis censente senatu,
Mauortis geminus surgit per gramina campo.

How sorely all Italy mourns for your deaths! By decree of the Senate, a double tomb is now rising in your honour on the grassy field of Mars.

The pattern follows Scipio’s exchange with Paulus, noting how Rome wept at the deaths of Scipio’s father and uncle (as Rome had for Paulus, 13.711-12), followed by his detailing of their last post mortem rites (cf. 13.714-15). The elder Scipio’s response is telling (13.663-5):

ipsa quidem uirtus sibimet pulcherrima merces;
dulce tamen uenit ad mane,
durat apud superos, nec edunt obliuia laudem.

Virtue is indeed its own noblest reward; yet the dead find it sweet, when the fame of their lives is remembered among the living and oblivion does not swallow up their praises.

Hannibal, it seems, has devoured the laus from Paulus by positing himself as the focal point of the funerary rites. Scipio confirms this implicitly by going out of his way to highlight Hannibal’s role in Paulus’ funeral, capping his comments to Paulus with what is almost gossipy anecdotal information.64

That the ownership of *laus* is at stake here, more so than Paulus’ concern for exactly how his body has been disposed of can be gleaned from some of Silius’ earlier contextually relevant references to funeral rites. During the rites Hannibal conducts over his dead soldiers and allies at Cannae, and moments before he cremates Paulus, Silius comments that the building and lighting of funeral pyres are (10.536): *officium infelix et munus inane peremptis*, ‘a mournful duty and a tribute that means nothing to the dead’. And during Scipio’s exchange in the underworld with Appius Claudius, the unburied shade he meets who asks for burial but lists his preferred form of disposal (cremation over inhumation), the list of various burial rites Scipio details employed by different cultures around the world functions as a lecture indicating that exactly how a corpse is dealt with is irrelevant to the corpse and the dead man (13.468-87).65 Both of these comments share Stoic sensibilities about death and disposal with Cicero’s *Tusculan Disputations* (esp. 1.42-5) and Lucan’s musings post Pharsalus (esp. BC 7.809-19), both clear models for Silius here.66 Scipio promises to cremate Appius, but it does not matter how he carries out the rites, only that he provides some sort of burial. Though Silius does not explain the exact cause of Paulus’ tears at hearing of his own funeral conducted by Hannibal, he is less distraught over the manner of his last rites than that Hannibal managed to steal his *laus*, the ultimate aim of epic heroes, in the process.

6.3. Bloody Homecoming

*you should either hear me now or go deaf*
*or end up dead, die tryin’ to know death,*
*might end up dead, swallow blood, swallow my breath,*

65 See Bassett (1963): 77.
66 Bassett (1963) details Silius’ borrowings from these and other texts. van der Keur (2013) considers these lines with possible ties with burial rites depicted in Statius’ *Theb.*
Hannibal cares little for the mass dead, and only seems to provide burial rites over the
corpses of Roman generals as a means of validating his own humanitas and appropriating the
praise and glory associated with the funeral display, in a crude imitation of Scipio Maior’s
burial of the Carthaginian Hanno depicted on the Roman temple at Liternum in book 6.
Hannibal’s interest in his own funeral rites in Punic 17, as the issue of Carthage’s loss in the
war (and Scipio’s and Rome’s victory) and Hannibal’s own ‘ending’ take center stage in
Silius’ narrative, layers allusions that create something of a cacophony of dizzying
intertextuality. This compounds the image Silius has presented throughout the epic of
Hannibal as simultaneously an epic hero and villain.

With Carthage under threat of destruction from Scipio and his forces, Carthaginian
envoys beg Hannibal to return from Italy with his troops and defend his own country and city
(17.170-83). He hesitates, but ultimately agrees to save Carthage, since he recognizes he is
their only hope of survival (197-8: nunc patriae decus et patriae nunc Hannibal unus |
subsidium, nunc in nostra spes ultima dextra, ‘Hannibal is now the glory of his country and
her only rock of refuge; their one remaining hope is in my right arm’). Hannibal leaves Italy
by ship (211-17), his eyes longingly clinging to the sight of his unfulfilled epic conquest, and
the land he has come to regard as his own.\footnote{Note Augoustakis (2010): 151-2, comparing Hannibal’s flight here with Imilce’s flight from Spain and Hannibal at Punic. 3.152-7. He argues with some success that Hannibal is implicitly feminized here in book 17 by association with this earlier scene. See also Lovatt (2013): 258-60.} In this respect, as we have seen (chapter 3.3) he
resembles Aeneas leaving Troy in defeat at *Aeneid* 3.10-12 and Pompey fleeing Italy at *BC* 3.1-7.⁶⁸

Suddenly Hannibal changes his mind and decides to return to Italy, to aim at epic glory one last time, and he turns his fleet’s sails back toward the Italian shore (230-9). Silius slyly constructs out of this decision to attack Italy again an allusion to the Achaean’s feigned flight from Troy in *Aeneid* 2. The Italians come out to the shore to inspect the now empty Carthaginian camps, a gift from the gods (*Pun.* 17.204-07), recalling the Trojans’ gleeful examination of the empty Achaean camps on the abandoned shoreline (*Aen.* 2.21-30).⁶⁹ Silius evokes this earlier ruse, sealing the association, when just before Hannibal decides to turn around he recalls the destruction of Troy and Rome’s ancestors (17.228-9): gentique superbae | Iliacum exitium et proauorum fata dedissem, ‘I ought to have consigned that proud nation to the destruction of Troy and the doom of their ancestors’. This repetition of destruction is itself a repetition of Hannibal’s initial childhood oath to visit upon Rome the fate of Troy, and the ring-composition ties the poem’s beginning with its (near) end through Hannibal’s obsession with Troy’s/Rome’s destruction (1.114-15): Romanos terra atque undis, ubi competet aetas, | ferro ignique sequar Rhoetaque fata reuoluam, ‘When I come to age, I shall pursue the Romans with fire and sword and enact again the doom of Troy’.⁷⁰

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⁶⁸ Cf. Jason sailing off in tears from home at Apollonius *Argonautica* 1.534-5.

⁶⁹ Cf. also Sen. *Ag.* 435-6: iuuat uidere nuda Troiae litora, | iuuat relictis sola Sigei loca, ‘it was a delight to see the empty shores of Troy, a delight to see the lonely land of deserted Sigeum’; *Pun.* 17.206-07: et litora ab hoste | nuda uidere sat est, ‘[they] were content to see the shore with never an enemy upon it’. Eurybates describes the happy sight of the empty Achaean camps from the view of the fleeing ships; Silius describes the same happy sight but from the perspective of those remaining on the shore.

⁷⁰ Venus voices the same fear of destructive repetition in her complaint to Jupiter at 3.567-9: parumne est, | exilia errantes totum quaesisse per orbem? | anne iterum capta repetentur Pergama Roma?, ‘Is it not enough that we have wandered over the whole earth, seeking a place of exile? Or shall we be taken and the doom of Troy be repeated once more?’
The young Hannibal continues (1.116-17) ‘The gods shall not stop my career...’, but by now it is obvious that Italy is not so easily conquered. Neptune, like Poseidon and Aeolus (Od. 5.299-312; Aen. 1.94-101), stirs up a typhoon and blasts Hannibal and his ships back towards Carthage (Aeneas too is driven from Italy to Carthage), crashing waves over the fleet (Pun. 17.236-58). There is an inversion here, since these earlier scenes in Homer and Virgil represent the first appearance of Odysseus and Aeneas in their epics, while this will be among Hannibal’s last in the Punic: this is the end of his epic journey. Sailing imagery in epic is typically associated with ‘beginnings’ or at least ‘re-beginnings’, and Silius offers here a disruption of an epic voyage by breaking it off before it has really even begun.

Despite the inversions, Hannibal’s fear is still the same as his epic predecessors: that he will die at sea and not on some field of battle (17.260-7):

felix, o frater, diuisque aequate cadendo,
Hasdrubal! egregium fortis cui dextera in armis
pugnanti peperit letum, et cui fata dedere
Ausoniam extremo tellurem adprendere morsu.
at mihi Cannarum campis, ubi Paulus, ubi illae
egregiae occubuere animae, dimittere uitam
non licitum

fortunato, cum ferrem in Capitolia flammis,
Tarpeio Iouis ad manes descendere telo.

Fortunate were you, O brother Hasdrubal, and made equal to the gods in your death. You died gloriously, falling in battle by a soldier’s hand; and Fate permitted you to bite the soil of Italy as you died. But I was not suffered, either to breathe my last on the field of Cannae, where Paulus and many another hero fell, or, when I carried firebrands against the Capitol, to be struck down to Hades by the bolt of Jupiter.

Aeneas at Aeneid 1.96-8 wishes he had died by Diomede’s hand, recalling their duel in Iliad 5. Further, he wishes he were dead like his comrades Hector and Sarpedon (Aen. 1.99-100; 71 Silius’ reworking of these earlier epic sea storms has been well documented: See Marks (2005a): 59 with n.117 for more bibliography; add to these Tipping (2010): 87-8; Lovatt (2013): 260; Stocks (2013): 61-4. 72 On the importance of epic seafaring as a poetic marker for originality, poetic origins, and for driving the epic plot, see Harrison (2007).
cf. *Iliad* 16 and 22). This is how epic heroes, or at least Homeric heroes, should die, on the battlefield. Hannibal begins similarly on the mortal plane, but ends with the jarring reference to his ‘duel’ with Jupiter in *Punica* 12—when he had attempted to storm Rome’s walls despite divine warnings and Jupiter’s lightning bolts—placing himself on par with the gods and thus eclipsing mortal standards of epic combat. Hannibal, then, inverts Aeneas’ reference to Diomedes, who himself fought with gods at Troy, but more directly recalls Capaneus (or Salmoneus or Locrian Ajax) who felt the wrath of Jupiter’s thunderbolt during the height of his theomachic madness.73 The Carthaginian envoys had moments before kissed Hannibal’s hands ‘as if he were a god’ (17.183: *effundunt lacrimas dextramque ut numen adorant*); Venus demands that Neptune calm the storm lest Hannibal’s and the Carthaginians’ deaths by divine intervention make them seem invincible against humans and thus ‘godlike’ (284-9),74 and earlier, during his attack on Rome, the Romans believe only Jupiter has the power to defeat Hannibal (12.643-5). Silius imposes this godlikeness into Hannibal’s own characterization of himself.75

While Hannibal recalls the frightened and (for a time) defeated Odysseus and Aeneas at sea, his decision to turn back to attack Rome coupled with his theomachic pretensions strongly point to Caesar at sea in BC 5, who similarly battled the (divine) elements and

74 Venus’ attempt to halt a sea-storm of course recalls her intervention in *Aen.* 1, begging (also) Neptune to stop Aeolus from destroying Aeneas’ fleet. Silius plays with the details of the original scene so that Venus is seen to be helping the Romans long-term (assuring them military glory by defeating Hannibal in battle) by providing short-term aid to the enemy Carthaginians. See Ahl, Davis, and Pomeroy (1986): 2515; Fucecchi (2011a): 323-4.
75 Hannibal’s aims were sublimely celestial: surpassing the Alps, burning Rome’s Capitol, usurping the rule/role of Jupiter the Thunderer; his wish here—not without wit—implies that he ought to have trod a more traditional (downward) path, like Scipio (17.267): *…ad manes descendere.*
challenged the gods to strike him down in his attempt to cross from Epirus into Italy (see chapter 4.3). The teasing allusion here is more fully articulated near the end of the poem when Hannibal regrets not dying at sea, and seems to align himself more definitely with Caesar in rejecting his own burial rites (17.559-60): \textit{aequore mersum | texissent scopuli, pelagusque hausisset et undae!}, ‘Oh that I had been drowned at sea, that the rocks had been my tomb,’ and that the waves of ocean had swallowed me down’.

Caesar had eschewed the permanence of a pyre or tomb so long as he was always ‘feared and awaited by every land’ (\textit{BC} 5.671: \textit{dum metuar semper terraque expecter ab omni}). Hannibal delivers a mirror threat and further challenges to Jupiter later as he watches from afar his army’s destruction against Scipio and the Roman army at the battle of Zama, in his last lines before he exits the epic stage (\textit{Pun.} 17.606-15; cf. 12.729-30):

\begin{verbatim}
      caelum licet omne soluta
in caput hoc compage ruat terraque dehiscant,
non ullo Cannas abolebis, Iuppiter, aevo,
decedesque prius regnis, quam nomina gentes
aut facta Hannibalis sileant. nec deinde relinquo
securam te, Roma, mei, patriaeque superste
ad spes armorum uiuam tibi. †
nam modo pugna
praecellis, resident hostes† mihi satque superque,
ut me Dardaniae matres atque Itala tellus,
dum uiuam, expectent nec pacem pectore norint.
\end{verbatim}

Though the earth yawn asunder, though all the framework of heaven break up and fall upon my head, never shalt thou, Jupiter, wipe out the memory of Cannae, but thou shalt step down from thy throne ere the world forgets the name or achievements of Hannibal. Nor do I leave Rome without dread of me: I shall survive my country and live on in the hope of warring against Rome. She wins this battle, but that is all; her foes are lying low. Enough, and more than enough for me, if Roman mothers and the people of Italy dread me coming while I live, and never know peace of mind.


\footnote{For \emph{tego} as very commonly ‘bury’ see \textit{OLD} \textit{s.v. tego} 1b.}
This eternal fame through the imposition of fear\textsuperscript{78} and a challenge to divinity permeates each boast, and supersedes the limits of mortality. Like Caesar’s speech, Hannibal’s functions as a self-eulogy,\textsuperscript{79} modelled on his own speeches at the funerals for Paulus and Marcellus. Hannibal eyed his own future and fate during these funeral speeches, selfishly usurping the praise and glory from the dead Romans. Here, his eulogy also looks forward, blending (or blurring) a sense of atemporal dread with the telos of his own lifespan (612: uiuam; 615: dum uiuam). Hannibal will be a menace to Rome ‘while he is alive’ but like Caesar, his infamy will live ‘forever’, longer than Jupiter’s reign (608-10) and beyond even cosmic ekpyrosis\textsuperscript{80} (606-07).\textsuperscript{81}

Yet unlike Lucan’s Caesar in his war with Rome, Hannibal is ultimately a ‘defeated’ epic character, and everywhere that Silius builds up his pretensions to Caesarism, he also undercuts the association with allusions to other defeated epic characters. While his desire to have died at sea challenges his earlier association with Aeneas and looks instead to Lucan’s Caesar, his sense of helplessness, his guilt, and thoughts of suicide link Hannibal intimately to Turnus lost at sea at Aeneid 10.668-86.\textsuperscript{82} The context is similar too: both Turnus and Hannibal attack phantoms contrived by Juno as a means of leading them from battle and

\textsuperscript{78} Both threats rely on Accius’ tyrant ethos: oderint dum metuant, ‘let them hate me, as long as they fear me’ (Acc. Atr. fr. 203 R.); with Sen. De ira 1.20.4; Clem. 1.12.4, 2.2.2. Seneca was rather obsessed with this articulation of tyranny, cf. similarly Sen. Ag. 72-3; Phoen. 654-9; Oed. 703-04; Thy. 212.

\textsuperscript{79} Stocks (2014): 216-17, 229-30 also refers to Hannibal’s speech as a self-eulogy (more on this below).

\textsuperscript{80} This is the Stoic belief in the cyclical, periodic conflagration of the cosmos every Great Year (an ambiguous designation that involves planetary alignments that ancients are in disagreement about). The cosmos is recreated after the conflagration, setting a course toward another ekpyrosis at the end of the new cycle: a cycle of cosmic death and regeneration. The most detailed discussion of Stoic ekpyrosis is Philo’s Peri aphtharsias kosmou 8-9, 83-103, 120-9 (detailed because Philo is aiming to utterly invalidate the philosophical concept).

\textsuperscript{81} This claim to eternal epic fama reworks similar claims to poetic immortality that we see in sphragides like Hor. Carm. 3.30, Aen. 9, Met. 15, BC 9, etc., but crucially it is Hannibal himself who voices his own prophecy of poetic eternity, usurping the role of epic narrator and writing his own epic ‘ending’; though his will not be the last words of the Punica. For this inversion of the sphragis topos, see Tipping (2010): 69-70; Bessone (2013b): 95-6; Chaudhuri (2014): 254-5.

delaying their deaths (Aen. 10.633-88, attacking a phantom-Aeneas; Pun. 17.522-66, a phantom-Scipio), and each watches helplessly away from the battlefield, hearing the groans of their comrades, and unable to return to fight.83 Turnus wishes god-driven winds would smash his boat against the rocks and crags and cast him into the Syrtian shallows of North Africa (Aen. 10.676-8). Hannibal, reflecting back on his earlier plight at sea, in retrospect wishes he had suffered the fate Turnus desired off the coast of North Africa.

Although Hannibal’s defeat prompts a further Caesar-style incentive to rage and vengeance through his threat to Jupiter, his actual position more closely resembles Pompey during the battle at Pharsalus, who similarly watches the destruction of his army and his own claims to victory from a safe distance on land (BC 7.647-53; Pun. 17.597-603).84 Juno in disguise refers to him as ‘Hannibal the Great’ (17.572: magnus…Hannibal), lying that the Carthaginian leader is routing the Roman army, while leading Hannibal himself away from his own and Carthage’s defeat. A reference to Lucan’s ‘Mr. Big’ as a leader whose reputation for victory ultimately outshines his actual battlefield success seems clear here.

More striking still are the verbal cues linking Hannibal’s wish to have been a shipwreck victim to the actual fate of Pompey as a quasi-shipwreck victim also off the coast of North Africa in Lucan’s poem; the allusions have gone unnoticed, to my knowledge. Here is Silius’ passage (Pun. 17.559-60): aequore mersum | texissent scopuli, pelagusque hausisset et undae!, ‘Oh that I had been drowned at sea, that the rocks had been my tomb,

and that the waves of ocean had swallowed me down’. The reworking of Lucan’s description of Pompey’s corpse floating in the waves is clear (BC 8.708-10): *pulsatur harenis, | carpit in scopolis hausto per uolnera fluctu, | ludibrium pelagi, nullaque manente figura | una nota est Magnum capitis iactura reuolsi*, ‘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 | the single mark of Magnus is the absence of the torn-off head’.

Pompey’s decapitation also resonates because Hannibal references the destruction of his own *caput* (along with a Pompey-like distinctive interest in his nomen) moments later during his themomachic boast to Jupiter (17.606-10, cited above), recalling unmistakably the fate of Pompey.\(^85\) The point is clear: Hannibal is willing to die exactly like Pompey (headless, unburied, beaten by waves) so long as his name and fame live on. Silius catches Lucan’s own blending of the fates of Caesar and Pompey as they seek immortality in the face of ‘death at sea’ (Caesar: BC 5.653-71; Pompey: BC 8.610-36, with my earlier discussion at 4.3).

Hannibal will survive and threaten/scorn the gods like Caesar, but he will lose the war and conjure images of death, mutilation, and defeat like Pompey.

Hannibal flees the epic stage undercover (*Pun. 17.616-17*): *sic rapitur paucis fugientum mixtus et altos | inde petit retro montes tutasque latebras*, ‘Then he joined a band of fugitives and hurried away, seeking a sure hiding-place among the high mountains in his rear’. He is again like Pompey after his defeat at Pharsalus, though more inconspicuous (BC 8.12-13: *deserta sequentem | non patitur tutis fatum celare latebris | clara uiri facies*, ‘Although he goes through wilderness, | the warrior’s famous face does not allow him to

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conceal | his fate in safe hiding-places”). As has been recognized, Hannibal’s exit also recalls Aeneas fleeing Troy for the mountains at Aeneid 2.804: cessi et sublato montis genitore petiui, and Turnus grudgingly fleeing life into the shadows at the close of Virgil’s poem (Aen. 12.952: fugit...sub umbras). These are all exits marked powerfully by defeat (singular and communal), and in the case of Pompey and Turnus, also by death, which Silvius intricately weaves together into one multi-layered snapshot.

That the exit is meant to signify death—and decapitation—for Hannibal and Carthage is strengthened by the allusion in the line immediately following Hannibal’s flight (17.618): hic finis bello, ‘Thus the war ended’. This phrase recalls Silvius’ epitaph for the dead Paulus at Cannae (10.305: hic finis Paulo), and the moment of Hannibal’s greatest victory and Rome’s teetering on the brink of destruction, articulated through the analogy of Rome’s ‘decapitation’ (309-11). The epitaphic signifier ultimately derives from Virgil’s (technically, Aeneas’) comment on the headless Priam signaling the ‘decapitation’ of Troy at Aeneid 2.554: haec finis Priami. What follows is Silvius’ description of Carthage’s surrender to Rome (tantamount to decapitation), the symbolic funeral procession of her wealth, power, weaponry, war elephants (17.618-24) transferred and translated to Scipio (literally, as he ‘encompasses’ the land via his cognomen ‘Africanus’, 17.625-6; cf. 4.130, 7.491, 9.544-6, in

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86 The allusion is signaled earlier by the Sibyl’s prophecy to Scipio about Hannibal’s fate, though here his flight from battle into the shadows will descend further into a hiding place offered by the Bithynian king Prusias (13.889-90): altera seruitia imbelli patietur in aeuo | et latebram munus regni, ‘too old to fight any more, he will suffer a second slavery and find a hiding-place by the king’s favour’.
89 The phrase here is surely also a metapoetic note that the poem has nearly reached its end.
anticipation) as a procession of Scipio’s now triumphant return to Italy (17.628: *sublimi...triumpho*, and generally: 625-54).

The traitorous Numidian king Syphax along with Hanno are drawn in chains through Rome as prisoners, as are Carthaginian youths, Macedonian leaders, Moors and Numidians, the Garamantes, and so on. Moreover, effigies of cities, mountains, rivers, conquered and subjugated, follow in order: Carthage,91 Spain, Gades, Calpe, Baetis, Pyrene, Ebro, all once emblems of Hannibal’s and Carthage’s expansive power and control, now under the aegis of Scipio and Rome. These—as I demonstrate below—are all simultaneously elements of victory parade (for Scipio/Rome) and funeral pomp (for Hannibal/Carthage).

It has gone unacknowledged, but the site of Hannibal’s final appearance and the setting from which he delivers his Caesarian style self-eulogy is a pastoral/elegiac92 tomb (597: *tumulo...propinquuo*; 605: *tumulo*), where Juno ‘monumentalizes’ him (598: *sistit*) before finally relenting to fate (by handing her favorite over to his own grim fate), and fleeing the epic herself (604). Translators and commentators have preferred ‘hill’, ‘hillock’, or ‘mound’, reasonably (*OLD* s.v. *tumulus* 1), but the double-meaning and double-usage of *tumulus* here seems hardly incidental/accidental—Silius might have used ‘agger’ as Lucan had for the parallel scene at *BC* 7.649. Hannibal’s soldiers fear their leader is already dead since they cannot locate him on the battlefield, or else that he had fled in despair at the ill-

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91 Carthage appears ‘stretching out her conquered hands to heaven’ (17.635: *mox uictas tendens Carthago ad sidera palmas*), like Aeneas at the onslaught of Aeolus’ storm, bringing *Aen.* 1 back into focus for yet another time at the *Pun.*’s close (*Aen.* 1.93: *duplicis tendens ad sidera palmas*).

92 Commentators have noted that Juno seems to be dragging Hannibal out of an epic context and into a pastoral one, in an attempt to save him from the sort of ‘epic ending’ that befell Turnus or Pompey: see Hardie (1997): 161; Ganiban (2009): 97; Lovatt (2013): 260. The scene and extra-epic setting recall the elegiac topos of ‘epitaph writing’, e.g. Tib. 1.3 (Tibullus, ill); Prop. 1.21 (of Gallus’ corpse speaking his own epitaph); 2.13 (Cynthia’s ghost), etc.
will of the gods (581-4). Both opinions are more or less true, as Silius has constructed it in the later pomp of Hannibal’s ekphrastic journey through the streets of Rome (see below). Following this graveside self-eulogy, Silius’ post-script of the triumph of Scipio doubles as a funeral procession for Hannibal and Carthage, as indicated by the epitaphic marker hic finis and the virtual ‘death’ of Hannibal and his Carthage through their defeat at Zama.

The final image in Scipio’s triumphal parade (17.644: imago) which commands everyone’s attention is an effigy of Hannibal in flight over the fields (643-4): sed non ulla magis mentesque oculosque tenebat. quam uisa Hannibalis campis fugientis imago, ‘But no sight attracted the eyes and minds of the people more than the picture of Hannibal in retreat over the plains’. Hannibal is not there per se, but that his imago is paraded along with other ‘images’ comprising his once mighty Mediterranean influence point to a funeral procession and the public display of ancestral imagines. Silius is toying with long-held Greco-Roman associations linking funeral and triumphal processions (e.g. Sen. Consol. ad Marc. 3.1: funus triumpho simillimum),\(^\text{93}\) complete with painted battle-scenes, masks, other artistic representations, all meant to be viewed as public spectacle. Lucan, as we have seen (4.2), had done similar things by construing Pompey’s parade of troops as a quasi-funeral procession for their leader in BC 3, and the parading of his severed head on a pike in books 8 and 9 apes cruelly the parades of ancestral imagines in pompa. Funeral and triumphal processions are both powerfully closural in Greco-Roman literature—Statius combines both in Thebaid 12, though triumph is ‘interrupted’ by a return to war, and the burials are not really described:

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\(^{93}\) See Flower (1996): 107-09 for the funeral absorbing elements of the triumphal procession.
*Theb.* 12.519-39, 797-809—and by warping elements of each, Silius is teasing at both at the same time.

Claire Stocks also views this scene from the poem’s close as evocative of a funeral procession, but argues that Hannibal is subsumed into Scipio’s triumphal procession as a pseudo-ancestor with seniority over Scipio, and that he threatens to ‘steal the show’ by attracting the attention of Rome’s audience.\(^4\) What is implicit in her claim is, I think, the idea that Hannibal is appropriating Scipio’s glory and praise by infiltrating his triumph and dominating the crowd’s attention. I agree that the conflict between conqueror and conquered, triumph and funeral, praise/glory, and immortality is certainly at the heart of Silius’ construction of his epilogue, but I think the layering of allusive imagery requires us to read the ending in multiple ways.

I argue that additionally the poem ends with Scipio infiltrating and dominating a pseudo-funeral for Hannibal and Carthage, recalling and inverting the way in which Hannibal had earlier insinuated himself into the odd anti-Roman funerals for Paulus, Gracchus, and Marcellus, by leading the rites and appropriating the praise and glory owed to the dead (see 6.2). Hannibal’s *imago* draws the attention of the crowd, detracting from Scipio’s triumph, but it is Scipio in full triumphal regalia who dominates our attention over the final 10 lines of the poem, which equally detracts from our attention to Hannibal’s funereal effigy (17.645-54). Scipio’s triumph is tantamount to *apotheosis*\(^5\) and foreshadows the divinity of future Roman emperors (cf. 3.625-9 of Jupiter’s prophecy of Domitian’s future *apotheosis*). Scipio


\(^5\) So Bassett (1966): 273. The poem ends with a nod to ‘mythologizing’ and Scipio enters a space familiar to readers of Cicero’s *Somnium*. By the poem’s close, Scipio has mastered the realms of Hell, earth, and (through allusion to *apotheosis* here) sky. Silius’ *encomium* of Scipio approximates an *encomium* of a Roman emperor, son-of-a-god: see e.g. Hardie (1993): 39; Bessone (2013b): 90-1.
is Bacchus, Hercules, not inferior in glory (652: laudibus) to Quirinus, or in services (652: meritis) to Camillus, draped in purple and gold, a ‘spectacle’ of military excellence (645-6),\textsuperscript{96} the glory he has gained is ageless (625: mansuri comos decoris per saecula rector).

Scholars have well noted that the last two lines of the Punica echo the final lines of BC 8 and Lucan’s eulogy for Pompey (Pun. 17.653-4): nec uero, cum te memorat de stirpe deorum, | prolem Tarpei, mentitur Roma, Tonantis, ‘Rome tells no lie, when she gives thee a divine origin and calls thee the son of the Thunder-god who dwells on the Capitol’; with BC 8.871-2: atque erit Aegyptus populis forasse nepotum | tam mendax Magni tumulo quam Creta Tonantis, ‘and Egypt in the eyes of the crowds of our descendants will be perhaps | as false about the grave of Magnus as Crete about the Thunderer’s’.\textsuperscript{97} Hannibal had left Zama and the Punica like Pompey fleeing Pharsalus in the opening lines of BC 8, and at the poem’s close Silius alludes to the ending of BC 8, with Pompey now a mutilated corpse receiving a warped burial. But whereas Lucan had construed these lines as a symbol of Pompey’s atemporal, immortal fama as part of his narrator’s laudatio funebris, Silius reassigns/reapplies the lines to Scipio in triumph, usurping the claims to immortality that the intertext ought to be ascribing to (the ‘dead’) Hannibal. This functions as a stunning reversal and appropriation that directly recalls Hannibal’s appropriation of Roman generals’ funeral rites earlier in the poem.

At Liternum in Punica 6, Hannibal had seen images of past Roman victory from the First Punic War against Carthage on the temple there, and imagined future images he himself

\textsuperscript{96} The divine and semi-divine models listed here are nearly identical to the models Virtus urges Scipio to emulate, all (like him) children or grandchildren of Jupiter: Pun. 15.77-83 (Bacchus, Hercules, the Dioscuri, Romulus/Quirinus).

would set up commemorating his victory against Rome in this war. The final scene of Silius’ poem is a recapitulation of the *ekphrasis* from book 6, and functions as another ‘monument’ of the Punic War—a triumph in *ekphrasis* (book 6) replaced by an *ekphrasis* in triumph (book 17)—but one that replays so closely the scenes Hannibal had tried to destroy and replace with his own Carthaginian victory monument.}\(^98\) Like his father Hamilcar, Hannibal’s *imago* attracts the attention of all (*Pun. 6.689-91 ~ 17.643-4*), and a ‘Scipio’ is immortalized for leading the funeral rites over a ‘Carthaginian general’ (6.670-2). Hannibal’s fortunes mirror those of his defeated ancestors as displayed at Liternum, which powerfully contrast his own idealized, but unrealized, imaginary future monument (cf. *Pun. 6.700-13*).

Consider Hannibal’s final imagined scene of future-vision for his Carthaginian monument (6.712-13): *flagrantes effinges facibus, Carthago, Libyssis | Romam et deiectum Tarpeia rupe Tonantem*, ‘you shall display Rome blazing with Libyan fire-brands, and the Thunderer cast down from the Tarpeian rock’. And Hannibal’s aim here becomes something of a theomachic refrain throughout the poem: cf. 10.335-6: *moenia flamma | occupat et iungit Tarpeia incendia Cannis*, ‘he sees…the walls on fire, and makes the burning of the Capitol follow close on Cannae’; 12.516-17: *quam tanti fuerit cadere, ut Palatia cernas | et demigrantem Tarpeia sede Tonantem*, ‘The fall of Capua is a price worth paying, if you see the Palatine Hill and the Thunder-god evicted from his abode on the Capitol’; 17.225-7: *tunc sat compos, qui non ardentia tela | a Cannis in templo tuli Tarpeia Iouemque | detraxi solio?*,

\(^98\) The relationship between the temple *ekphrasis* and the scenes described in Scipio’s parade has received some scholarly attention: see Fowler (1996): 69-70; Marks (2003); Manuwald (2009): 49-50; Stokes (2014): 228-9. Marks (2003) has shown convincingly that the final parade that closes the *Punica* functions as a virtual *ekphrasis* recalling the images on Dido’s temple at Carthage as well as the earlier scenes at Liternum.
‘Was I in my senses then when I failed to carry my fiery weapons from Cannae to the Capitol, and to hurl Jupiter down from his throne?’ (cf. also 15.800-05).

This is Hannibal’s ultimate goal, to burn Rome and throw Jupiter down from the citadel, then immortalize his victory in stone.99 Now recall again the last lines of the poem, the last lines of Silius’ ‘commemoration’ of Scipio triumphator (17.653-4): nec uero, cum te memorat de stirpe deorum, prolem Tarpei, mentitur Roma, Tonantis, ‘Rome tells no lie, when she gives thee a divine origin and calls thee the son of the Thunder-god who dwells on the Capitol’.100 We have seen how Silius usurps the funereal context of these lines (from Pompey in BC 8), superimposing them onto Scipio’s triumph and undermining Hannibal’s pseudo-funeral. But the lines also form a devious intratextual usurpation of Hannibal’s claims to theomachic immortality. The closest he will come to torching Rome and defeating Jupiter is his destruction of the Liternum temple depicting Roman victory, in the line that closes book 6 (6.716): in cineres monumenta date atque inuoluite flammis, ‘throw these pictures into the fire and wrap them in flames’. The poem ends not with Hannibal’s overthrow of Jupiter Tonans and the conflagration of the Capitol, but of Rome’s firm solidification and immortalizing assurance established by the association between Scipio and his divine father Jupiter.

We have to weigh two conflicting commemorative ‘images’ of Hannibal at the poem’s close, both contextually funereal: that of his self-eulogy, depicting eternal fame through fear, outlasting Jupiter’s reign and cosmic ekpyrosis, and of his funeral imago crystalized in shameful flight and defeat over the fields of Zama, in a quasi-funeral pomp

99 The destruction of the Capitol, as metonymy for Rome’s State vitality, is elsewhere conceived of as the aim of foreign ‘invaders’, esp. Cleopatra (e.g. Hor. Carm. 1.37.6-8; Ov. Met. 15.828).
100 Harrison (2009): 288 spots the verbal connection between Pun. 6.713 and 17.654.
through the city he had failed to destroy. This conflict is in large part a product of the clashing of intertextual models aimed at destabilizing our reading of Hannibal and our interpretation of the end of the poem, generally. Especially powerful are the competing allusions between Lucan’s Caesar and Pompey in Silius’ characterization of Hannibal throughout *Punica 17.* Hannibal everywhere battles allegiances to Lucan’s protagonists, in what Marco Fucecchi has described as a ‘pattern of the synchronic coexistence of opposites’.

Broadly speaking, Silius has constructed Hannibal as an epic anti-hero aiming to conquer Rome like Caesar, but fated to failure like Pompey.

Our analysis of Hannibal’s characterization necessitates mediation through Silius’ handling of his nemesis Scipio, and scholars have debated just how positively we should view Scipio as a purveyor of *Romanitas*, of *virtus*, and as something like a proto-*princeps* in the poem as a whole, and in his description in the epilogue in particular. Like reading(s) of Hannibal, not surprisingly arguments have hinged on intertextual allusions pitting ‘positive’ models from earlier epic (and history) against ‘negative’ ones. Hannibal is clearly an enemy of Rome and always by definition a villain, but if we feel a strong urge to read Lucan’s Pompey into his demise, then there must be at least a hint of Lucan’s victorious, villainous Caesar in the Scipio who defeats him.

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101 Fucecchi (1990a) and (2011a) are the most detailed and useful discussions.
104 Direct links between Lucan’s Caesar and Silius’ Scipio have been largely ignored in favor of Caesar’s poetic influence on Silius’ construction of Hannibal. But along with deep intertextual role-playing patterns, cf. e.g. *BC* 5.237ff ~ *Pun.* 17.338-40 (controlling troops); *BC* 2.453-4: *pugetaque minaci | cum terrore fides ~ Pun.* 9.412-13: *aderat terrore minaci | Scipio conuersae miseratus terga cohortis; BC* 1.151-7 ~ *Pun.* 15.404-05, 16.143 (as ‘thunderbolts’); *BC* 10.14-52 ~ *Pun.* 13.762-76 (association with Alexander the Great); *BC* 5.324, 10.346 ~ *Pun.* 17.651 (characterized as ‘inuictus’, with the doubly significant designation of Scipio as *parens*, recalling
I want to end this section, and my discussion of Silius, by looking briefly one more time at the last two lines of the poem. Scipio’s victory over Hannibal and Carthage is symbolized in the *Punica*’s final image by his familial connection to Jupiter and Rome’s control of the Tarpeian rock and the Capitol, the precise features and focal point of Hannibal’s imagined destruction of Rome at Liternum (6.712-13). Hannibal is never able to burn the Capitol and as Jupiter promises Venus, her ‘descendants hold the Tarpeian rock and long shall hold it’ (3.572-3: *tenet longumque tenebit* | *Tarpeias arces sanguis tuus*), looking ahead to Domitianic Rome and Silius’ present.

Jupiter’s prophecy betrays a more disturbing reality of future-history more in line with Hannibal’s unfulfilled wish. Despite the oracular response from Jupiter Ammon claiming that no man will penetrate the guts of Italy more deeply than Hannibal (3.709: *altius Ausoniae penetrare in uiscera gentis*; cf. 1.64, 12.569-70), Jupiter reveals the horrors of the civil war of 68-69 CE following the death of Nero, during which Romans themselves (Vitellians and Flavians) destroyed the Capitol—most importantly the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus—and nearly killed the young future emperor Domitian hiding inside it (3.609-10): *nec te terruerint Tarpei culminis ignes*; | *sacrilegas inter flammas seruabere terris*, ‘The burning of the Tarpeian temple cannot alarm thee; but in the midst of the impious flames thou shalt be saved, for the sake of mankind’.

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105 Cf. the grim overview at Tac. *Hist.* 1.2.2: *et urbs incendis uastata, consumptis antiquissimis delubris, ipso Capitolio ciuium manibus incense*, ‘and the city was wasted by fire, with the most ancient shrines consumed, the Capitol itself torched by citizen hands’, and further at *Hist.* 3.71-4. Stat. *Silv.* 5.3.197: *sacrilegis lucent Capitolia taedis*, ‘the Capitol glows with impious torches’. The destruction was devastating, and clearly had a significant impact on Silius who was in Rome on December 17 when the Capitol was burned (Tac. *Hist.* 3.65.2).
The image of Hannibal penetrating Italy’s guts is a clear allusion to Lucan’s conception of Roman civil war as corporeal evisceration (e.g. *BC* 1.3; 7.221-2, 293-4, 491, 578-80, etc.), and Lucan himself had contrasted the prying sword-hand of Hannibal (and Pyrrhus) with Rome’s more deadly self-inflicted wounds (1.30-2: *non tu, Pyrrhe ferox, nec tantis cladibus auctor* | *Poenus erit: nulli penitus descendere ferro | contigit; alta sedent ciiulis uolnera dextrae*, ‘the author of such a great calamity will prove to be not you, | fierce Pyrrhus, nor the Carthaginian; no foreign sword has ever penetrated | so: it is wounds inflicted by the hand of fellow-citizen that have sunk deep’). By only scratching the surface of Rome’s civic bodily integrity, Hannibal provides a limit to destruction that later Romans aspiring to autocracy will shatter: Hannibal is a model for how a tyrant can conquer Rome, his only problem being paradoxically (and disturbingly) that he is not Roman enough to pull it off. Rome awaits Caesar(s) for Hannibal’s threats to reach fulfillment; what Hannibal could not do in Silius’ poem and in history, Caesars can and did do, in Lucan’s poem, in history. Scipio’s emergence as a proto-*princeps* in the *Punica* sets the ball rolling towards monarchy.  

Scipio’s success in defeating Hannibal in large part derives from his becoming something like another Hannibal—they are interchangeable even (17.401-05)—rejecting the limitations imposed by State authority and the burdens of the divided, fractious consular command of disparate armies that nearly brought about Rome’s defeat in the civil war heavy

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107 The temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus Capitolinus had also burned in 83 BCE when the dictator Sulla stormed across Italy, again during a time of civil war (Tac. 3.72; Plut. *Sull.* 27; App. *B Civ.* 1.86). Jupiter in Silius’ poem refers to the events of 69 CE, but the idea holds firm that only Romans themselves can bring devastation to the Capitol.
imagery of the first half of Silius poem.\textsuperscript{108} By consolidating power in the final five books of the poem (\textit{Pun.} 13-17; a \textit{Scipiad}, as Hardie has it\textsuperscript{109}) Scipio becomes the \textit{unus uir} to challenge Hannibal (e.g. 3.590-1, 17.399) and a paradigm of monarchal leadership. Scipio is a powerful model for future Roman autocracy and this likeness between a ‘monarchal’ Scipio and Rome’s present Flavian monarchs is symbolized by Jupiter’s prophecy which jumps staggeringly from Scipio’s defeat of Hannibal to the exploits of the Flavians, 3.590-629,\textsuperscript{110} erasing the history in between and collapsing the significant temporal distance. But Scipio’s association with monarchy also makes him unavoidably a forerunner of ‘Caesarism’ and all of its negative implications, its dangerous individualism.\textsuperscript{111}

Although Scipio will hold the Capitol at the end of the poem (looking ultimately to Domitian’s rebuilding of the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus after another fire destroyed it in 81 CE), book 16 closed with his willingness to abandon Rome’s walls and temples to Hannibal in order to bring the attack to Carthage (16.690-7: cf. the senators’ fears of leaving Rome unprotected at 16.597-9). There is some obvious grandstanding here as he is attempting to incite the senate to action, but Scipio, taking over Hannibal’s imperative as the ‘invading enemy leader’ when he brings the war to Carthage, does in the end go further even

\textsuperscript{108} E.g. Marks (2010).
\textsuperscript{109} Hardie (1993): 97.
\textsuperscript{110} Marks (2005a): 214-17 sees this somewhat jarring historical compression rightly, I think, as a means of tying Scipio teleologically with the future Roman \textit{principes} of the Flavian period (Domitian in particular): e.g. ‘…compressing or condensing history in this way is meant to add force to the prophecy’s teleological continuity. How better to show us that the past of the Second Punic War and the present of Domitianic Rome are intimately linked than to compress the hundreds of years of history between them into a single hexameter? Indeed, one could argue that getting from point A to point B more directly makes the teleology more convincing’ (214). See contra Kißel (1979): 202-03, who argues that the prophetic portions of Jupiter’s speech related to Domitianic Rome should be ignored or even removed as obligatory panegyric; Wilson (2013) argues similarly, but on the grounds that the \textit{Pun.} is more naturally a Neronian poetic project, and that the panegyric concerning Flavian Rome is a toss-away result of his date of completion. I am not particularly convinced by these arguments.
\textsuperscript{111} See Tipping (2010): 188.
than Hannibal, who had finally, reluctantly left Italy in order to protect his Carthage from destruction (17.170-98). Rome is eventually victorious, but this more and more seems incidental to Scipio’s interest in his own glory and praise,\(^{112}\) reminiscent of Hannibal’s interest in ‘Carthage’s’ victory over Rome. The poem ends with Scipio’s triumph, not Rome’s; Scipio’s fame is raised to the sky through the forward-looking imagery of imperial apotheosis, not Rome’s, reformulating the promise of Silius’ proem (1.1-2: *ordior arma, quibus caelo se gloria tollit* | *Aeneadum*, ‘Here I begin the war by which the fame of the Aeneadae was raised to heaven’).

The conflicting glory of Hannibal and Scipio brings the poem to a close, and casts an eye forward to a future where Rome is ruled by powerful individuals who are in many ways more fully formed versions of the prototypes for monarchy offered by leaders on both sides of the *Punica*. Though Scipio occupies a secure Capitol in the poem’s final image, Hannibal’s eternal/infernal goal of its destruction and conflagration reaches fruition in the civil wars that brought about the establishment of the Flavian dynasty, as presaged by Jupiter in book 3. Silius’ poem ends where Lucan’s begins, anticipating and pre-writing Lucan’s view towards Rome’s self eviscerating internecine madness, more destructive than the worst foreign enemies could bring to the Capitol. Scipio anticipates Rome’s *principes*, but so too does Hannibal, and both combine to form a frightening image of the downside to future Caesarism. While relative peace may have allowed Silius’ Flavian panegyric to sit more

comfortably with his Roman audience, the cost of that peace could never be far from the surface.
CHAPTER 7

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

*Hippolytus:* ‘*Vultures*’.

*(He manages a smile.)*

‘If there could have been more moments like this’.

*(Hippolytus dies. A vulture descends and begins to eat his body.)*

—Sarah Kane, Phaedra’s Love

This dissertation represents the most detailed and complete examination of the maltreatment of the dead in Roman epic poetry. It has been my aim to track the generic development of corpse maltreatment in epic from Homer’s *Iliad* through the Flavian poems of Silius and Statius, focusing in particular on the post-Augustan epicists’ ingenuity in adapting and reworking this major motif. I have achieved this by focusing specifically on the figure of the corpse as a crucial ‘character’ in these poems with a valuable *post mortem* existence that demands analysis. My study demonstrates that corpses and corpse abuse are central obsessions in the poems of Lucan, Statius and Silius. I thus offer a major reorientation to scholarship on these texts, which to date has neglected this important phenomenon.

Chapter 2 on Homer and Virgil revealed cracks and fissures in the narrative structure of these poems in terms of the treatment of the dead that become entry points for exploration in Lucan, Statius, and Silius. I argued that Homer and Virgil, in unique but relatable ways, place a definable limit on expressions of violence and cruelty in war. Death is viewed as a limit to the application of violence which should not be breached, and even in examples in these poems when this limit is pushed or ruptured, the poets provide their own checks upon this system of abuse. I have argued that the post-Augustan epicists explode this system of limitation by championing a poetics of excessive violence, cruelty, and boundary breaking.
The unresolved tensions in the earlier epics related to corpse maltreatment offered the imperial epicists a fertile avenue for investigation and poetic expansion.

This ‘attack’ upon the refusal to countenance corpse abuse in Homer and Virgil emerges most directly where there are explicit points of contact between the texts. Chapter 3 examined the most brutal form of corpse maltreatment in these poems: decapitation and the further physical abuse leveled against a severed head. I argued that Lucan, Statius, and Silius target model scenes of violence and/or implied abuse in Homer and Virgil and push these models past the limits placed in the earlier texts. The abuses that in Homer and Virgil are nearly always unfulfilled or relegated to narrative silence are foregrounded as focal points for extended narrative in the later epics, and this form of grisly abuse takes center stage. This intertextual engagement works deviously and multidirectionally, since it imposes upon the earlier scene (in Homer and/or Virgil) a new reading or retelling with added elements of perversion generally excised in the original, as well as supplying a classic epic framework for a new narrative context, then promptly blowing the framework apart.

In chapters 4, 5, and 6 I examined in detail post-Augustan epic’s obsession with burial rites and corpse treatment. I have demonstrated that the poets display a fascination with burial distortion, perversion, and open rejection, and that even in cases where funerals are provided the epicists warp the sentiments of these rites. I argued provocatively that these poets infuse their epic universes with the stain of death, and that characters take on the features of corpses living out extended death rituals; there is in these poems the insistence of death ‘infecting’ or ‘invading’ life and the living. This confusion of the boundary between life and death complicates funeral observance, which by definition is predicated on an understanding of death as a discernible finality. Apart from aesthetic considerations, I have
shown that this poetic trope serves as a reflection of and upon contemporary Roman society, autocracy and tyranny, delusions of the imperial ideology of a restored res publica, and fears of repetitive cycles of civil war and its resultant violence and abuses. Lucan’s role here is key, as he forms a bridge between the old guard and the new (as similarly he has provided the main pivot for my analyses here). I have demonstrated not just the influence of his masterpiece on the Flavian epicists, who embraced the Bellum Civile as a fully canonical text, but also his importance as a voice of political dissent through his challenge to Roman (Neronian) autocracy. We can (and should) just as fruitfully speak about the Epic Successors of Lucan, as we similarly follow Hardie’s powerful framework for the subsequent poetic import of Virgilian dynamism.

A brief overview of the Roman epicists shows that Virgil had constructed a war epic that symbolically identified death and killing as a necessary product of political advancement: the death of the Republic ‘birthed’ the Augustan principate. Death brings the possibility of rebirth, and this is demonstrated most emphatically in the underworld scene in book 6 when Aeneas views, with his dead and buried father Anchises, the unborn future-souls of Roman future-history.¹ By contrast, Ovid avoided the issue of death and rebirth, and issues related to the establishment of monarchy, altogether when he structured the Metamorphoses around, not death and rebirth, but ‘transformation’. The specifically Roman material in books 14 and 15 is structured around the Pythagorean insistence that ‘everything changes, nothing dies’ (15.165: omnia mutantur, nihil interit). Julius Caesar’s physical death is elided by the singular importance of his deification and his passing of the torch through his

¹ This is also clear when Hector’s ghost entrusts Aeneas with the legacy of Troy in book 2, in book 5 where the death of Palinurus is a sacrifice of ‘one for many’, and in Aeneas’ killing of Turnus at the close of the epic.
divinity to Augustus in another series of transformations (15.745-870). What Lucan, Statius, and Silius, the three poets considered in this dissertation, have done is re-emphasize the important role of death in epic, but instead of articulating this as a necessary end for (productive, positive) future rebirth, the deaths provide a ‘metamorphic’ extension of death and dying that complicates and disrupts issues of funeral observance and corpse treatment. Burial rites in these poems come too soon, too late, or not at all, in conjunction with the demarcation of death which has failed.

Many of the ideas I have presented here leave room for further development, and it is my hope that I have provided considerable groundwork for future studies. For one, I explored the phenomenon of post mortem bodily function in these poems in some depth here, specifically as it applies to individual characters in the poems displaying corpse-like features and living beyond the limits of death. Still, I have only touched on the variety, ingenuity, and absurdity of this motif.

Beyond the examples I have detailed, still more disturbing cases abound in these poems: a trumpeter and guitarist sound musical death-notes (Pun. 4.167-74; Theb. 10.304-10, 11.55-6); a fighter continues running after his head has been removed (Pun. 13.244-8); a headless trunk rides on into battle (Pun. 15.726-9). Soldiers are packed so densely that they do not fall forward in death, but as corpses stand erect in formation (BC 4.780-7; Pun. 4.553, 9.321-2), and corpses steer ships during naumachiae (BC 3.592-9; Pun. 14.532-8). The mass and dumb-weight of the dead crush opponents (BC 2.201-06, 6.169-72); they attack and stab opponents unwittingly with severed sword-hands and spears protruding from their pierced chests (Theb. 8.441-44; Pun. 9.385-91, 7.621-30). These phenomena all demand further study.
Another fruitful avenue for future investigation involves the related *post mortem* function of severed limbs. This motif is popular in Roman epic, though it has not received an enormous amount of scholarly attention.\(^2\) This list (by no means exhaustive) provides a taste of the variety of the post-Augustan epicists’ interest in the motif. We see hewn hands continue to grasp objects (*BC* 3.609-13, 3.661-8, 6.174-6; *Theb.* 8.441-4, 9.266-9; *Pun.* 1.347-8, 4.208-12, 4.385-9, 14.489-91, 16.66-7); heads mumble and eyes dart or stare after death or decapitation (*BC* 8.669-84; *Theb.* 7.644-6, 8.751-6; *Pun.* 5.331-2, 5.413-19, 15.467-70), while a severed tongue twitches (*BC* 2.181-2). Again, the abundance of material dedicated to this motif betrays an obsession in these works with disrupting the limitations posed by death and exploring the fine line between living and dying.

Most importantly, I hope to have offered a variety of new insights into and new readings of many familiar, and some less familiar, passages in these poems. By zooming in on a motif that has received little scholarly interest—and worse, often, derision, as an expression of grotesque imperial decadence—I have shown that Lucan, Statius, and Silius invest an extraordinary amount of meaning, both poetic and political, in the motif of corpse maltreatment. The abuses dealt to corpses in these poems are staggeringly violent; they are definitively and pointedly ‘horrific’, in the way that Cavarero articulates it. But where Cavarero’s theory focuses on death as the endpoint for the application of violence, this dissertation shows that there is plenty of scope for horrorism beyond the point of death.

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\(^2\) Dinter (2012): 37-49 offers the most detailed examination (see his notes for further bibliography), though his discussion ends with Lucan, with no mention of Silius or Statius.
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