Anatomizing Civil War

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Anthropologically cultural memory stems from the remembrance of the dead. This means the obligation of relatives to remember the names of their dead and to hand them down to posterity eventually. Remembrance of the dead has a religious and a profane aspect, which manifest as “pietas” and “fama” respectively. Piety means the duty of the descendants to keep honoring the memory of the dead. By definition piety has to be performed by others, can only be provided by the living for the dead. Fama, however, in the sense of lasting glory, can to a certain degree be taken care of in one’s lifetime. Fama is a secular form of self-memorialization, which has much to do with staging one’s self. Christianity has largely overshadowed the ancient concern for lasting glory among posterity with its concern for the salvation of the soul at Judgment Day.¹

As we have seen in the previous chapter, Lucan’s epic body is tied together by a wealth of body imagery. In addition Lucan’s writing also reveals his care for himself and his epic body in line with the “ancient concern for lasting glory.” This chapter will further explore which role in Lucan’s epic technique is played by Fama, whose cultural history is analyzed in this chapter’s epigraph. This is, however, merely one side of the multifaceted Fama, whose name in modern English translates not only as fame, glory and renown but also as rumor, report,

tradition, and narration. Lucan works hard to make himself part of Fama so as to cement his lasting glory, and so do the protagonists of his epic. In addition, however, he also employs Fama’s other side by introducing narratives with the formula (ut) fama est “as the traditional story goes” or—showing a more active Fama—fama ferebat “rumor has it.” In this way she plays an important part in Lucan’s epic technique and becomes a directing force in his epic.

There has been much scholarly lament over Lucan’s fragmentary and fragmented story-line, a feature that has certainly contributed to the perception of the Bellum Civile as a wild, untamed opus. However, Lucan must have been aware that he would need to maintain the momentum of his epic—to give it impetus but also, most important, to keep the reader under his spell. Marti has pointed out that the poet gains credibility thanks to his historical subject matter, but “he loses in the absence of suspense; . . . in order to arouse a strong desire and expectation that some unforeseen development may occur, the poet must find other devices.”

Lucan had to bring together the many episodes, the many voices of his epic, into a wider frame. He needed to find a unifying concept that would allow him to incorporate so many sources of information and so many perspectives without letting his work fall apart. In what follows I shall suggest that one of the threads that pull the reader through the epic and simultaneously account for suspense and the unexpected is the application of Rumor/Fama in many different forms and on many different levels. This creates a conscious discourse on the reliability of sources, on knowledge and on what we thought we knew for sure.

Masters has pointed out the dichotomy between fas and nefas in the Bellum Civile and shown how Lucan again and again measures against each other the urge to tell and the horror of the unspeakable. The topos of speaking while not telling anything, or telling much without having a voice, seems central to the first book of the epic. As this book has to establish two of the epic’s main characters and foreshadows much of the story yet to come, it is obliged to give away information. Those who speak about nefas (sacrilege), however, contaminate themselves; accordingly many who in fact have knowledge prefer to remain silent (Arruns at BC 1.637–38). Moreover, while some voices tell us things seemingly irrelevant (the catalog of foreign peoples at BC 1.396–465), others are too scared to speak. Dead silence thus frames the speech of the men of Ariminum (BC 1.244–61).

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4. Masters 1992, 9. Romans derived fas and nefas from fari (to speak); dies fasti are “days on which it is allowed to speak” (dies quibus fari licet, Varro Ling. 6.29); cf. Feeney 1992.
5. Cf. BC 1.247 and 1.257–59. The following simile in BC 1.259–61 features the silence of land and
and silenced telling, I will demonstrate that Rumor plays an important part in Lucan’s epic technique and allows him to build up a crescendo of things unspeakable (nefanda).

Already at the very beginning of the poem Lucan connects his programmatic opening phrase “of wars we sing” (bella . . . canimus, BC 1.1–2) with “universal guilt” (in commune nefas, 1.6). This makes clear that the reader should not expect to find any constitutive or constructive elements here, unlike in parts of Virgil’s Aeneid. Lucan goes on to stage the nefas (sacrilege) of civil war as a topos hard to describe in rational terms; together with the many paradoxes he employs this creates a nimbus of irrationality. Frequent authorial questions that remain unanswered endorse the impression that we cannot know everything, cannot face every aspect of Roman civil war. Confirmation of this is also found in Lucan’s sudden retreat into silence at BC 7.552–56, culminating in tacebo (I shall not tell, BC 7.556) and his transposition of excessively violent scenes onto earlier conflicts under Sulla and Marius (BC 2) or the “outlandish” sea battle against Greek-founded Massilia (BC 3). By conducting civil war, however, the Romans have forfeited knowledge, not power, as they miss out on the chance to discover the source of the Nile. This exploit is of such importance to Caesar that he even contemplates abandoning civil war for it.

The prologue also shows us what “crimes and guilt” (scelera ista nefasque, BC 1.37) were for. All this was done for you, Nero (BC 1.45). In this respect civil war brought Rome its emperors and smoothed the way for Nero, who will preside as muse over the poet’s work and serve as substitute for the gods Apollo and Bacchus (BC 1.64–65). Nonetheless Nero does not open up hidden secrets or provide access to knowledge closed off to us, as Apollo would do. Instead he provides creative power only (vires, BC 1.66).

Thus by the time we arrive at the introduction of the two main protagonists of civil war, Caesar and Pompey, the concept of scire nefas (BC 1.127), of “forbidden knowledge,” has already been spelled out.

At this point Fama, translatable as both Fame and Rumor, makes her debut (BC 1.131). Lucan employs her to measure up the two contestants against each other. Pompey is introduced as a fame-addict who lives a quasi-theatrical life of idle staginess but holds a mighty name. In contrast Caesar is characterized

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6. There is, in addition, also a tradition of nefas (sacrilege) in the fraternal strife that bloodies the foundation myth of Rome (BC 1.92–97).
7. Cf. sub iuga . . . gens si qua lacet nascenti conscia Nilo (Beneath your yoke could have come the race, if it exists, that knows Nile’s birth, BC 1.19–20).
8. Cf. spes sit mihi certa videndi / Niliacos fontes, bellum civile relinquam (Let me have a hope assured of seeing the springs of Nile, and I will abandon civil war, BC 10.191–92).
9. Cf. famaeque petitor (a seeker of fame, BC 1.131), plausuque sui gaudere theatri (rejoicing in
by not only having a reputation but also the primal energy to match it.\textsuperscript{10} Immediately afterward \textit{Fama} begins her work. By giving a voice to latent feelings and dragging to light some of the underlying causes for war, she starts to spin her web of “further voices” in the \textit{Bellum Civile (BC 1.159)}.\textsuperscript{11}

\textit{Fama} often functions in \textit{analepsis} as record keeper of past fame who spreads stories of earlier times. But she can also be employed proleptically in the shape of a report or rumor: “Report can run ahead of an event: in the historians \textit{fama} of an approaching army may arrive before the army itself.”\textsuperscript{12} Frequently \textit{Fama} also functions as a powerful “Grossmacher” (enlarger) expanding and broadening what she has to tell.\textsuperscript{13} We see this exemplified in the \textit{Bellum Civile} when false \textit{fama}, empty rumor, proves to be Caesar’s mightiest weapon, when augmenting genuine fears (\textit{BC 1.469}). Here \textit{Fama} reveals one of her characteristic features: “she unlocks countless tongues to utter false assertions” (\textit{BC 1.472}), which leads to a quick increase in the scope of the rumors spread (\textit{BC 1.485}). These rumors finally leave Rome in a state of panic and cause a mass exodus of her inhabitants (\textit{BC 1.486–93}). Caesar’s fame has multiplied, becomes stronger and stronger, and now haunts the \textit{caput mundi} (head of the world), troubling both Rome and Pompey (\textit{BC 2.573–74}). Even Pompey’s self-appraisal (\textit{BC 2.582–92}) in which he deploys his own fame does not manage to overcome the vague rumors about Caesar’s military advance. It seems that the more indistinct a rumor the more powerful it becomes, as an already anxious mind empowers it with the worst things imaginable.

In the end triumph is granted to Caesar’s \textit{Fama} when Pompey decides to withdraw his army: “a force already overcome by rumor about Caesar as yet unseen” (\textit{iam victum fama non visi Caesaris agmen, BC 2.600}). Nevertheless, Pompey as well manages to take advantage of his own fame and links it with that of Rome.

\textit{Euphraten Nilumque move, quo nominis usque
nostri fama venit, quas est volgata per urbes
post me Roma ducem.}

\textsuperscript{applause in the theater he had built, 1.133); stat magni nominis umbra (he stands, the shadow of a great name, 1.135). On Pompey’s theatricality cf. Leigh 1997, 114.}
\textsuperscript{10. Cf. sed non in Caesare tantum / nomen erat nec \textit{fama} ducis sed nescia virtus / stare loco (Caesar had not only a general’s name and reputation, but never resting energy, \textit{BC 1.143–44}). Nevertheless with growing renown he acquires the same weakness for fame. At Troy he is a \textit{mirator famae} (\textit{BC 9.961}).}
\textsuperscript{11. Cf. Lyne 1987 for the slogan. I will follow up some hidden voices in detail in an analysis of \textit{BC 1} below.}
\textsuperscript{12. Hardie 2009, 557.}
[Stir up Euphrates and Nile, as far as my name's fame has reached, through cities in which Rome became renowned through my command.] (BC 2.633–35)

We will observe this technique of tapping into larger fame, of linking a person's repute with wider issues, in Lucan himself when he steps forward at two occasions to secure his poetic afterlife. Lucan explicitly knots together Caesar's fame with his own and styles himself as a new Homer who has found his Achilles in Caesar (BC 9.982–85). Together Lucan and Caesar double their chances: the Bellum Civile will be read in future times because of its famous subject and/or because of the famous author. In a previous instance Lucan displays an equally high level of self-consciousness. In BC 7 Lucan demonstrates his awareness that he is writing history and builds up interdependence between his subject matter and his writings. Accordingly each will help the other's lasting fame.

haec et apud seras gentes populosque nepotum
sive sua tantum venient in saecula *fama*
*sive aliquid magnis nostri quoque cura laboris*
nominibus prodesse potest . . .

[Even among later races and the people of posterity, these events— whether they come down to future ages by their own fame alone or whether my devotion also and my toil can do anything for mighty names . . .] (BC 7.207–10)

In BC 7, a book whose content in many respects would be expected to constitute the climax of the Bellum Civile, this is the only instance of the word *fama*. On the one hand this is the morphological consequence of treating a subject that does not allow those involved in actual fighting to win any glory. Civil war must only gain fame through its historical importance and its narrator's art (and vice versa, so Lucan hopes). On the other hand it is in the end the poet Lucan himself who controls the flux of fame in his epic. He can distribute it in theory—and in practice as the examples of characters such as Scaeva and Vulteius show—*ad libitum*. 14 Lucan has recognized that Fama can work both inside his epic for his characters and outside his epic for the narrator. He secures the lion's share by placing himself in the epic's center, by writing himself into his epic and by linking his fate to its fate. He makes himself part of his liter-

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ary corpus and will—so he hopes—keep alive his name. The *Bellum Civile* will propagate if not guarantee his fame long after his death. As a result Lucan writes his own monument with verve and passion. With polished *sententiae* and rhetorical splendor he shines his literary tombstone. Rhetoric reaches new dimensions if you compose for your own afterlife. Consequently, the case that this epic pleads comes across as that of Lucan himself. As the *Bellum Civile* remains Lucan’s last and probably unfinished opus, his personal voice in the narrative bestows an epitaphic gesture on the entire epic that serves as his monument.\(^\text{15}\)

To sum up, even the few examples discussed so far have established the importance of *Fama* in Lucan’s epic. We shall find the main protagonists (and the author) in everlasting attempts to outdo one another’s fame. Lucan’s discourse on *Fama*, however, also provides insights into further aspects of the workings of fame. Having confronted us with Pompey’s static and Caesar’s fast-growing reputation, both already in existence but so very different, Lucan also shows us *Fama*’s beginnings. As with *Aeneid* 4, *BC* 4 in particular has rich offerings for the reader on the lookout for *Fama*. Here Vulteius persuades his men to enact collective suicide. Their death is virtuous and largely motivated by their hope of gaining fame (*quo plus habeat mors unica famae* “so that our unique death would grow with fame,” *BC* 4.509)—even though it constitutes a *mise en abyme*, a self-reflexive embedding of a small version of civil war into the larger civil war context.\(^\text{16}\) We are allowed to witness the self-construction of a reputation, a deathly do-it-yourself, that leads to the dawn of fame. Soon ever-increasing *Fama* runs through the world to spread acclaim and glory, for once praising those truly virtuous *nullam maiore locuta est / ore ratem totum discurrens Fama per orbem* (*Fame running through all the world spoke of no raft with a louder voice,* *BC* 4.573–74).\(^\text{17}\)

*Fama* as “tradition” is frequently linked to “places of memory.”\(^\text{18}\) Lucan confronts us with two such places that bear their very own connotations and are inhabited by and overloaded with their own rumors and reputations: Troy and Libya. Both appear in *BC* 9, the book with the highest density of the word *fama*. In addition Lucan also allows us a short glimpse of Athens’s fame: now itself a shadow of a great name like Pompey, it constitutes a miniature on the rise and

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15. The habit of self-memorialization runs in Lucan’s family. Ker 2009 has explored the modes of (self-)representation and the literary traces of the death of Seneca.

16. Dällenbach 1989, 8 offers the definition that “a ‘mise en abyme’ is any aspect enclosed within a work that shows similarity with the work that contains it.”

17. Eldred 2002, 76 takes a distinctly negative stance on Vulteius’s fame, which I do not share. In the case of Scaeva, however, Lucan explicitly distances himself. Contrast *infelix, quanta dominum virtute parasti* (Unhappy man! with such enormous valor you bought a master! *BC* 6.262) with *BC* 4.575–77.

fall of fame and fortune (BC 5.52).\textsuperscript{19} A further place that has acquired its own reputation is the Massilian grove.\textsuperscript{20} Caesar has it cut down when the Massilians remain entirely unimpressed by his fame.\textsuperscript{21} He thereby subsumes local \textit{Fama} to ensure his own preeminence, for in Caesar’s world, in a world that is his, there is to be no fame but Caesar’s. In addition, the Massilian trees have also been interpreted as a literary forest, standing in for the literary tradition—a tradition that Lucan demonstratively has chopped down to build his own reputation as epic poet.\textsuperscript{22} What is more, the Massilians are about to win fame of their own through their heroic sea battle. Pompey and the senate will later acknowledge the Massilians’ deeds and have them remembered by honoring their metropolis Phocis with freedom (BC 5.53).

However, returning to BC 4 we encounter a further instance of \textit{Fama} in Lucan’s excursus on the giant Antaeus—whose genealogy according to Hardie defines him as a localized version of \textit{Fama}. \textit{Fama} and Antaeus are both late births of Mother Earth. Thus with respect to \textit{fuit terrarum gloria} (his mother’s pride, BC 4.595) Hardie coins the designation \textit{Fama Telluris} (Fame of the Earth) for him. Antaeus’s firm-rootedness, however, puts him in contrast with the unlocatable Ovidian \textit{Fama}, whom Lucan employs as a narratological device to direct his narrative. She calls Hercules to Libya “to confront a double of the Virgilian \textit{Fama},” \textit{fama mali} (rumor of evil).\textsuperscript{23}

\begin{quote}
tandum volgata cruenti

\textit{fama mali [ . . . ]}

\textit{magnanimum Alciden Libycas excivit in oras.}

[At last the rumor of the blood-stained evil spread and summoned to the shores of Libya great-hearted Hercules.] (BC 4.608–10).
\end{quote}

In this way Lucan brings together two mighty foes to fight it out. We witness how Hercules, who sides with Pompey as his divine patron and inspires his motto at Pharsalus, fights Antaeus, an aggressive, fast, and forever regrowing version of \textit{Fama}. When interpreting this fight of two \textit{Magni} (heavyweights) as a mirror passage of the battle at Pharsalus, we should also notice the parallels

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{19} Cf. Feeney 1986a, 240. Athens, already a shadow of former glory, also occurs in the catalog of Pompey’s forces (BC 3.181–83). In addition Athens is spurned by Alexander the Great as a realm too small (BC 10.29). Even faded fame permeates the epic.

\textsuperscript{20} Cf. \textit{iam fama ferebat} (now it was rumored, BC 3.417). Cf. Masters 1992, 5 n. 12 on the epic \textit{iam}. Cf. Lebek 1976, 116 on the creation of a \textit{Zustand} (fact) by using adverbs like \textit{iam} at the beginning of a sentence.

\textsuperscript{21} Cf. \textit{cumque alii famae populi terrore paverent} (though other people [but not the Massilians] cowered in terror at his [Caesar’s] name, BC 3.300).

\textsuperscript{22} Cf. Leigh 1999 on deforestation and Hinds 1998, 12–14 on poetic “intertextual” forests.

\textsuperscript{23} Hardie 2008, 318.
\end{footnotesize}
with Pompey’s battle against Caesar’s reputation. On this reading strategy, Lucan’s mythological excursus provides us with a new perspective on the nature of the conflict between our two Roman leaders.

We can register a similar impact of Fama on the epic plot when Caesar is set on the defeated Pompey’s track “with rumor as his guide” (fama duce, BC 9.953). When Caesar is attracted by the ancient city’s renown, Fama also seduces him to a side trip to Troy: Caesar’s shows himself as mirator famae (admirer of glory, BC 9.961). Shortly afterward not only Caesar’s interest in Pompey but also his concern for his own reputation leads him on to Egypt. Caesar acknowledges and exemplifies Fama’s workings when he tells the wise man Acoreus: “For sure, I was brought to Pharos’s cities by report about my son-in-law, but still report about you, too” (fama quidem generi Pharias me duxit ad urbes / sed tamen et vestri, BC 10.184–85). As before in Thessaly, where Erictho and Pompey’s son are destined to meet through Fama’s designs (BC 6.570), here again Fama has directed a protagonist toward a knowledge figure, the priest Acoreus. As we have seen, Fama has the power to move people—the prime example being “even Eastern retreats were roused by rumor of war” (movit et Eoos bellorum fama recessus, BC 3.229), which is followed by a catalog of foreign tribes, set in motion. Fama manifests this power by causing protagonists to react to hearsay regardless of what source this stems from. She thus serves as one of Lucan’s favorite narratological devices for directing a plot in which neither reliable sources nor reliable knowledge can be found.

Let me return to BC 4 once more, where we bear witness to yet another micro-image of civil war, when Curio and Iuba, deputies of Caesar and Pompey, restage between themselves their leaders’ contest. Here again Fama plays a decisive role. Initially she causes Curio to tremble before mere hearsay, which prompts him to act (BC 4.694). The result is successful at first: Varus is defeated. When this defeat is reported back to Iuba, however, the king seizes the opportunity to enlarge his fame. By attempting to tame his fame, by trying to silence rumor, lest it scare away the enemy, Iuba does something unique to the entire epic (obscuratque suam per iussa silentia famam “and he [Juba] veils

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24. There are of course multiple subtexts. Ahl 1972 points to Virgil’s Hercules and Cacus episode. Martindale 1981 sees Hercules’ role as Stoic exemplum undermined and mythology subordinated to Lucan’s history of civil war. Saylor 1982 identifies both Curio and Juba with Antaeus.

25. Cf. vertissem Latias a vestro litore proras:/ famae cura vetat (I should have turned my Latian prows from your shore: regard for my reputation stops me, BC 9.1079–80).

26. As exemplified by Masters 1992, 134 on Appius and the Delphic oracle: “Nowhere is exactly, pointedly, defiantly, where the episode goes, and that at great length.”

Fama knows so much more but there is no time to tell it all. Cf. BC 2.672 on Xerxes bridging the Hellespont; BC 3.215 on Ninos, famous for having been the capital of Assyria in the past; and BC 3.220 on the invention of the alphabet.

27. These news arrive not unlike a rumor without mention of source or messenger (BC 4.715–16).
report of his approach by imposing silence,” *BC* 4.718). This results nevertheless in increasing his fame yet again. The Curio episode in *BC* 4 serves accordingly not only as a micro-image of civil war but also exemplifies once more that *Fama* can be a man’s mightiest weapon and that the rivalry for fame between the epic’s main protagonists, Caesar and Pompey, is played out at many different levels. Characteristically, then, when the two big names, Caesar and Pompey, finally meet in Illyria, they are first referred to not by name but instead simply as being famous: “this was the place where Fortune matched two names of fame so great” (*hoc Fortuna loco tantae duo nomina famae / composit, BC* 5.468–69). At this point in the epic the reader can be expected to have realized whom this must mean.28 The Curio episode also foreshadows the outcome of the ongoing competition between Caesar and Pompey. Curio is granted fame even though he lies unburied, a topos we encounter again on a larger scale at the death of Pompey.29

As we have seen, Caesar in particular engages with *Fama* and employs his reputation successfully in the first half of the epic. Throughout *BC* 8, however, Pompey gradually intensifies his relationship with her. Accordingly his death forms simultaneously both climax and finale in the construction of his renown.30

In *BC* 8 *Fama* becomes as much danger and burden for Pompey as she has previously been honor and weapon for Caesar. She turns against Pompey and those he loves. On Pompey’s flight from Pharsalus his bygone fame becomes a threat (*BC* 8.10–12). For a moment Pompey even seems to have lost his *Fama*, as he speeds along faster than her in his flight. The people he meets have not yet heard of his defeat: *nondum fama prodente ruinas* (when rumor had not yet disclosed his fall, *BC* 8.15). Temporarily Pompey thus has to take over *Fama*’s role and spread the news among those passing by (*cladisque suae vix ipse fidelis / auctor erat* “and he scarcely was believed when he himself reported his defeat,” *BC* 8.17–18). Only too soon, however, *Fama* catches up. Now fortune has turned against Pompey and his defeat is aggravated by his fame.31 All of a sudden Pompey longs to be unknown, only a name—any name.32

Before pursuing Pompey’s *Fama* further let me examine her relations with his devoted wife, Cornelia. Having styled herself an Alcyone figure who awaits report about her husband while anxiously patrolling the shores, Cornelia fears nothing as much as bad news (*BC* 5.774–75, 5.778–81, and 8.51–52). In the end she learns of Pompey’s fate not through words but rather by seeing her de-

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28. Cf. Feeney 1986a on the constant play with the title *Magnus* in the *Bellum Civile*.
29. Cf. *BC* 4.810–13 and *nil ista noccebunt famae busta tuae* (in no way will that grave [i.e., the fact that you don’t have one] impair your fame, *BC* 8.858–59).
feated husband: for once Fama has spared her. Pompey for his part, although still alive, has survived himself and has become a walking corpse. When the couple are finally reunited, Pompey bestows both his proximity to death and his fame upon Cornelia. Her deathlike fainting (BC 8.56–60) stands in for the death she desires, as she is destined to survive her husband (BC 8.60–61). Pompey then in finest epic fashion makes her a monument, a memento of his fame: *habes aditum mansurae in saecula famae* (you have an avenue to fame that will endure for centuries, BC 8.74). Accordingly she will one day be renowned as “the former wife of Magnus” and become his living tombstone. Invested with Pompey’s fame, Cornelia becomes a mouthpiece of Fama, echoing “Magnus” back to Pompey. She mirrors Pompey’s language by using *Magnus* twice at the beginning of a verse (BC 8.102 and 8.105), while he uses it twice as a verse ending (BC 8.80 and 8.84). Thereby she reinstates and reconfirms him in his title of honor. Having secured his own afterlife, Pompey wins back his self-confidence and starts to employ his fame and name to best advantage: *sed me vel sola tueri / fama potest rerum [. . .] et nomen* (But even on its own the fame of my achievements and my name can keep me safe, BC 8.274–76). For the moment Pompey seems right back in Fama’s favor. His retrospect remarks on his former greatness (BC 8.316–21), however, are preceded by an epitaphic gesture (BC 8.314–16) that pictures Pompey lying dead in foreign lands and sets Magnus on track toward posthumous fame. It comes as no surprise, then, that we encounter Fama, and a final spurt toward her, at the very end of Pompey’s life in BC 8.

As if to provide a foil of contrast for Pompey’s good reputation, his murderer is loaded with disrepute, the Fama of nefas (sacrilege). Lucan marks Septimius as embodiment of nefas, of all that is unspeakable (BC 8.608–9). Accordingly the poet cannot find a name for the ultimate sacrilege Septimius is about to commit and cloaks it in rhetorical questions (BC 8.609–10). In contrast, Pom-


34. Cf. Hector’s words to Andromache that she will be remembered as his wife (Il. 6.459–61). She fulfills precisely this role when she reappears in the Aeneid (3.303–4) honoring his cenotaph. Pompey’s words thus fit the pattern. Cf. also *nunc sum tibi gloria maior* (Now I bring you greater glory, BC 8.78). Claassen 1999, 121–22 points out Ovid’s attempts to utilize his wife when exiled.

35. Nevertheless she already has—as Pompey rightly remarks—her own “female” fame won through lineage (BC 8.72–74). Cornelia’s fame—in opposition to Pompey’s—is of a passive nature and not won through deeds (BC 8.75). Pompey’s active fame, too, as soon as it is transferred onto Cornelia, will be transformed into a passive one as she wins it by marriage only (BC 8.76). Nevertheless this gift could also generate her doom as she might turn into a trophy wife for Eastern kings (BC 8.413).

In contrast Caesar’s companion Cleopatra possesses a more active fame. Readers of Lucan must have been well aware of her role in both Roman and (Judeo-)Egyptian propaganda. She carries very much her own story. Cf. Volkmann 1958, 158 (“Octavian’s propaganda brought Cleopatra into the foreground and made her the real adversary”) and Clauss 1995, 57 on the programmatic naming of Cleopatra’s children, 69 for her appearance on Roman coins and 79 on Sib. Or. 3.
pey’s death is defined by his determination to coin his posthumous reputation. To die bravely is his last obligation in life but also his last chance to exert any influence over his fame: *nunc consule famae* (think now of your fame, BC 8.624). Accordingly, he stages his death as a Stoic spectacle to be marveled at by his son and wife: *natus coniunxque peremptum / si mirantur, amant* (my son and wife, if they admire me in death, love me, BC 8.634–35). Pompey willingly silences his own voice lest it interfere with his everlasting fame: *ne quas effundere voces / vellet et aeternam fletu corrumpere famam* (lest he break into speech and mar his eternal fame with tears, BC 8.616–17). Again he shifts death onto his wife, who faints in deathlike manner after delivering a tragic monologue. Even as a dead body Pompey has some fame to bestow. This time it goes to Cordus, who though mentioned only once in the entire epic (BC 8.715) nevertheless earns eternal fame for providing Pompey with burial (*quo te Fama loquax omnes aceptit in annos* “for this, loquacious fame has welcomed you for all the years to come,” BC 8.782). Surprisingly Lucan makes a positive of the shabbiness of Pompey’s tomb (BC 8.859). It will vanish even faster and thus smooth the way for Pompey’s posthumous omnipresence. BC 8 thus constitutes a crescendo of *Fama*, not unlike thunder growing louder as it approaches. It takes the reader through the entire spectrum of fame from a humbled Pompey on the run at the entrée of the book to a Pompey on his way to eternal fame at its curtain.

Meanwhile the whereabouts of Pompey’s severed head soon instigate rumors and succeed in creating *Fama*. Cornelia now fulfills her designated role and carries on Pompey’s fame after his death. When she delivers his last will, the frame of her speech makes clear that this is now her only reason for living (BC 9.85–86 and 9.98–100). His fame thus lives on and is by itself sufficient to rally an army. It remains Pompey’s most powerful weapon. Moreover thanks to gentilician nomenclature, which makes sons perpetuate their father’s name, Pompey literally leaves his name to his sons. In this way they are able to capitalize on it for fresh ventures: *inveniet classes quisquis Pompeius in undas veniet* (whichever Pompey comes onto waves will find a fleet, BC 9.93–94).

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36. Cf. Leigh 1997, 183 n. 36. The notion of Pompey’s death as spectacle reappears in Ptolemy’s (BC 8.687) and Caesar’s (9.1035) gazing at his head.

37. Cf. BC 8.661–62. Cf. *labor* OLD (7) and *rapitur* cf. OLD (5) for the vocabulary of death in these verses.

38. Cf. 8.865–72. Pompey thus equals Caesar’s appearance at Pharsalus, and later in Egypt (BC 10.488), which creates “den verschwommenen Eindruck einer Allgegenwart” (Glaesser 1984, 63–64).

39. Cf. *haec fama est* (it is said [about the head], BC 9.139). In BC 9.1029–30 Pompey’s decapitation is already firmly established as subject of *Fama*.


In what follows the epic’s action is relocated to an area filled with fame. We return to Libya, which we have visited before in BC 4, and are given a mythological supplement to the Hercules and Antaeus episode when we are told about the garden of the Hesperides (BC 9.347–67). This time, however, it is no unnamed local (as will also be the case at Caesar’s visit to Troy) but the authorial voice itself that plays the guide as mouthpiece of Fama. The reader is instantly pointed to Fama, as this passage shows the highest density of occurrences of the word *fama* in the entire epic: four times in 63 lines. In addition Lucan thematizes Fama in an authorial comment on the truthfulness of rumored traditions: *invidus annoso qui *famam* derogat aevo/*qui vates ad vera vocat* (spiteful is anyone who takes away from aged time its glory, who summons poets to the truth, BC 9.359–60). We can then hardly fail to remember that we have listened to the *fama* of this place before. Lucan even inserts another pointer to BC 4 when he refers to Iuba’s kingdom as known by rumor (*nulla iacet tellus quam fama cognita nobis/tristia regna Iubae* “there lies no land except the dismal realm of Juba, known to us by rumor,” BC 9.868–69).

Last but not least the fame Scaeva has earned in *Bellum Civile* 6 will come to conclude the extant text, serving as epilogue and final signal of one of the epic’s key concepts. Whether or not Lucan really chose to end his epic on this ringing note on fame and afterlife, we may never know. However, if this epic can bestow eternal fame on both Caesar and Pompey, it should provide the same much-desired service for the poet Lucan.

What is more, Fama’s ever-shifting form and definition are present in her conceptualization as both fame and rumor, paradoxically uniting validity with vanity. Lucan points to this inherent ambiguity when all of a sudden he asks what military fame is worth when brought face to face with Cato’s *virtus*? *quis Marte secundo, quis tantum meruit populorum sanguine nomen*? (Who has earned a name so mighty by favorable battle, who by blood of nations? [in comparison to Cato], BC 9.596–97). By questioning the preeminence of Pompey’s and Caesar’s fame, which has been won through military deeds, Lucan extends

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42. Cf. BC 9.348 and 9.356 ut *fama* (the legend goes), 9.359 (cited below n. 77) and 9.411–12 si *credere famae/cuncta velis* (if you want to trust in rumor altogether). This frequency is only rivaled by BC 2, which provides four occurrences of the word *fama* in a hundred lines but no further instances in the rest of the book.


44. Cf. also *potuit discrimine summo/Caesaris una dies in famam et saecula mitti* (That single day could have passed into glory and the centuries because of Caesar’s utmost danger, BC 10.532–33).


this question to the fame of the epic poet himself. For as we have seen Lucan not only guarantees the fame of the military leaders with his epic but also links his own renown to theirs.\textsuperscript{47} Lucan, however, plays it safe—by quickly siding with Cato as well.

\textit{hunc ego per Syrtes Libyaeque extrema triumphum / ducere maluerim, quam ter Capitolia curru / scandere Pompei, quam frangere colla Jugurthae}

[This triumphal march through the Syrtes and remotest parts of Libya I would rather make than climb the Capitol three times with Pompey’s chariot, than break Jugurtha’s neck.\textendash{}(BC 9.598–600)]

This move gives us a further hint about the priorities set out for his opus: fame is the main concern.

After having pursued \textit{fama} through the entire epic, we can now grasp more firmly what there is in Lucan’s epic that is worth fighting for, dying for, and writing for. In an epic that arguably can be read as being all about \textit{Fama}, this principle constitutes both narratological method and—as I will argue—substitutes for the traditional “control level.”\textsuperscript{48} Accordingly the epic’s quest does not so much demand fulfillment of what Fate has decreed for Rome—\textit{for} this cannot be prevented any more. Rather it consists of a textualized struggle for fame. In a nutshell, Lucan writes an epic of \textit{Fama} as opposed to Virgil’s epic of \textit{Fatum}.

In what follows I shall examine whether Lucan employs a \textit{Fama} figure that can be seen as replacing Jupiter in his traditional role as epic “control level” and explore in detail the distribution of narratological power in Lucan’s \textit{Bellum Civile}.

\textbf{Erictho as \textit{Fama} Figure:}

\textit{da nomina rebus, da loca, da vocem (BC 6.773–74)}

Epic is to be read as a discourse of power. For an epic plot, an author needs to invent an epic hero, who establishes his own power by fulfilling a quest. Second, he needs a “control level,” usually gods or their agents, who as already established force ideally signpost the destination of the epic journey with prodigies

\textsuperscript{47} Virgil asks a similar question in \textit{Aeneid} 9 at the end of the Nisus and Euryalus episode (if question it is), \textit{si quid mea carmina possunt} (if my songs have any power, 9.446), which can be put to the entire epic. Cf. Fowler 2000, 110.

\textsuperscript{48} Cf. Lowe 2000, 165 for this term.
and prophecies or at least act as its driving forces. In this way gods supply narratological power by providing the epic with a sense of direction. They are an important source of knowledge for both the reader and the hero, who without them might easily lose direction. Moreover, the gods frame the epic narrative by putting a single man’s fate into a wider cosmic context; they help to define the epic world. For the *Aeneid*, Norden famously proposed that “God leads through chaos with wise providence.” Subsequently Jupiter and Juno have been established as the *Aeneid*’s main narratological power figures. Moreover recent studies have shown that the *Metamorphoses*, as well, derive their narratological force from the gods, especially Jupiter and Juno. And even for Lucan’s *Bellum Civile*, an epic world without gods, this scheme can apply in much the same way. Fantham demonstrates how Caesar, “the *fulmen*” (thunderbolt), is the embodiment of Juno’s and Jupiter’s divine anger. The aim of this section is to suggest how Jupiter’s position, the role of the figure that has knowledge of fate, is negotiated by Lucan in view of the prominence and importance of *Fama* in his epic. I will thus review how Lucan substitutes the “control level” in his uncontrollable epic. First, however, let me examine in what direction he points his readers on their search for knowledge.

**Toward Pharsalus**

On the journey through Lucan’s epic world the reader is bombarded with prophecies, the usual source of information for epic protagonists and reader alike. In the *Bellum Civile* the list of prodigies in BC 1.522–83 already makes it clear that there is nothing good to come. Then Arruns is asked to perform an extispicy in order to gain some knowledge (BC 1.584–638). The outcome is unspeakable, though it lacks any precise content: non *fanda timemus* (unutterable are the things we fear, BC 1.634). The astrologer Nigidius Figulus at last gives a name to the evil: civil war (BC 1.672). It will be long and lead to despotism (BC 1.668–70). Now we know more, but not yet enough. The climax is given to the *matrona furens* (raging matron, BC 1.673–95). She provides a miniature

49. “Gott führt mit weiser Vorsehung durch das Chaos” (Norden 1917, 4).
53. O’Hara 1990 and Feeney 1986b provide a pessimistic reading of the prophecies in the *Aeneid*. In the *Bellum Civile* prophecies herald either nothing relevant at all or tell of *nefas* (sacrilege). They thematize egocentrism in a world where citizens fail to act as a community. But as Albrecht 1999, 281 and Masters 1992, 194 have shown, Lucan is not simply an anti-Virgil, but more of an ultra-Virgil who extends Virgil’s already inherent ambiguities.
overview of the entire war.\textsuperscript{54} This—thanks to Lucan’s tendentious geographical inaccuracy—gives the epic its spin toward Emathia.\textsuperscript{55}

In BC 5—much closer to Pharsalus—we finally approach Delphi, a place whose mantic tradition must raise great expectations in a reader searching for information.\textsuperscript{56} Nevertheless the Delphic oracle fails to be a source of knowledge. It does of course, if only very briefly, answer the question of Appius. But does it provide anything of relevance that would help us understand the wider dimensions of the epic? No, for the answer is on the smallest possible scale, revealing Appius’s own fate alone. One reason for this reticence might be found by examining the metapoetic content of the passage: the oracle cannot answer Appius’s question about an ending (\textit{finemque expromere rerum / sollicitat superos} “He [Appius] stirs the gods to disclose the outcome,” \textit{BC} 5.68–69) simply because there is no answer, or at least not only one.\textsuperscript{57} Lucan’s “negative re-writing of the \textit{Aeneid}” reaches its telos in book 6.\textsuperscript{58} Afterward the epic loses all sense of direction.\textsuperscript{59} In the end the epic raises the question about the end itself: \textit{nam quis erit finis si nec Pharsalia pugnae / nec Pompeius erit?} (What end to battle will there be if it is not Pharsalia or Pompey? \textit{BC} 9.232–33). In order to create a particular anti-Aeneidean structure, Lucan’s epic has reversed the sequel of the \textit{Aeneid}’s “Odyssean” half, in which the hero wanders around, and the “Iliadic”

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{54} On the relative silence—considering what could be said—of all three prophecies cf. Masters 1992, 185.
\item \textsuperscript{55} This geographical inaccuracy looks back to a literary tradition; cf. Virg. \textit{Georg.} 1.489–92 and Ov. \textit{Met.} 15.823–24. The idea of melding together Pharsalus and Philippi serves two purposes: it frames the matrona’s prophecy in a ring-composition and gives the reader the feeling that wherever we go, we shall end up at Philippi = Emathia = Pharsalus. Emathia is a correct alternative for Philippi; in the \textit{Bellum Civile}, however, this term is also regularly (and incorrectly) applied as if it included Pharsalus, thus linking the two battlefields together throughout the epic. It provides the opportunity for Lucan to pile even future \textit{nefas} on Thessaly. Cf. \textit{BC} 7.591–92 and 871–72.
\item \textsuperscript{56} For a detailed discussion of this passage cf. Masters 1992, 91–149.
\item \textsuperscript{57} Wheeler 2000, 110 raises the topic of multiple endings (and beginnings) in Ovid’s \textit{Metamorphoses}. Masters 1992, 2 shows that Lucan creates multiple beginnings. By refusing to give the second part of his epic (or at least what we have of it) a sense of closure, a telos, Lucan creates multiple endings as well. Pompey’s death (\textit{BC} 8) could easily have stood as the end, or even Caesar triumphantly looking at Pompey’s head (\textit{BC} 9). Furthermore Lucan might have created a Virgilian ending by promising Pompey’s apotheosis—or ended in Ovidian manner with \textit{BC} 9.1–18 depicting it. Moreover Lucan also plays with the possibility of an abrupt end: [Caesar:] \textit{spes sit mihi certa videnti Niliacos fontes, bellum civile relinquam} (Let me have a hope assured of seeing the springs of Nile, and I will abandon civil war, \textit{BC} 10.191–92).
\item \textsuperscript{58} Hardie 1993, 118.
\item \textsuperscript{59} Cf. the many suggestions where to go in the \textit{consilium} \textit{BC} 8.277–78: Libyam Parthosque Pharonque, quenam Romanis deceat succurrere rebus (Libya and the Parthians and Pharos, which ruler best can help the Roman state). Furthermore Cato refuses to consult an oracle, which could have provided new orientation (\textit{BC} 9.566).
\end{itemize}
one, in which the hero has defined his quest and fights for its fulfillment. The result is a deliberate “endlessness” of the epic.

\[ Fas \] (lawfulness) has no power to give information in this epic of nefas (sacrilege). As we realize, in the Bellum Civile narratological energy comes not from heaven but exclusively from hell. Lucan ostentatiously does not rely on the usual epic props of prophecy and oracle to direct his epic. Instead mantic silence drives the epic toward Emathia. Cheated of their expectations once more at Delphi, the readers arrive at BC 6—a book that feeds the hope in all those who have read the Aeneid of finding a proper, authorized source of information. However, besides the model provided by Virgil, there is also Ovidian inspiration at work here. In what follows I shall examine the influence Ovid’s memorable personification of Fama has exerted on BC 6.

**Personifications**

Personifications, by the time Lucan wrote the Bellum Civile, were a long-established trope of epic poets. Hesiod’s Theogony and Homer’s epics feature numerous examples. Still, to become allegorical personifications, “characterful agents who engage with human beings, occupying the same narrative space as the human characters, and interacting with them in the same way as do the gods themselves,” they had to wait for Virgil and especially for Ovid’s Invidia (Envy), Fames (Hunger), Somnus (Sleep), and Fama (Rumor). With Lucan’s abolition of the Olympian gods, however, personifications seem to have gone the same way because of their affiliation with the apparatus deorum and their role as mediators between gods and men. Nevertheless it is unlikely that Lucan’s poetic production can have stayed innocent of and uninfluenced by Ovid’s powerful and memorable creations. Indeed, given the prominence of Fama in Lucan’s epic, I must pay special attention to Ovid’s Fama.

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61. Masters 1992, 258 defends the final verses as the intended epilogue.
66. Personifications found their way into Christian literature with ease; cf. Gombrich 1971. Vessey 1973, 316 concludes his examination of Statius’s “Clementia” by constructing an almost Christian allegory: “The Thebaid ends with the triumph of virtue over sin.” In Lucan’s Bellum Civile, however, personifications serve to demonstrate precisely the opposite.
In the *Metamorphoses* Ovid picks up Virgil’s lead and creates a powerful knowledge-figure in *Fama*, often translated as *rumor*, but also a personification of *kleos* (fame), the epic tradition and generally the spoken word. Her genealogy sets her up in direct opposition to Jupiter, for *Fama* is born from Earth in answer to Jupiter’s blasting of her other gigantic children. In addition an association with thunder goes with both Jupiter and *Fama*, as she grows like a thunder that comes rolling from a distance, and both characters can spread fear and terror.67 Already in her Virgilian incarnation in *Aeneid* 4 *Fama* shares many features with the father of the gods. What is more, Virgil already depicts her as maleficent and thus as a suitable agent for Lucan’s world perverted by civil war: *Fama malum qua non aliud velocius ullum* (Rumor the swiftest of all evils, *Aen.* 4.174).68 In an epic where Jupiter’s position is vacant she thus arguably provides a possible alternative casting. Therefore I suggest that it will be worthwhile watching out for a *Fama* figure in Lucan’s epic.

**Fama’s Landscape**

In the *Metamorphoses* Ovid describes not only the persona he creates through personification but also the place where it lives or stays. He thereby provides his protagonists with a context and places them in a setting. As a result, Ovid’s geographical ekphraseis are not without significance and tell much about those who inhabit them. Homer’s technique of introducing new characters to Odysseus only after a description of the landscape they inhabit is not dissimilar.69 The important role landscape plays in the epics of Homer, Virgil, and Ovid then lies in the connection between landscape and the human action performed in it.70 The environment here often serves as narrative mirror and metapoetic matrix. In the case of the Ovidian *Fama* the depiction of her house even serves as a substitute for her own bodily manifestation.71 For this reason we should expect landscape to play a major role in constructing Lucan’s version of a *Fama* figure in *Bellum Civile* 6 as well.

Lucan supplies Thessaly with the topography of a *locus horridus* (terrible

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68. Hardie 1986, 276–78 and Hardie 1999, 97–98 point to similarities between *Fama* and the Furies, especially Allecto. Ovid is less outspoken in assigning her to the evil side but still depicts “Error, unfounded Joy and panic Fear” (*Met.* 12.59–60) as part of the house of *Fama*.
place) and creates a geography of war.\footnote{Fama and Fate have left the place with a local mythology of destruction in which Hercules is the most prominent figure. The stations of Hercules’ own destruction—Achelous (BC 6.363–64), Nessus (6.365, 6.391–92) and Philoctetes (6.535–36)—foreshadow the defeat of Pompey, as whose divine patron Hercules served.\footnote{Hercules’ destruction of mountains clears the Flood so that Emathia emerges (BC 6.347–48) and the gigantomachy, which is mentioned here to construct Thessaly as a prototypical locus for transgression, shows Hercules helping to establish the world of the Olympian gods (BC 6.410–12).\footnote{In the forthcoming fight between Magni (great names), however, Hercules will side with the loser. In addition the Trojan War, which took off from Thessaly, provides a model for and actually foreshadows Rome’s downfall (BC 6.350–52).\footnote{Lucan also undertakes some geographical labor in order to relocate Agave and the head of Pentheus (BC 6.357–59) in Thessaly, an unmistakable pointer to Pompey’s severed caput (head).\footnote{Furthermore the cultural achievements of Thessaly are all semina Martis (seeds of war, BC 6.395–407). The presence of horses, ships (the instruments of war), and money (the reason for war) all point toward the martial “iron age.”\footnote{What is more, Thessaly’s darkness, lack of wind, and Stygian river Titaresos make it an apt substitute for the underworld. Fama and Fate have prepared this place for war and directed the protagonists and the reader.\footnote{As these surroundings provide the best possible background for all sorts of nefas (sacrilege), Pompey appears on a well-prepared stage.\footnote{Accordingly, this ominous landscape, a topographical double for Pompey’s destruction, raises great expectations. It virtually screams for a power figure. And Erictho, whom we meet here, turns out to be the place’s}
\footnote{72. Schiesaro 1985 coins this term. The words opponit ([the mountain] he opposes, BC 6.336), premuntur ([mountains] they press, BC 6.343), ruinam (fall, BC 6.348), maculatus sanguine, secat, and ferit ([the river] stained with blood; [the river] cleaves; [the river] strikes, BC 6.364–65) all appear in conjunction with mountains and rivers.}
\footnote{73. Hercules invictus (Hercules invincible) was Pompey’s motto at Pharsalus (cf. Appian BC 2.76).}
\footnote{74. In Hercules’ fight with the giant Antaeus (BC 4.593–653)—even though located non Phlegraes arvis (not on Phlegran fields [the location of the battle of gods and giants], BC 4.597)—we are actually confronted with a miniature gigantomachy.}
\footnote{75. Masters 1992, 158 remarks how the chronologically “last” epic in history returns here to the geographical starting point of the Iliad.}
\footnote{77. Cf. Nicolai 1989, 130.}
\footnote{78. Cf. movit . . . familia bellorum (the rumor of war roused [the East], BC 3.229). Fama causes soldiers to march toward Pharsalus.}
\footnote{79. Cf. contigit Emathiam, bello quam fata parabant ([Pompey] reached Emathia, which the Fates were preparing for war, BC 6.332). For the staginess of Pharsalus cf. Leigh 1997, 77–110.}}}}
very essence. The mighty wicked witch and omniscient mistress of black arts has long been recognized as the most prominent and powerful female persona in the *Bellum Civile*. Indeed it seems as if part of her power derives from her setting. As the House of Fame stands for *Fama*, Thessaly stands for Erictho. She is designed to embody landscape; for the name Erictho occurs only four times and she is labeled *Thessala* instead. On many counts, then, Erictho has the strongest claim to launch our enquiry into epic personification and an investigation of Ovidian inspiration for Lucan’s powerful *Fama* figure in *Bellum Civile* 6.

*How to Create a Power Figure*

Many well-known horror figures have already been put forward as models for Erictho: Medea in Ovid and Seneca; Ovid’s *Invidia*; the Hellenistic fiend Lamia; Hecate and Gaia; Horace’s Canidia; and Virgil’s Allecto. Some even suspect a literary version of Nero’s poisoner Locusta. At any rate, the creation of a unique and impressive character in Erictho out of all these models is a striking Lucanism. We have already observed the prominent connection between personifications and their surroundings. Thus, to boost the ancestry of Erictho’s narratological power I shall point to resemblances between the witch in her Thessalian landscape, and Ovid’s personification of *Fama* and her home. As I will argue, Erictho’s extraordinary powers have much to do with the fact that she incorporates so many traces of the Virgilian and Ovidian *Fama*.

*Fama and Erictho*

As we shall see, Erictho’s resemblances to *Fama* are striking. However, as Ovid does not actually depict *Fama* physically, but instead takes pains to locate her,

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80. Erictho has therefore prompted constant scholarly interest; for an overview cf. Masters 1992, 179 n. 1, and more recently Korenjak 1996 and Hömke 1998.


the reader must deduce her features from her environment. Ovid describes her setting in the *Metamorphoses* as follows:

> *Orbe locus medio est inter terrasque fretumque caelestesque plagas, triplicis confinia mundi*  

[There is a place between land and sea, the meeting point of the threefold universe.] (*Met.* 12.39–40)

Fama lives at the focal point of the world, where the elements—sea, sky, and earth—meet. She resides in an elevated place, from which everything can be seen and heard (*Met.* 12.43). She thus occupies two positions of supreme power: the center and the top. Likewise Erictho is first seen by Sextus in a similarly elevated position (*BC* 6.575). On close examination, Thessaly, where Erictho resides, is indeed construed by Lucan as the new center of the sublime epic world. It is a land near the sea, whose summits—according to Lucan’s own tendentious description—include with Mt. Olympus a mountain, which even in a world without gods is associated with heaven. The threefold universe meets in Thessaly. Furthermore the local witches are able to drag down the stars and moon from heaven so that these heavenly bodies finally come to touch the earth (*BC* 6.499–500 and 505). In addition “the place where Erictho performs necromancy can be securely located neither in the world above nor the world below.”

Thessaly thus also serves as a terrestrial substitute for the underworld of *Aeneid* 6. Thessaly is an *interlocus*, the ultimate in-between place. Moreover, as the people of the entire world follow Caesar and Pompey into battle, the world meets in Thessaly, and Thessaly thus unites the world in one place. What is more, Lucan transfers the mythological and political centers of the world to Thessaly. After he has demonstrated the dysfunction of the Delphic oracle, a place usually traded as the geographical middle of the world, he now points to its roots. The place from which the Python arose and the laurel supply for Delphi comes is Thessaly (*BC* 6.407), from here the oracle derives its mantic power. In addition, Pompey refuses to return to Italy and claims that Thessaly will serve him as a substitute for Rome, the center of the empire. To avoid fighting the civil war in the *Forum Romanum*, the world’s political center,

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86. Masters 1992, 188.  
87. Cf. *acciperet felix ne non semel omnia Caesar, / vincendum pariter Pharsalia praestitit orbem* (to ensure that lucky Caesar received everything at one stroke, Pharsalia offered him the world to be conquered all at once, *BC* 5. 296–97).
he migrates to Thessaly (BC 6.323). Here civil war is supplied with a new, wider forum. What is more, Fama is well embedded in this landscape and already at work in Thessaly: fama est (she is there, BC 6.378). As a result, she directs Sextus to Erictho (hanc ut fama loci Pompeio prodidit “when local rumor revealed her to Pompey,” BC 6.570). And at one point our Fama figure Erictho even meets her fame and delights in hearing her own reputation ( inpia laetatur volgato nomine famae / Thessalis “the wicked witch of Thessaly delights in her fame’s renown so widely spread,” BC 6.604–5).

A further characteristic of the Ovidian house of Fama is the presence of Fear. 88 Intimidation is a métier in which Erictho feels at home as well. Her appearance alone spreads utter horror (BC 6.515–18) and she easily arouses fear in Sextus and his companions (BC 6.659 and 666). In the same way that Fama’s home resounds with a mixture of confused voices and noises, the Fama figure Erictho resounds with a multitude of voices: 89

tum vox . . .

confundit murmura primum
dissona et humanae multum discordia linguae.
latratus habet illa canum gemitusque luporum,
quod trepidus bubo, quod strix nocturna queruntur,
quod strident ululantique ferae, quod sibilat anguis
expimit et planctus illisae cautibus undae
silvarumque sonum fractaeque tonitrua nubis.
tot rerum vox una fuit

[Then her voice, first composed of jumbled noises, jarring, utterly discordant with human speech—the bark of dogs and howl of wolves, the owl’s cry of alarm, the screech owl’s nighttime moan, the wild beasts’ shriek and wail, the serpent’s hiss—it utters, too, the beating of the cliff-smashed wave, the sound of forests, and the thunderings of the fissured cloud; of so many noises was one voice the source.] (BC 6.685–93)

Despite all this Erictho manages to unify all of these sounds into a single voice (BC 6.693), not dissimilar to the way in which rumor, Fama’s voice, is distilled from many. Indeed Fama’s Virgilian representation thematizes this when de-

88. Cf. vanaque Laetitia est consternatique Timores (and here [in the House of Fama] is unfounded Joy and panic Fear, Met. 12.60).
89. Cf. tota fremit vocesque refert iteratque quod audit (the whole place is full of noises, repeats all words, and doubles what it hears, Met. 12.47) and Met. 12.53–55.
picting her with a multitude of tongues. As in Latin the word for tongue (lingua) is virtually the reification of speech, this again is an image of Erichtho’s many voices. In addition, like Fama Erichtho is a poet figure. As such she invents and tries out her own new poetic production.

In Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* Erysichthon provides a body for *Fames* (Hunger). By infecting Erysichthon with insatiable hunger the personification of *Fames* becomes a split divinity. *Fames* employs an “interaction between personification and victim, simplified by Ovid, followed by Statius, of the kind: ‘She breathes herself into the man’.” For her part, when Erichtho interacts with her victim, she breathes *murmura* (murmurs) into it and *nefas* (sacrilege): *gelidis infudit murmura labris / arcanumque nefas Stygias mandavit ad umbras* (she pours mumbles into icy lips and sends mysterious horror to the Stygian shades, BC 6.568–69). Murmur forms a key element of magic practices. However, *murmura* also constitute an essential part of the house of *Fama*. Thus if Erichtho, too, follows the set model and she breathes her very essence into the man, she reveals herself as an incarnation of *Fama mala*.

Ovid’s *Fama* is an all-inclusive knowledge figure who sees all that is done and hears all that is said (*Met*. 12.62–63). In fact Lucan’s Erichtho is just as well informed as *Fama*: She can trace events from the world’s beginning and knows the workings of fate (BC 6.611–12). This, however, is precisely the office of Jupiter in both the *Aeneid* and the *Metamorphoses*. Thus in this respect—we remember *Fama’s* chthonic descent—Erichtho builds up the *Fama*-Jupiter tension more sharply. Indeed, her invocations feature a noticeably disrespectful tone toward the gods (BC 6.730–49). Out of fear they quickly grant whatever Erichtho asks for. Lucan tells of the Thessalian witches’ extraordinary powers just before...
Erictho is introduced (BC 6.492–99). To her he then ascribes exceptional dark powers. Dismissing the other witches because of their excessive piety (nimia pietas), Erictho styles herself as an “über-witch” reaching new heights in the art of dark magic (BC 6.507–10). In addition, the witches trouble Jupiter as they take over the business of weather-making and steal his thunder. The god is left to wonder what is happening (legi non paruit aether . . . Iuppiter urgens / miratur non ire polos . . . et tonat ignaro caelum love “the ether does not obey his law, and as Jupiter drives on the sky he is amazed that it does not move and heaven thunders without Jupiter knowing,” BC 6.462–67). As we have seen above, Erictho incorporates thunder into her powerful voice to conjure up the gods of the underworld (BC 6.692–93). That she takes over the thunderbolt from Jupiter seems the ultimate empowerment of a poet figure. Lucan fills the role of Jupiter Tonans with Erictho, who seems to have forces at her command that rival those of a dark goddess (non superi, non vita vetat “she is not prevented by the gods or life [from knowing the secrets of the underworld],” BC 6.515).

Since Erictho has been invested with such superior power, the reader builds up great expectations for her mantic performance. In line with this the prophecy of the dead body is introduced as the source of information and at the same time dismisses all that has been uttered before. A sequence of assurances insists that this time there shall be certainty:98

tripodas vatesque deorum
sors obscura decet; certus discedat, ab umbris
quisquis vera petit duraeque oracula mortis
fortis adit.

[The tripods and the prophets of the gods are graced with obscure answers; he who seeks the truth from ghosts and approaches bravely the oracles of relentless death, let him leave certain.] (BC 6.770–73)

Finally, who listens to the prophecy? Sextus’s reaction to the corpse’s utterance is not reported, and this signposts that it is not only voiced for him but also for us. Nonetheless Sextus plays an important role precisely because he will remain unimportant. For Sextus will not inherit his father’s name, Magnus. Ovid tells Sextus’s end in the Metamorphoses and makes clear that the “great”

98. Masters 1992, 196–98 points to certum (certain, BC 6.592), aditus ad verum (paths to truth, BC 6.616–17), plena voce, nec incertum (louder and clear, BC 6.622–23), omnia canat (let him foretell all, BC 6.716–17) and finally addidit et carmen, quo, quidquid consulit, umbram scire dedit ([She also added also a spell] to empower the shade to know whatever she asks, BC 6.775–76).
figure of his generation will be Augustus. He is the heir of Caesar’s name, a new Magnus, while Sextus dies in disgrace.⁹⁹ In the *Bellum Civile* Sextus will only be a shadow of his father’s fame, as *Magno proles indigna parente* (a son unworthy of his parent Magnus [Pompey], *BC* 6.420). Sextus carries on from Pompey, who himself is famously described as *magni nominis umbra* (a shadow of a great name, *BC* 1.135). Accordingly Sextus incarnates fading *Fama* and serves as living proof that *Fama* can be nothing but empty air.¹⁰⁰

Masters sees the corpse’s prophecy as yet another disappointment: “the ghost will at least tell us which side will win. That, however, is all.”¹⁰¹ In the end it diverts Sextus to a *certior vates* (a surer prophet, *BC* 6.813), his father Pompey. I myself am not too disappointed, as the vatic team of Erictho and the corpse does its best when offering reports of what other shades have seen and told (*BC* 6.779), thus distributing secondhand knowledge. We come to know hearsay and rumor—the prophecy is part of *Fama* herself, which the *Fama* figure Erictho helps spreading.

Due to Erictho’s dominion over the boundaries of time, past, present, and future seem to become indistinct in the Erictho episode and Thessaly is peopled by the dead, the dying, the soon to die.¹⁰² The prophecy gives her the opportunity to prove that she has indeed means to know the future, but also helps to integrate the past into the present civil war. In *Aeneid* 6 Anchises’ prophecy looks into the future, to the forthcoming foundation and glory of Rome. The corpse’s prophecy looks back to this future and shows how history had always divided the Romans into two parties.¹⁰³ It demonstrates that all of Rome’s history can be read in Pharsalian terms as a battle between *optimates* and *populares*. Pharsalus is thus the culmination of ever-inherent Roman conflict. Erictho’s extraordinary power then stems from the fact that she confounds the roles of Allecto, the hellish force from the underworld in *Aeneid* 7, and of Anchises, mouthpiece of *Fatum* and *Fama* in *Aeneid* 6. She transgresses the line between the two halves of the *Aeneid* that kept these two figures apart while combining their power. Similarly, Erictho forms a bridge between *Bellum Civile* 6 and 7: she embodies the *nfas* (sacrilege) Lucan does not want to spell out when he describes the battle. It is the evening before that tells about the battle, not the battle itself. For there Lucan ostentatiously renounces his topic (*BC* 7.552–54).

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¹⁰⁰ Cf. Hardie 2002a, 237.
¹⁰¹ Masters 1992, 199.
In Lucan’s *Bellum Civile* the search for gods or supernatural powers, which at first sight seem to be excluded, has prompted a burst of scholarship. Le Bonniec suggested taking *fatum/fortuna* (fate/fortune) for *dei/superni* (gods/deities), while Williams points to the personified *Fortuna* as a faded substitute for the *apparatus deorum*.\(^{104}\) Feeney fills the gap with Nero, “the perfect presiding deity for the new, quintessential Roman poetry,” Ahl with Cato.\(^{105}\) Finally Due suggests that the survival of Lucan’s epic during the Christian Middle Ages might ironically be a consequence of the absence of a cast-list of pagan gods.\(^{106}\)

Lucan follows two of Ovid’s tendencies at the end of the *Metamorphoses*: first he constructs—like Ovid in his sphragis—a godlike poet figure.\(^{107}\) He puts the poet on stage and invests him with extraordinary power, thereby demonstrating his own poetic self-consciousness. Second, by cutting out the traditional *corpus deorum*, Lucan makes space for the next generation of gods. Wheeler has observed that at the end of the *Metamorphoses* the Ovidian gods play not the role of lovers but that of parents: Jupiter, Mars, and Venus are all concerned with the deification of their children.\(^{108}\) In my opinion Caesar is a representative of the next generation of gods. We should remember that his apotheosis forms one of the final episodes in the *Metamorphoses*. In the *Bellum Civile* Caesar’s godlike status is on view when he cuts down a sacred grove but is not punished (*BC* 3.426).\(^{109}\) In the end many modern readers of Lucan seem to forget that the Roman contemporary audience will have perceived divine Caesars as the norm and Pompey merely as one of the figures from a republican past.

In this chapter, I have broadened the criteria for this search and looked, more generally, for a “power figure.” I have suggested that Erictho, Lucan’s most powerful figure, is heavily influenced by Ovid’s personifications of *Fama*.\(^{110}\) She thus comes close to providing a body for *Fama* who spins her net throughout the epic and is one of its driving forces.

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106. Due 1962, 78.
107. Cf. Wheeler 2000, 151 on Ovid’s sphragis as the denial of death. Furthermore, the poet’s fame is immune to Jupiter’s anger and fires (*Met.* 15.871).
108. Wheeler 2000, 140. In addition Feeney 1991, 297 has pointed out that Lucan’s civil war is presented as a gigantomachy: “Yet it is a very odd sort of Gigantomachy, since the giant succeeds.”
109. Moreover, Caesar does not fear storm’s power (*BC* 5.578–84 and 654–56). His confidence places him in the center of the universe and makes the cosmos fade to mere decoration around him. Finally compared to Mars and Bellona (*BC* 7.568–70), Caesar performs his *aristeia* not by fighting but by his mere presence, which resembles a godly omnipresence. Cf. Glaesser 1984, 63–64 and n. 74.
110. *Fama*’s potential has been recognized by Zumwalt 1977. Hardie 1999 and also Hardie’s forthcoming book on *Fama* pursue the topic further.
Having established the epic’s concern with a Fama figure, I will examine how Lucan employs Fama/Rumor as a narratological device in the Bellum Civile. As I will argue, Lucan’s Bellum Civile is an epic directed by Fame rather than Fate and it is in this way that Erictho’s power as Fama figure spans the entire epic.\footnote{111}

Fama Dispersed: Further Voices

Above I have envisaged Fama as a narrative operator who helps to create the epic’s fractured voice and simultaneously functions as a unifying device. In the same way Lucan’s body imagery evokes the shared suffering of different bodies by making them one but also conjures up a world in pieces. In what follows I take a closer look at how Lucan employs Fama to spin a web of both fame and rumor through Bellum Civile 1. One way of doing so will be to examine some of the “further” and sometimes even “furthest voices” summoned by Lucan.

I have already pointed to the speech of the men of Ariminum (BC 1.244–61) as a prime example of the unheard made heard. Later on, Laelius, probably a fictional character named ironically for Scipio’s sage friend and adviser, in BC 1.359–86 lends voice to what had only been described before as the undefined muttering of the masses: dixerat; at dubium non claro murmur volgus / secum incerta fremit (He [Caesar] ceased, but the wavering mass with inarticulate murmur mutters indistinctly, BC 1.352–53).\footnote{112} Laelius turns indistinct utterances of doubt into clear words. In addition he also functions as catalyst for Caesar’s fame. He starts his speech by addressing Caesar as “greatest helmsman of the Roman name” (Romani maxime rector / nominis, BC 1.359–60). Moreover he swears to follow Caesar even through inhospitable Libya, whose fame has reached Laelius’s ear long before it is told to the reader in BC 4. Caesar is here credited with the same potential as Cato, two great leaders whom their soldiers would follow anywhere.\footnote{113} Laelius then puts a strong emphasis on listening to and following just one voice, Caesar’s.\footnote{114} He supports Caesar’s authority with references to the general’s deeds and glory and thus employs Caesar’s

\footnote{111. Still more so if one considers that in ancient manuscripts the script would not mark the distinction between personified Fama and unpersonified fama, as modern editions do.}
\footnote{112. Cf. Getty 1940 ad BC 1.357 and Duff’s 1928 Loeb edition ad locum in a rare footnote. Note especially the stark contrast between Caesar’s well-demarcated speech and the soldiers’ response.}
\footnote{113. Wildberger 2005 points to a clever play on sequi (who follows whom) in the Bellum Civile.}
\footnote{114. Cf. iussa sequi (to carry out your [Caesar’s] orders, BC 1.372), audiero (I hear [Caesar’s trumpets], BC 1.374), me iubeas (if you [Caesar] order, BC 1.377), iussoris (you [Caesar] command, BC 1.385).}
fame to the leader’s advantage (BC 1.369–71 and BC 1.374–75). Subsequently Laelius merges back into the crowd, which shakes off its doubts by bursting into a universal and unifying shout of approval (clamor, BC 1.388). This confirms once more the effectiveness of Caesar’s fame. His soldiers are willing to follow his voice; they are encouraged by his reputation (BC 1.386–88). The following simile with its Thessalian setting confirms that we have just set sail toward Pharsalus (BC 1.388–91).115

Then Caesar calls on his troops in order to march against the center of the world, Rome (BC 1.392–95). What follows is an astonishing catalog of both Gallic regions and peoples rejoicing when freed from Caesar’s presence (BC 1.396–465). All these peoples have been soaked up by the Romans into their empire and have contributed to Caesar’s Fama. At this occasion Lucan serves up a poignant piece of geopoetics, for these people are not unlike the river Isara (Isère), which loses its name when merging with a larger stream.116 Now that these tribes have regained their independence, however, their own stories start to emerge again. Accordingly Lucan has packed the catalog with references to the regions’ and peoples’ histories. Each of them could be enlarged into a narrative or discourse. In some cases Lucan actually succumbs to this temptation, as in the passage on the play of ebb and flow (BC 1.409–19). Then again, other possibilities for excursus are implied but glossed over for the sake of the main narrative. The stories of the Nervii (BC 1.429) and the Ligures (BC 1.442–43) thus remain untold. How much of an independent Fama has sprung up in Gaul after Caesar and his troops retreat can be seen from the example of the bards (BC 1.447–49). Like the poet Lucan they, too, exert the power to eternalize with their songs: vos quoque, qui fortes animas belloque peremptas / laudibus in longum vates dimittitis aevum (you [bards] too, poets who with praise send forth into eternity the valiant spirits cut off in war, BC 1.447–48). The catalog ends with a second digression (BC 1.450–62), which introduces deliberations on knowledge and afterlife. In relativistic fashion Lucan states that the Druids either got it all right or all wrong: solis nosse deos et caeli numina vobis / aut solis nescire datum (to you alone is granted total knowledge of the gods and heaven’s powers—or total ignorance, BC 1.452–53). With their doctrine Lucan allows an

115. Mt. Ossa is only ever mentioned again as part of Thessaly’s warlike landscape in BC 6.348 and BC 6.412.

116. Cf. hi vada liquerunt Isarae, qui [. . .] / . . . famae maioris in amnem / lapsus ad aequor nomen non pertulit undas (Others left Isara’s fords, a river that flows into a river of greater fame and does not convey its own name to the waters of the sea, BC 1.400–402). Hübner 1975, 203 demonstrates how the struggle for a name and fame is perpetuated and distorted in geography: unconventionally the tributary steals the name of the larger river (BC 4.24, Hiberus vs. Cinga). Moreover, Helle “steals” (abstulit) the name of the straits she fell into, which is thus never mentioned (BC 9.955–56), and imposes her own name. Cf. also Bartsch 1997, 155 n. 31 for a summary and a partial translation of Hübner.
alternative to his cosmos of nefas (sacrilege) to surface that states that death is not the end: *longae, canitis si cognita, vitae / mors media est* (If what you sing is known for fact, then death is the midpoint in prolonged life, *BC* 1.457–58). Suddenly this little excursus questions Lucan's literary project, questions the basis of the entire epic. If death is no evil, there is no nefas and thus no story. In what follows, however, Lucan takes control and dismisses the northern tribes—somewhat regretfully—as happy fools, thereby securing the continuation of his own story (*certe populi . . . felices errore suo* “without a doubt the people are fortunate in their mistake,” *BC* 1.458–59).

Subsequently Lucan moves the focus of his epic back to Italy, where we witness the potency of Caesar's concentrated fame. All the key words are assembled in *BC* 1.469–72: empty rumor (*vana fama*), fear (*timores*), speed (*velox nuntia*), and fast action (*properantis belli*) come together with innumerable tongues (*innumeras linguas*) that spread false reports (*falsa preconia*). We see ever-growing *Fama* at work and gain insight into her mechanisms when we are offered an avalanche of anonymous rumors.117 She also uses her (Ovidian) companions Fear and Terror to win strength: “so by his panic each gives strength to rumor, and they fear ungrounded evils of their own invention” (*sic quisque pavendo / dat vires famae, nulloque auctore malorum / quae finxere, timent, BC 1.484–86*). In this way *Fama* climbs up the social ladder and affects both commoners and senate (*BC* 1.486–88). By putting the senators to flight *Fama* manages to silence voices, which could speak up powerfully against her. The senators, however, hand over their voice to the consuls and join the mass exodus. Their behavior amplifies the horror *Fama* spreads even further. Finally Lucan’s narration culminates in a simile providing the reader with a wider perspective. For it shows the “ship of state” in utter distress and near dissolution (*BC* 1.498–502). The list of prodigies (*BC* 1.522–83) that follows features a range of vocabulary exemplifying this state of insecurity.118 The only certainty is that there is worse to come (*BC* 1.523–24). *Fama* triumphs when Rome is finally abandoned through the power of a single word: war (*tu tantum audito bellorum nomine, Roma, / desereris* “but, Rome, as soon as the word “war” is heard, you are deserted,” *BC* 1.519–20).

What is more, Lucan also gives tales of past nefas (sacrilege) a chance to be

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117. Cf. expressions such as “it is said” (*est qui, BC 1.472, adferat, BC 1.475*) and reported speech at *BC* 1.477–78 and 1.481–84.

heard. The tragic voices of Thyestes and of the brothers Eteocles and Polynices are employed in similes and thereby linked to present-day phenomena such as solar eclipses (BC 1.543–44) and the splitting of the flame at the feriae Latinae (BC 1.550–52). The two similes, both micro-images of civil war and brotherly strife, become virtually contemporary events. They join in seamlessly with the general cosmic and geographical disarray, presenting the reader with a frame of reference from the literary tradition.

Further rumors (BC 1.556–60) build up a crescendo of horrors, into which Lucan integrates every sound imaginable. Animals gain speech with ease (BC 1.561); Fama spreads the grim verses of the Sibyl of Cumae (BC 1.564–65); the priests of Bellona and Cybele, both dreaded goddesses, have their say, and even the dead join in (1.564–68). Moreover the forests contribute further voices to mix a spooky sound-track of war (BC 1.569–70). What is more, Lucan creates the impression of hell on earth by depicting a Fury laying siege to Rome, an image recalling Virgil’s fury Allecto stirring up war in Aeneid 7.119 Similes—again taken from tragedy—illustrate the Fury’s maddening influence (BC 1.574–77). She spreads and obviously has spread the furor (madness) necessary for war. With furor provided, the crescendo culminates in the sounding of trumpets and the shouting of imaginary armies, completing the setting for war (BC 1.578–79). Last but not least, the great voices of the past, Sulla and Marius, raise their heads. They spread fear and prophesy disaster (BC 1.580–83). Here ends Lucan’s catalog poem of ill-boding voices, which brims with verbs and nouns that denote utterance, sound, or forms of expression. All these Lucan weaves together into a continuous song of nefas (sacrilege). As no authoritative or authorial voice offers any interpretation or guidance amid the multitude of cameos, the reader is left alone with his worries and a desire for directions. This is the three potential knowledge figures Lucan offers in the remaining verses of BC 1 definitively fail to satisfy.

For a start, the Arruns episode seems to restore some order within the chaos. First of all the priest Arruns takes control.120 As a result the citizen body marches together with the city’s priesthood in a formation whose orderly arrangement Lucan depicts in detail (BC 1.592–604).121 In spite of that, the sacrifice so carefully prepared goes horribly wrong in the end. Arruns seeks refuge

119. Cf. ingens urbem cingebat Erinys (a huge Erinys was circling Rome, BC 1.572). Rome, the urbs, is virtually framed by ingens and Erinys. Cf. Hardie 1993, 59 for the hell on earth topos in Latin epic.
in ambiguity and silence (*non fanda timemus* “unutterable are the things we fear,” *BC* 1.634; *multaque tegens ambage canebat* “he veiled the omens in obscure ambiguity,” *BC* 1.638). He even prays that his insights may prove false (*BC* 1.636–37). Ultimately the sacrificial body constitutes the only message communicated to the reader; all information we gain is embodied in its disorderly features (*BC* 1.627–29).

In a similar manner the astrologer Nigidius Figulus emphatically raises more questions than answers.\(^{122}\) He describes a disordered cosmos that mirrors the dark forebodings of war on earth and foreshadows the ousting of Roman values, both moral and political (*BC* 1.642–72).\(^{123}\) On a smaller scale the body of the raging matron filled with Apollo’s words offers us a micro-narrative of the civil war in sixteen lines (*BC* 1.678–94). For a brief moment she embodies the entire epic, becomes a symbol of Rome’s fall (*iacuit* “she collapsed,” *BC* 1.695). The matron offers us a narrative skeleton, a very short introduction to civil war, an epitaph on Rome. In what follows the reader will be overwhelmed by the multitude of voices Lucan employs to put flesh on this skeleton and to construct his epic body. The reader turns away from *BC* 1 prepared to be constantly left in the dark and uncertain whom to listen to.\(^{124}\)

As emerged from my analysis above, it is *Fama*, both rumor and much-desired fame, who directs and influences the epic’s course to a great extent. Accordingly she is both scribe of and inscribed into the epic. Fama is both the epic’s driving force and simultaneously what author and protagonists achieve with the help of the epic. In view of the preeminence of *Fama* throughout, already exemplified in *BC* 1, the reader will wonder even more about Lucan’s attempt to glorify Nero at the very beginning of the epic (*BC* 1.33–66).\(^{125}\) Paulsen concludes in his discussion of the Nero encomium: “Lucan thus had to isolate the encomium as far as possible so that it would fit seamlessly into the epic structure but would stand on its own in regard to content.”\(^{126}\) In his opinion this is achieved through recantation (“Palinodie”) of Nero’s praise in later parts of Lucan’s opus. My examination, however, suggests a further indication that Nero’s praise has been isolated. It is excluded from the web of *Fama* with which Lucan knots his epic corpus together from *BC* 1.130 onward. Nero is left out; his

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\(^{122}\) Narducci 1974, 99–100 sees in Nigidius Figulus’s prophecy the inversion of Venus’s supplication for an end to Aeneas’s labors. Cf. *Aen.* 1.241 and *BC* 1.669.

\(^{123}\) Lewis 1998 argues that the stars described by Numanus correspond to the appearance of the sky at the time of Nero’s ascendance to the throne. For others the stars are simply foreboding images of the war to come. Cf. Luisi 1993 and Hannah 1996.

\(^{124}\) Masters 1992 offers a discourse on (failing) knowledge figures.


\(^{126}\) Paulsen 1995, 198 (my translation).
fame is not carried on by the epos, as he does not find his way into the Fama the epic constructs. Instead the poet Lucan studiously connects his own Fama with that of his oeuvre.

Let me reinforce my argument for the preeminence of Fama with a final observation. It is an axiom of Lucan’s choice of subject matter that military glory is not to be won in civil war. At best glory can be annihilated, as we learn from Pompey’s perception of the battle of Pharsalus: *Pompei nec crimen erit nec gloria bellum* (the battle shall be neither the reproach nor the glory of Pompey, BC 7.112). In Virgil’s *Aeneid*, however, *gloria* (glory) is employed much as Fama is in Lucan, in that it serves as final achievement of the epic quest. Aeneas is to establish the future glory of Rome, as showcased by Anchises in the parade of future heroes: *Nunc age, Dardaniam prolem quae deinde sequatur / gloria . . . / expeditam dictis et te tua fata docebo* (Now then, the glory henceforth to attend the Trojan race I shall reveal in speech and inform you of your destiny, *Aen.* 6.756–59). It is indeed part of Virgil’s project to link the past glory of Troy (*ingens / gloria Teucrorum* “the great glory of the Teucrians,” *Aen.* 2.325) with the future glory of Rome. We find this concept exemplified in a nutshell in the epitaph on Caieta (*Aen.* 7.1–4) at the beginning of *Aeneid* 7, which serves as bridge between the Trojan first half and the Italian/Roman second half of the *Aeneid*. in these verses, however, in sharp contrast to Lucan’s *Bellum Civile*, *gloria* and *fama* still go hand in hand. What is more, *gloria* (predominantly that of future generations) is employed as a motivating force when urging Aeneas to keep on the right path toward Rome and leave Dido behind (*Aen.* 4.232 and *Aen.* 4.272). In contrast, in Lucan’s epic *gloria* appears stripped of any ideological significance. already at its very first appearance it is made clear that in this epic glory is nothing to rejoice in. For Caesar can find no joy in having driven Pompey out of Italy—alive and without combat (*non illum gloria pulsi / laetificat Magni* “the glory of Magnus's rout does not delight,” BC 3.48). Indeed it seems that the only way in which human glory can be won in the *Bellum Civile* is through death or ancestry. Accordingly the Brahmins are praised for taking their fate into their own hands and winning glory through suicide (*BC* 3.241–42). Vulteius’s suicide strikes the same note (*BC* 4.479–80); and the conceit that the only glory that can be promised to Sextus Pompeius is that of a short life fits the pattern (*BC* 6.805–6). Ancestry, fame won in the past but not the dire present, can be traced in the appearances of the Massilian twin brothers, dubbed as “the glory of a fruitful mother” (*fecundae gloria matris,*

127. The line *ambitiosa fames et lautae gloria mensae* (ostentatious hunger and pride in a lavish table, *BC* 4.376) may well serve as an indication of what has become of the Virgilian *gloria* won through virtue. Cf. OLD gloria 3 (glorious deed) vs. 4 (boast).
Embodiments

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BC 3.603), and of Antaeus, “his mother’s pride” (nec fuit genetricis gloria, BC 4.595). Similarly the glory Pompey bestows on Cornelia after he has lost his good cause also looks back to an earlier reputation: nunc sum tibi gloria maior (now I bring you greater glory, BC 8.78). Moreover, as part of Lucan’s epic technique, which mirrors the turmoil of the Roman Republic on many levels, we find that geography, too, has its share in the discourse on gloria. The Black Sea steals glory from the Pillars of Hercules (BC 3.277–79), thus imitating the epic’s central conflict for fame, and Mytilene wins glory by protecting Cornelia (BC 8.110–11). In the end we find that conventional glory is reserved for those who would control the Nile (BC 10.284–5), for foreigners (Juba BC 4.715–17), and, significantly, for those who could play a part in Caesar’s death (Pothinus and Achillas: BC 10.377–78).128

In accordance with these observations it comes as no surprise to us that decus (honor), too, experiences a redefinition in the course of the epic. Already at the word’s first appearance the standards for decus are redefined: magnumque decus ferroque petendum / plus patria potuisse sua, mensuraque iuris / vis erat (it was an honor great and to be sought by the sword, to have more power than the state; the yardstick of legality was violence, BC 1.174–76). While this term can be justly employed in connection with the glittering name of Brutus (o decus imperii . . . “o glory of the state,” BC 7.588.), Lucan also dubs Erictho decus Hae-monidum, grace of Thessaly (BC 6.590). In a similar manner the decus of Massilia is deconstructed when decus is also used to describe the glorious victory of the Caesarian side.129 Accordingly when decus is applied to Pompey in the hour of his death the reader is already well aware of the ambiguity Lucan has built up around this concept: at, Magni cum terga sonent et pectora ferro, / permansisse decus sacrae venerabile formae (But, as the weapons sound on Magnus’s back and breast, the majestic beauty of his sacred features lasted, BC 8.663–64).130 By then Lucan’s writing will have systematically undermined the conventional Roman system of values, displacing it in his epic of Fame—not Fate—in favor of an omnipresent and omnipotent Fama.

128. Caesar seems fully aware of the glory his death would bestow on his killer (BC 5.656–57). Marti 1970 argues for the murder of Caesar as a likely end to the epic.
129. Cf. iam satis hoc Graiae memorandum contigit urbi / aeternumque decus (Now the Greek city gained eternal glory, well deserving mention, BC 3.388–89) and at Brutus in aequore victor / primus Caesareis pelagi decus addidit armis (But Brutus was victorious on the water and first conferred on Caesar’s warfare glory at sea, BC 3.761–62).
130. Wick 2004 points to a further instance where decus is clouded in ambivalence. Scorpio wins decus by killing Orion in BC 9.836. Lucan, however, remains silent about which version of this myth he refers to. Orion is often seen as having been justly punished for transgressions toward Artemis, but Lucan here stages his death as a heroic fight.
Fama Preserved: Epitaphic Gestures

Lucan’s *Bellum Civile* is an epic obsessed with death and burial. Not only is *mors* (death) a constant presence and described in great detail, but also the closure (or lack thereof) that burial provides is a constant theme that runs through the narrative. Accordingly frequent signposts direct the reader toward Pompey’s untimely end. At the same time, as will be exemplified by my discussion of Vulteius and his men in chapter 4, in accordance with the prominence given to *Fama* throughout, many figures in the text display less concern with their actual death than interest in their *Nachleben*. Indeed, gaining *Nachleben* often emerges as the sole motivation of their actions. Furthermore, Lucan himself frequently offers us an *epiphonema* on one of his poem’s personae, in which he weighs up a life in just a handful of verses. Sometimes these comments shed an unexpectedly positive light on the characters that are fading out of the epic plot.

The first of these *epiphonemata* is Lucan's epitaph on Marius that confines itself to remembering the latter’s changing fortune and captures the figure of a leader who despite ups and downs exits on a high when consul for the seventh time.

*septimus haec sequitur repetitis fascibus annus.*

*ille fuit vitae Mario modus omnia passo,*

*quae peior fortuna potest, atque omnibus uso,*

*quae melior, mensoque hominis quid fata paterent*

[After this the seventh year restored the Rods of office. That for Marius was life’s end: all of worse Fortune’s works he had suffered, all of better Fortune’s works enjoyed, and measured the extremes of human destiny.]  
(*BC* 2.130–33)

His most memorable features are not as one would expect given the many cruelties he committed—for those will be outshone by the civil war that im-pends. Instead Lucan chooses to integrate Marius into the recurrent motif of the reversibility of fortune and toppling from height—in this rare case with resurgence to power. Marius will stand as example of what Pompey could

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132. Pomeroy 1991, 258 suggests that while biography “attempts to be comprehensive in its records of an individual’s life,” death notices seek “to isolate the most memorable or instructive features.”
133. On the reversibility of Fortune cf. Marius and Carthage *BC* 2.91–93; cf. also Caesar as top-
have turned into had he reached old age. The tyrant who lives too long for his
own reputation certainly serves as paradigm—one of many as we shall see—in
Lucan's discourse on how to end a life.

Soon Marcia, Cato's former wife and now wife to be (again), appears on the
epic stage with the sole mission of securing her lasting reputation as manifested
in her tombstone inscription.

*da tantum nomen inane
conubii; liceat tumulo scripsisse “Catonis
Marcia” nec dubium longo quaeratur in aevon
mutarim primas expulsa an tradita taedas

[Grant me only the empty name of spouse and let my tomb read, “Mar-
cia, wife of Cato,” and let there be no dispute in the future whether by
divorce or by transferal I changed my first marriage.] (BC 2.342–45)

As a result she casts an epitaphic shadow from the very beginning over her
renewed union with Cato. Their alliance's lack of physicality emphasizes that its
purpose is to honor Marcia. All she asks for is to be the female shadow of a
great name.

Similarly the Massilian twin brothers form an epitaphic unit: while one of
the pair is killed in the sea battle, the other survives as living remembrance of
his brother: *tenet ille dolorem / semper et amissum fratrem lugentibus offert*
(he maintains their anguish for always and presents his lost brother to them as they
mourn, BC 3.607–8).

One of the most ambiguous and therefore most discussed figures in Lucan's
epic is the young Curio. He meets his premature end by his own hand after
his Caesarian troops have been wiped out by Juba. Curio has been counted
among the members of a lost generation—lost when the political climate of
the age left no room for the virtues of old. Moreover, Curio features promi-
nently in Caesar's commentarii, a result of the combination of Caesar's personal
sympathies and the promptings of propaganda before the African campaign.
Lucan was thus confronted with a detailed and diverse tradition on a historical figure; at any rate the image he draws of Curio’s character is nothing if not ambiguous. On the one hand he sees no real virtue in Curio’s death *ceciditque in strage suorum / impiger ad letum et fortis virtute coacta* (he fell amid the wreckage of his own men, vigorous for death and brave with necessary valor, *BC* 4.797–98). On the other Lucan considers him deserving of commemoration and praises his merits.

\[ \begin{align*}
&\textit{at tibi nos, quando non proderit ista silere} \\
&a quibus omne aevi senium sua fama repellit,} \\
&\textit{digna damus, iuvenis, meritae praecoonia vitae} \\
&\textit{haud alium tanta civei tulit indole Roma} \\
&\textit{aut cui plus leges deberent recta sequenti} \\
&\text{[But it is no use to keep quiet about deeds whose own fame fends off all decay of time—so to you, young man, we give worthy commendation to the life that earned it. No other citizen of such great talent did Rome produce, to no other did the laws owe more had he followed what was right.]} \quad (BC\ 4.811–15) \quad 139
\end{align*} \]

Like Vulteius and Scaeva Curio functions as a stand-in for Caesar; but at the same time, the lack of a tomb for his body prefigures Pompey’s fate. What we learn about the character of Curio in both his speeches, two bravura pieces clad with *sententiae*, is that he represents not so much a “disintegration of Roman virtus” as a rhetoricization of it, as is exemplified by his two speeches in *BC* 1.273–91 and *BC* 4.702–10. Curio is characterized as a voice, the voice of the Roman people, once eager to prevent civil war: \[\ldots\] *audax venali comitatur Curio lingua, vox quondam populi libertatemque tueri / ausus et armatos plebi miscere potentes* (with them came the reckless Curio with his mercenary tongue—once the people's voice, he dared to champion liberty, to level with the people armed grandees, *BC* 1.269–71). That he is then repeatedly depicted disputing in favor of war marks him as a product of rhetorical education; he stands out as a master of the word, able to argue pro and contra on the same issue, as and when the situation demands. Accordingly, his death, the death of

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141. Cf. also Thompson and Bruère 1970, 172.
the voice that once fought for freedom, indicates another step toward the perversion and loss of Roman liberty. Curio’s change of faith foreshadows Lucan’s lament a few hundred verses later, and spells out what rhetoricization can mean for the integrity of a character: namque omnis voces per quas iam tempore tanto / mentimur dominos haec primum repperit aetas (and indeed all those expressions with which for so long now we have lied to our masters were invented by that age, BC 5.385–86). Gowing defines this passage as Lucan’s “moment at which the Republic died and the empire began to take shape.” 143 Lucan’s emphatic and unforgettable epiphonema on Curio points us to the discourse on freedom and freedom of speech he embodies. 144 The marked ambivalence of this figure is enhanced by Lucan’s final dictum: “they all bought, but he sold Rome” (emere omnes, hic vendidit urbem, BC 4.824). This line links Curio to a verse from Virgil’s underworld describing the doomed, which was in all likelihood originally coined for Mark Antony. 145 The scholia on Lucan, however, already read the Virgilian verse as referring to Curio and thus as directly prefiguring Lucan’s epimythion. 146 Ever the more, then, for the reader Curio remains a tragic and sinister figure, a grande dannato aligned with the great and bad of Roman history. 147

Caesar, even though seemingly invulnerable and soon to be immortal, is not above deliberating on his own tombstone inscription, which would list all his offices and honours (nulla meis aberit titulis Romana potestas “no Roman office will my inscription lack, ” BC 5.664). In fact he virtually delivers his own funeral speech when caught in the storm of Bellum Civile 5, where he enumerates his res gestae.

Arctoas domui gentes, inimica subegi
arma metu, vidit Magnum mihi Roma secundum,
iussa plebe tuli fasces per bella negatos

[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.] (BC 5.661–63)

The parallel and asyndetic first two cola may even evoke the style of the elo-gium, a form of archaic honorary inscription and hallowed republican institu-

144. Henderson 1998a, 200 sees the curi-a fall with Curi-o.
145. Cf. vendidit hic auro patriam dominumque potentem / imposuit (This one sold his country for gold, and fastened on her a tyrant lord, Aen. 6.621–22). Cf. Norden 1917 ad loc.
tion, with which the Romans used to commemorate their worthiest men. Caesar’s republican \textit{elogium} would have been the last of its kind, as a change of government lies but a few steps ahead: this is the last possible moment in which Caesar could die still an ordinary man (\textit{BC} 5.665–68). Pointedly, Caesar goes on to end his self-commemoration with the statement that he—unlike everybody else—cares nothing for funeral rites and burial

\begin{center}
\textit{mihi funere nullo} \\
\textit{est opus, o superi, lacerum retinete cadaver} \\
\textit{fluctibus in mediis desint mihi busta rogusque} \\
\textit{dum metuaro semper}
\end{center}

\[\text{[No need have I of burial, O gods; keep my mangled corpse in the bil-}
\text{lows’ midst, let me be without tomb and pyre, provided that I am always feared.] (\textit{BC} 5.668–71)\]

Caesar does not mind suffering the fate that awaits Pompey, to be a mangled corpse drifting in the sea, as long as his name lives on to be feared. He thus characterizes himself as a tyrant through an actualization of the \textit{oderint dum metuant} (Let them hate me as long as they fear me) formula coined (for tyrants) by Accius. Finally, having no fixed tomb would invest Caesar (and will later invest Pompey) with an almost supernatural omnipresence. Mindful that at the time of Lucan’s writing Caesar was a secure fixture among the gods, we find his divine position foreshadowed by Caesar’s display of self-consciousness toward \textit{Fortuna}, the gods and the elements, and the demonstrative rejection of natural closure through death and funeral—Caesar already counts on apotheosis.

Finally an all too short but most compelling inscription graces Pompey’s tomb: \textit{HIC SITUS EST MAGNUS} (Here lies Magnus, \textit{BC} 8.793). Not unlike Phaethon, Pompey crashes in failure, having dared great things, and Ovid’s epitaph on Phaethon must indeed be Lucan’s prompt. The purpose of this surprisingly plain inscription and “the point of this studiously simple epitaph is

\begin{enumerate}
\item Fraenkel 1964, 141 points out echoes of \textit{elogia} in Dido’s speeches in \textit{Aeneid} 4.
\item Cf. Tarrant 1985, 42 for Seneca’s reception of Accius’s ubiquitous line.
\item Caesar’s godlike behavior constitutes one of the paradoxes exploited by Lucan’s \textit{sententiae}. Cf. \textit{sed expensa superorum et Caesaris ira} (weighing in the scales the wrath of gods and Caesar, \textit{BC} 3.439); \textit{Italiam si caelo auctore recusas / me pete} (if you refuse Italy at heaven’s command, seek it at mine, \textit{BC} 5.579–80); \textit{et veniam meruere dei} (and the gods earn forgiveness—from Caesar, \textit{BC} 4.123); \textit{dum se desse deis ac non sibi numina credit} (in the belief that he was failing the gods and not the deities him, \textit{BC} 5.499); \textit{bella pares superis facient civilia divos} (the civil wars will create divinities equal to those above, \textit{BC} 7.457).
\item Cf. \textit{HIC SITVS EST PHAETHON CVRRVS AVRIGA PATERNI / QVEM SI NON TEN-}
\textit{VIT MAGNIS TAMEN EXCIDIT AVSIS} (Here Phaethon lies: in Phoebus’ car he fared, and though he greatly failed, more greatly dared, Ov. \textit{Met.} 2.327–28).
\end{enumerate}
that true greatness needs but the bare name for complete identification."\textsuperscript{152} But that is not all; by keeping the inscription to a minimum Lucan allows Pompey's tomb to be an ambivalent sign: "At one moment Pompey's tomb is a disgrace, at the next a glory; now an object of pilgrimage, now lost to sight."\textsuperscript{153} Indeed looking back over Lucan's discourse on death we find a series of ambivalences: savage Marius dies in old age in his bed; the Massilian twin is honorably cut to pieces in battle and survives unscathed in his spitting image; Curio dies dishonored in battle and yet is praised; Caesar ought to die but does not, and the same is true for his alter ego, Scaeva. In Lucan's epic world death as a closural device rarely offers a simple solution. Finally, Lucan himself—following Ovid's example at the end of the \textit{Metamorphoses}—commandeers his epic for his epitaph. Not only is he writing himself into his poem, becoming (as we have seen) a frequent voice through his numerous apostrophes, but he also seeks embodiment in several poet figures, and clamors for his epic to preserve his fame: \textit{venturi me teque legent; Pharsalia nostra / vivet, et a nullo tenebris damnabimur aevo} (Our Pharsalia shall live, and we shall be condemned to darkness by no era, \textit{BC} 9.985–86).\textsuperscript{154} To reinforce this internal epitaphic gesture, Lucan's biography, too, compels the reader to perceive his epic as his legacy; and of course this equation has become irresistible now that the misfortunes of textual tradition have robbed us of all of his other works, beyond a few shreds. Whatever one's view of the end of the \textit{Bellum Civile}—be it design or chance—as it stands it seduces us all too easily into imagining how young Lucan's genius was broken by a cruel emperor. Whether dictated on Lucan's deathbed, hastily composed the night before his death, or purposefully written long before that, it fuels the myth of Lucan. In light of the biographical tradition we cannot help but sense the \textit{Bellum Civile} as both the culmination and the end of Lucan's literary career. Fate did not allow him to pursue a literary career step-by-step, following the Virgilian model.\textsuperscript{155} In an age when the republican \textit{cursus honorum} with its age regulations had become an empty form, Lucan's literary career, too, mirrors the uprooting of this concept. Unlike Virgil, who progresses slowly up the ladder of genres, Lucan took them all at once, crammed into the span of just a few years of adulthood cut short by premature death. Statius's account and praise of Lucan's \textit{iuvenalia} sets up the comparison for us.\textsuperscript{156} We can but wonder what literary deeds Lucan might have progressed to, had he lived. However, as a me-

\textsuperscript{152} Mayer 1981 \textit{ad loc.}
\textsuperscript{153} Mayer 1981, 185.
\textsuperscript{154} Cf. d'Alessandro-Behr 2007 on Lucan's apostrophes and Masters 1992 on poet figures in Lucan's epic.
dieval epitaph attests, Lucan’s legacy is not only measured in the number of books that survive but is also defined by his stylistic contribution, his pointed formulations and their echoes.

**EPITAPHIUM LUCANI**

*Corduba me genuit; rapuit Nero; proelia dixi
quae gessere pares hinc socer inde gener.
Continuo numquam derexi carmina ductu
Quae tractim serpent, plus mihi comma placet.
Fulminis in morem quae sint miranda citentur:
Haec vere rapiet dictio, quae feriet.¹⁵⁷*

Corduba bore me, Nero took my life; I sang of the battles
Fought by the matched pair, father-in-law and son-in-law.
I have never written the verses in continuous flow
to creep along draggingly: I prefer the short phrase.
Let things to excite wonder be told like a thunderbolt:
This verse will capture, that strikes.

(Trans. J. A. Crook)

Mindful of the Virgilian tradition, Lucan acknowledges his life in the first line with the same words used in Virgil’s epitaph.

*Mantua me genuit, Calabri rapuere, tenet nunc
Parthenope; cecini pascua rura duces.*

[Mantua bore me, in Calabria I died, now I lie at Parthenope; / My poems were of meadows, fields, and chieftains.] (Trans. J. A. Crook)

But for Lucan the author pointedly fills in Nero as cause of death and the civil war as subject matter. The rest of the poem, however, is more concerned with Lucanian style than content. What has left an impression and lives on is Lucan’s preference for the short and striking. According to this reading, Lucan’s many *sententiae* are a characteristic feature of his oeuvre and nurture his fame. This leads me to examine Lucan’s *sententiae* as a further characteristic trait of Lucan’s epic technique in the following chapter.

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