Anatomizing Civil War

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Anatomizing Civil War: Studies in Lucan's Epic Technique.
The subject matter of Lucan’s epic constitutes a turning point of Roman history, when a society that has turned static or “cold,” to use Lévi-Strauss’ terminology, is forced to change. Cold societies have a tendency to neutralize changes through repetition so as to maintain an ideal state. Hot societies, on the other hand, try to define themselves in opposition to their ancestors. Change is thus much more rapid. With the knowledge they have of their past they wish to re-orientate the future and to legitimize or criticize the evolution of their society. History then becomes an element of moral conscience.¹ In my final chapter I would like to suggest a reading of Lucan’s poetics of repetition that not only reverberates with the concept of the open and closed body of the text but also mirrors the conflict between “hot” and “cold” in his epic. In what follows I shall look at two different kinds of repetition in the body of Lucan’s epic. One is verbal repetition, which is a distinct and much noted stylistic feature of Lucan’s writing. The other kind figures the repetition of events and patterns, a feature on which Lucan frequently comments. Repeating the same elements, as in music and architecture, reveals the underlying form, the anatomy of Lucan’s epic body.²

Lucan’s epic does not serve any ideology but, as we have seen in previous chapters, functions rather as a vessel for Lucan’s fame. The narrative of the Bello Civile does not follow any forceful trajectory—unlike in the Aeneid no future Rome constantly lurks in the background and no world history has to be seen through to the present day as in the Metamorphoses. This leaves Lucan at

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¹ Cf. Johnson 2003, 113–14 on Lévi-Strauss’s distinction between “cumulative” and “stationary” histories.
ease to structure his epic in an unconventional and at times episodic way. He seems to break with tradition deliberately and has earned himself a reputation as a maverick poet.

We keep telling ourselves that Imperial Latin literature finds ways to communicate how it means to function. Metatheatrical, metapoetic, or metaliterary comments signpost for the reader what the poet’s aims are and what he does to achieve them. Often these help to define a poet’s place in the literary tradition by illustrating his awareness of influence, his consciousness of the burden of the past. Accordingly, the poetic successors’ desire to outdo their literary predecessors is often written into their output. From the outset Seneca’s *Thyestes* thus announces crimes worse than those previously committed. In the prologue the ghost of Tantalus warns of what is to come:

*iam nostra subit*

*e stirpe turba quae suum vincat genus*

*ac me innocentem faciat et* inausa audeat

[Now from my stock there is rising a crew that will outdo its own family, make me innocent, and dare the undared.] (Sen. *Thy.* 18–20)

Key words relating to this idea are scattered over the entire prologue: all will be worse, new, and more: *peius inventum est?* (Has something worse been devised? *Thy.* 4); *peius* fame (worse than hunger, *Thy.* 5); *nova/supplicia* (new penalties, *Thy.* 13–14); *addi si quid ad poenas potest* (if anything can be added to my punishment, *Thy.* 15).

Similarly Lucan’s *Bellum Civile* promises in its first line to tell of war greater than civil war, a phrase that could be interpreted as a heading for the entire opus. *Bella per Emathios plus quam civilia campos / iusque datum sceleri canimus* (Of wars across Emathian plains, worse than civil wars, and legality conferred on crime we sing, *BC* 1.1–2). When read under these terms, Lucan stages a conflict between two *Magni* (great ones) for the role of the *Maior* (greater one). Critics have frequently emphasized the desire of the Neronian poets to outdo their literary fathers, to commit poetic patricide. Accordingly, Lucan’s epic, which constantly looks back to Virgil, has been hailed as both anti- and über-*Aeneid.* When Virgil’s proem announces *arma virumque* (arms and the man), we can easily make out what these key words refer to. Lucan also employs a plural, *bella civilia* (civil wars), at the beginning of his *Bellum Civile*. He, how-

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3. Bloom 1973 has established literature’s “anxiety of influence.”
ever, causes us to wonder if there is more than one war told here, and whether this civil war in fact stands in for all of them.

What is more, readers of Neronian literature can not only detect an awareness of literary succession but also diagnose a syndrome of repetition. We witness a constant retelling, rewriting, and rephrasing of the literary tradition, our sensitivity to which has been enhanced by the advent of intertextuality. Thus in Seneca’s *Thyestes* the initial question by the ghost of Tantalus in *quod malum transcribor?* (Thy. 13) is not only meaningful in its immediate context: “To what new sufferings am I shifted?” “To what punishment am I being re-assigned?” It shifts to register as “Into what evil am I being copied? For committing what evil am I being reassigned to another writer?” When taking the metaphor of writing literally this verse also indicates that Seneca is here helping himself to a portion of the literary tradition. He reawakens a (literary) spirit to supply narratological energy from hell initiating a story, which will be a repetition of Tantalus’s own crimes. Tantalus is forced by the Fury to cause the reiteration of evil in his family’s successive generations. The murder and exploitation of Thyestes’ children is not a novel crime; his meal’s ingredients are as much taken from the past as they eat into the future. While Tantalus’s crime on Pelops is reiterated, the play’s last line also functions as a “to be continued” announcement (*te puniendum liberis trado tuis* “for punishment I leave you to your children,” Thy. 1112). Thanks to their poetics of repetition Seneca’s tragedies thus read as a key matrix for the narrative techniques of the *Bellum Civile*. For Lucan, too, displays and imposes awareness that he is telling an already well-known story. Accordingly he can afford to take the historical tradition for granted in his narrative; the reader will have to make sure he knows what happened at Pharsalus, for Lucan will not tell us: *quidquid in hac acie gessisti, Roma, tacebo* (whatever you did in this battle, Rome, I shall not tell, BC 7.556).

Pointed toward the literary tradition in this way scholars have understandably been keen to identify the prose sources Lucan versifies and to highlight where Lucan rests on them and where he makes independent moves. A recent reading of Lucan is directed toward reconstructing Livy and presses the ques-

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8. Schiesaro 2003, 28 n. 4 suggests “metadramatic resonances, if for no other reason than its etymological reference to writing.”
tion of what value the *Bellum Civile* might be if read as a historical source.\textsuperscript{11} In contrast this chapter looks for possible influences and motifs from Caesar’s *Bellum Civile* in Lucan’s epic by discussing the “Raft of Vulteius” episode (BC 4.402–581). The reader will see what ballast Lucan takes on board his poetic ship (or raft in our case). As “the events narrated in Lucan’s text themselves symbolize the process of creating text,” it is telling to see what elements Lucan incorporates into his epic body.\textsuperscript{12} Once I have established the way in which Lucan works his literary predecessors, I shall employ this material for a wider discussion of Lucan’s poetics of repetition. In this vein, I set out to examine Lucan’s epic technique and to ask once more how he composes his song of *nefas* (sacrilege).\textsuperscript{13}

**Cosmic Cycles**

Virgil set the example of an epic in which the entire cosmos serves as the stage for a struggle for power, enhancing Rome’s role as the *caput mundi* (head of the world) and flattering the Romans’ consciousness that they were destined to rule the world.\textsuperscript{14} This relation between cosmos and *imperium* has been firmly established by Hardie’s fundamental study.\textsuperscript{15} He also points to the dualism of heaven and hell inherent in the *Aeneid* and demonstrates how this dualism maps onto the epic landscape, “where there is an alternation between places and times evocative of the Elysian Fields (or its close relative the landscape of the Golden Age) and waking Hells.”\textsuperscript{16} Ovid reacts to the Virgilian model with an all-inclusive *Weltgedicht* ranging from the creation of the earth to the final *katasterismo* of Caesar and the immortalization of the poet.\textsuperscript{17} Lucan thus inherits a well-developed epic cosmology, which he appropriates and develops further. This is made clear by the opening line of his epic’s narrative proper, which with the phrase *fert animus* (my spirit leads me) instantly alludes to the opening of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*: *fert animus causas tantarum expromere*

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{11} Radicke 2004.
\item \textsuperscript{12} Masters 1992, 25.
\item \textsuperscript{13} On the repetitiveness of Lucan’s subject matter, i.e., his negotiation of the previous civil wars, cf. Grimal 1970, 88–89.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Hardie 1993, 57.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Hardie 1986.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Hardie 1993, 58–59.
\item \textsuperscript{17} For Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* as universal history cf. Ludwig 1965, 74–75; Solodow 1988, 29–34 defines the *Met.* as universal poem.
\end{itemize}
rerum (My spirit leads me to reveal the causes of such great events, BC 1.67).\textsuperscript{18} And following this vein, one has read the \textit{Bellum Civile} as a metamorphosis from republican freedom to slavery under Julius Caesar.\textsuperscript{19}

Lucan’s first simile (BC 1.72–80) compares Rome’s fate with the destruction of the universe and thus provides a first indication of the scale of the \textit{bella plus quam civilia} (wars more than civil, BC 1.1), announced at the poem’s very beginning. It exemplifies how the expectations the \textit{plus quam} motif raises can only be met by a universal conflict. Thus an opening bid is made for a cosmic perspective, for universal poetry.\textsuperscript{20} Furthermore Lucan also integrates an image of sibling strife, even a conflict between twins, into this apocalyptic vision (\textit{fratri contraria Phoebe / ibit “Phoebe (Moon) will confront her brother (Sun),” BC 1.77–78}). This image finds its equivalent in the murder of Remus by Romulus (BC 1.95), which marks the beginnings of Rome and of Roman history with years counted \textit{ab urbe condita} (from the foundation of the city) and is also mirrored in the civil war, which throughout the epic is frequently interpreted as Rome’s end (\textit{funera mundi, e.g. BC 7.617–18}). Additionally Lucan’s insistence on Rome’s humble origins evokes and reinforces the image of the past growth but also the impending fall of Rome (BC 1.97). For civil war will shrink Rome and drain it of its inhabitants. The Romans leave Rome: \textit{sic urbe relicta / in bel-lum fugitur} (so they abandon Rome and flee into war, BC 1.503–4). Moreover, so many of Roman stock die that Rome has to be refueled with foreign blood (BC 7.540–43). This also propagates Lucan’s circular view of history. He adopts a concept akin to Stoic cosmology, for which the ring-composition of the prophecy of the \textit{matrona furens} (raging matrona) at the end of BC 1 is symptomatic.\textsuperscript{21}

From \textit{video [. . . ] latosque Philippos} (I see the plain of Philippi, BC 1.679–80) the raging woman returns—driven by \textit{iterum} (again, 1.692) and \textit{rursus} (again, 1.693)—to \textit{vidi iam, Phoebe, Philippos} (Philippi I have seen already, 1.694).\textsuperscript{22} When put into a wider perspective, the cycles of Roman history thus mirror the ever-circling movements of the heavenly bodies and the final return of the cosmic order to primeval chaos.\textsuperscript{23} The cosmic body exemplifies the return

\textsuperscript{18} Cf. Getty 1940 \textit{ad loc.}; Wheeler 2002 examines Lucan’s reception of the proem to the \textit{Metamorphoses}.

\textsuperscript{19} Cf. Tarrant 2002, 356.

\textsuperscript{20} Miura 1983, 209.

\textsuperscript{21} Cf. Long 1985.

\textsuperscript{22} Cf. Schiesaro 2003, 27 on \textit{iterum} (again) as a metaliterary mark and 177–220 for repetition in Senecan drama.

to (Ovidian) ur-chaos, into which Rome is about to slide: *antiquum repetens iterum chaos* (reverting to primeval chaos, *BC* 1.74). In contrast, however, to the doomed Roman body as exemplified by expressions such as *nec se Roma ferens* (Rome’s inability to bear herself, *BC* 1.72), the cosmos also displays elements of eternal order. It thus keeps a “natural” balance, a feature that is as persistent as the human thirst for power (*BC* 1.89–93). Even Nero as cosmocrator is admonished to keep up this balance (*librati pondera caeli / orbe tene medio “maintain the mass of heaven poised in the sphere’s midpoint,” *BC* 1.57–58).

Moreover, Lucan is keen to stress the role of Rome as the world power and cannot emphasize enough that Rome reigns over land and sea (*BC* 1.83 and 1.96). The notion that Roman *imperium* covers the whole world ultimately lends justification to Lucan’s hyperbolic alignment of Rome with the cosmos and justifies the analogy between the Roman state and the cosmos, which Lucan plays out repeatedly in the passage *BC* 1.65–97. Additionally the programmatic *certatum totis concussi viribus orbis* (a conflict waged with all the forces of the shaken world, *BC* 1.5) from the epic’s prologue evokes the notion of a worldwide conflict, while the words of the elders in *BC* 2.225–32 make clear that more than Marius’s and Sulla’s Rome is at stake in the current war.

Virgil’s epic storm and Ovid’s primordial chaos serve to set their respective epics off. In the same vein Lucan introduces at the very beginning of his narrative an apocalyptic vision of the cosmic body descending into chaos; with the *Bellum Civile* he creates a Götterdämmerung. This vision of chaos then offers material for recurrent reworkings on different scales and provides Lucan’s epic with narrative vigor. In addition, it also suits the epic’s episodic structure. Accordingly in the first book imagery of chaos and destruction finds further embodiment in the entrails of the sacrificial victim slain by the priest Arruns (*BC* 1.616–30) and rounds this very book off with the collapsing body of the *matrona furens* (raging matron, *BC* 1.695). Simultaneously it also directs the reader toward the epic’s climax. As *Bellum Civile* 1 and 7 are carefully linked by cosmic imagery, the reader is led to expect an all-destructive finale at Pharsalus.

Moreover, the cosmic body provides numerous portents, which stress the analogy between the downfall of Rome and the downfall of the universe: *superrique minaces / prodigiis terras implerunt, aethera, pontum* (and menacing gods filled earth and sky and sea with prodigies, *BC* 1.524–25). We find this chain of portents in a world cluttered with personifications, embodiments of cosmic phenomena such as Phoebe, Titan, Mulciber (= Vulcan), and Tethys. Therefore it also teems with body language, which leads us straight into the core of Rome (*media . . . Roma, BC* 1.560). This focalization is enhanced by the movement of

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the portents down from heaven toward earth and mankind, from ill-omened birds to beasts and people’s offspring (BC 1.558–63). In view of that, the suffering of the Roman body is prefigured by the distortion of the cosmic one. Yet Rome is not only under the gaze of heaven, but also plagued by the inhabitants of the underworld; an Eriny is circling Rome (BC 1.572), Sulla’s shade is seen, and Marius raises his head (BC 1.580–83). In the first book of his epic Lucan centers on Rome, which is itself turned into an image, for which Lucan invents a multitude of representations and embodiments such as the personification of Roma (BC 1.186–92) and the duo capita (dual lobes) at Arruns’s sacrifice (BC 1.627–28). In addition, throughout Bellum Civile 1 Lucan will keep the analogy between the Roman body and the cosmic body present by means of similes. Lucan is bent on linking the fate of the cosmos with that of Rome, seeing in the rise of Rome a repetition of creation and the establishment of order, and in the civil war a return to the primeval chaos, out of which will rise again a brave new world, that of the principate. Accordingly the proem (BC 1.33–45) already offers a comparison of civil war with gigantomachy as the precondition for establishing a new world order—one might argue, however, that this circular cosmic vision could imply that even the principate will not last forever.

### Historic Cycles

Stepping back from this cosmic perspective we find that the dynamics of repetition are written into the storyline of Bellum Civile 2 on a smaller scale. Here the older generation lament the fact that they have to see a second civil war in their lifetime: oderuntque gravis vivacia fata senectae / servatosque iterum bellis civilibus annos (they detest their long-enduring lot of oppressive age, their years preserved for civil war a second time, BC 2.65–66). Lucan jumps at this opportunity to write against the backdrop of an earlier war and creates a foil that then can be superseded by the nefas (sacrilege) of a second civil war. Through Lucan’s demonstrative retreat into reticence at Pharsalus the slaughter of the earlier war serves as a substitute and stands in for the second. Therefore what at the beginning of BC 2 seems to be just one of Lucan’s frequent excursuses is emphatically pushed into becoming the main narrative, and points directly to repetition. Furthermore Lucan’s digression enables him to tell of fighting in Rome itself, at the heart of the Roman imperium, the capital of the world. As we have seen earlier, the concept of caput mundi (head of the world) and the

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antagonists’ struggle for it is scrutinized throughout the entire epos and finds its ultimate embodiment and culmination in the decapitation of Pompey. The bloody effects of anger unleashed, which is the primordial emotion in civil war, is among the other motifs this first civil war illustrates in detail: *resolutaque legum / frenis ira ruit* (anger raced away, released from the bridle of the laws, *BC* 2.145–46).\(^\text{27}\) The war also introduces the imagery of piles of bodies and heads in heaps on market squares (*BC* 2.160–61), a demonstration of Lucan’s delight in compressing and heaping up materials, in stockpiling for later (re)use.\(^\text{28}\) One miniature image that, as I will argue, is taken up in the Vulteius passage in *BC* 4 is the Herculean idea of constructing one’s own funeral pyre and dying in dignity while this is still possible (*BC* 2.157–59), an idea that also embodies the Roman aristocratic ideal to be left in control of one’s own time and manner of death.\(^\text{29}\)

All this, so the epic tells us, we shall encounter again in the future: *haec rursus patienda manent* (these sufferings await, again to be endured, *BC* 2.223). Lucan even frames the narrator’s speech in *BC* 2 with *iterum* and *rursus* in a ring-composition. As Lucan’s review of previous civil war in *BC* 2 makes plain, the poet will recycle poetic material to construct his war as a rhetorically amplified and greater version. This time it will be a true world war: *multumque coitur / humani generis maiore in proelia damno* (the rush to battle brings much greater loss to humankind, *BC* 2.225–26). Opened up for its own repetition and reception, the civil war in *Bellum Civile* 2 sets the standards Lucan aims to supersede.

Civil war slaughter can reshape the world by crossing boundaries and breaking limits. Hence it can not only change human bodies, but also has an impact on the Roman state body and the cosmic body. The hyperbolic descriptions of dams constructed from bodies (*BC* 2.214) emphasize this conflict’s destructive but also creative energy. Civil war simultaneously unmakes and remakes the world. In his proem Lucan acknowledges the new world order, but he also bewails depopulated cities and uncultivated fields, the changed landscapes brought about by war. Large-scale construction is thematized in Lucan’s extensive descriptions of Caesar’s military building works and landscaping at Brundisium, Massilia, and Ilerda, probably inspired by Caesar’s civil war account.\(^\text{30}\) Masters has drawn parallels between Caesar’s military earthworks and deforestation and the poem-as-building metaphor, which interprets poetry as textual construction, and he has invested these military and technical passages

\(^{27}\) On anger in the *Bellum Civile* cf. Fantham 2003.  
\(^{28}\) For a list of heaps and masses, cf. Masters 1992, 145 n. 119.  
\(^{29}\) On the *amor mortis* motif in Lucan cf. Rutz 1960.  
\(^{30}\) Cf., e.g., Caes. *Civ.* 3.43.
with metapoetical meaning. What is more, we also find this poem-as-building topos melded with the poem-as-sea-voyage topos. This lead obliges us to take a closer look at the actual raft of Vulteius in what follows.

The Raft of Vulteius (BC 4.402–581): A Case Study

In this section I shall unearth Lucan’s poetics of repetition on different levels. First I will suggest that the Vulteius passage in BC 4 shows an awareness of repetition and retelling. Then I will look for inspiration and motifs Lucan might have drawn from his prose sources and reworked in the Vulteius episode. Finally I will address Lucan’s strategy of repetition in more general terms.

The Vulteius episode is emphatically self-contained, and, as with many other parts of Lucan’s episodic narrative, its immediate function in the grand plot remains unclear to the reader. Lucan makes play here with the axiom that he is telling us a story that is already well known. Thus he causes the reader to wonder where and by whom the rafts are built, and it remains unclear until BC 4.445 in what direction the rafts and the narrative with them are actually moving. This suggests a Livian account of this episode, the knowledge of which Lucan presupposes in his audience and on which he presumably relies for much of the technical detail. With his palpably enigmatic design Lucan draws attention to the fact that he makes the rafts cross the sea twice, thereby already writing repetition into this passage. The poet then focuses on the second time the vessels travel filled with people. However, anyone acquainted with Caesar’s commentarii will surely remember that empty ships, too, are indeed thought of as being worth burning in a civil war—if only for tactical reasons. So why does Octavius then wait to attack and restrain his fleet? The reason given is this: cursu crescat dum praeda secundo (for his prey should be increased by a prosperous /second passage, BC 4.435), introducing a play on the two meanings of secundus as both “favourable” and “second”—repetition is even written into enemy attacks.

Finally Lucan tells us himself that it is not the first raft that is caught nor the second but the third!—nec prima nec illam / quae sequitur tardata ratis, sed...
tertia moles haesit (neither the first raft nor the next was checked, but the third hulk stuck, BC 4.452–53). Read with awareness of the literary tradition, Lucan seems to remind us that the first poetic raft was famously constructed for carrying the Argonauts as eternalized by Apollonius’s epic. Lucan follows here on these epic tracks by constructing his own raft. Previously he has given his own very short account of the Argo myth (BC 3.192–97), pointing out the dangers of seafaring, that “new form of death” (mors una). Building on this Argonautic framework in the Vulteius episode Lucan will turn this mors una (collective death) into a mors unica (unique death, BC 4.509). In this literary vein the second raft that remains uncaught might then look back to the construction of a raft in an earlier episode in the Bellum Civile: sed rudis et qualis procumbit montibus arbor / conseritur stabilis navalibus area bellis (but wood is joined together, rough as it falls on the hills, to make a steady site for war at sea, BC 3.512–13). Redirected toward Lucan’s own account of the sea battle at Massilia in BC 3 we find the term ratis scattered over this episode no less than 19 times. We actually have seen it all before. The reader will also remember other boats whose course was hemmed: once in a previous civil war on the Tiber by a dam made of bodies (BC 2.212) and then again when Pompey escapes from Brundisium but two of his ships are caught (BC 2.711). When Vulteius’s raft finally enters center stage in BC 4 the readers experience a déjà vu in their awareness that Lucan is putting his poetics of repetition on show.

Vulteius then stages an exemplum. His and his troops’ bilateral suicide reads as a civil war in miniature. It is a micro-image of the larger conflict in whose context this passage is set: totumque in partibus unis / bellorum fecere nefas (the others fight, and on one side performed the entire crime of wars, BC 4.548–49). Here, too, brothers kill brothers and sons fathers: fratribus incurrunt fratres natusque parenti (brothers charge at brothers and son at father, BC 4.563). Such a miniature version of civil war can also be found in Caesar’s account, where an armed conflict is about to break out between different Pompeian parties among those enclosed in Corfinium (Civ. 1.20.3). While Roman history repeats itself in seemingly endless cycles of civil war, literature as well looks back and repeats what has been told before. For Lucan cites two mythological examples from Ovid’s Metamorphoses, which he compares to Vulteius’s civil war fighting: Cadmus’ earth-sprung warriors and the men born from the dragon’s teeth in the Medea myth (BC 4.549–56). Already in their Ovidian incarnation Cadmus’s as well as Medea’s men bear the mark of civil war: the “fratricidal strife” of the former (civilibus . . . bellis, Met. 3.117) matches the fighting of the latter (acies civilis “internecine strife,” Met. 7.142). In addition both Ovidian accounts are linked to the sphere of spectacle. The birth/growth of Cadmus’s men in particular is likened by Ovid to the raising of a curtain in the theater: crescitque seges
clipeata virorum:/ sic, ubi tolluntur festis aulaeae theatris [ . . . ] (and the crop grows with the shields of warriors: so on festal days when the curtain in the theater is raised . . . , Met. 3.110–11).35 Cadmus’s and Medea’s men then transmit their civil war down to future generations, spelled out once more in repetition by Vulteius’s men.

In Lucan’s epic the Vulteius episode is neither the first time that our attention is directed toward people dying in a boat, nor will it be the last. The reader here witnesses a repetition of elements from the Massilian sea battle such as a father committing suicide—in a boat—when he sees his son dying (BC 3.721–51); at the same time we can make out forebodings of Pompey’s death—staged in a boat as a spectacle of the inner self (BC 8.610–62). What is more, the bodies of Vulteius’s men can be seen as representing both the Roman state body in its dissection and the Roman military body in general. The limbs of the military body turn against their leader (even if voluntarily), who on his part stands in with his body for his men. As indeed no other named individual dies, Vulteius’s death here serves as a representation of his men’s death. In addition parallels have been drawn between Vulteius and Pompey, who is killed by a deserted soldier, a former limb of his military body.36 In the same way in which Vulteius’s raft is a micro-image of civil war, Pompey’s body can be equated to that of the whole imperium Romanum, with his head eulogized as caput mundi.

Caesar’s Civil War and the Vulteius Episode

Spectacle

There is no direct Caesarian source for the Vulteius episode beyond two short references to it made by Caesar in retrospect.37 The latter of these strongly suggests that a report on the incident was at least planned or if composed has been lost in transmission.38 However, I propose that it is nevertheless possible to identify some Caesarean motifs and general themes that may have inspired

35. Cf. also the role vision plays in the story of Medea’s men: ubi viderunt (when they saw, Met. 7.131) and vidit (when she saw, Met. 7.135).
36. Bartsch 1997, 156 n. 36.
37. Cf. [se, i.e., Caesar] morte Curionis et detrimento Africani exercitus et Antonii militumque deditione ad Curicam ( . . . while Caesar himself had suffered the death of Curio and disaster to his African army, and the surrender of Antonius and his troops at Curicta, Civ. 3.10.5) and illi castra defenderent, fortissimeque Tito Pullieno, cuius opera proditum exercitum C. Antonii demonstravimus, eo loco propugnante (The resistance in this area was lead by Titus Pullienus, by whose agency, as we have shown, Gaius Antonius’s army had been betrayed, Civ. 3.675).
Lucan’s poetic output. One of the key issues of the Vulteius episode that has recently attracted scholarly attention is its inherent notion of spectacle and engagement.\footnote{39. Cf. Leigh 1997, 182–83 and Eldred 2002.}

Potential models are on offer from two passages in Caesar’s Bellum Civile where the killing of men is turned into a spectacle and then used as a powerful tool to demoralize the opponent’s troops and to increase the confidence of one’s own soldiers. Thus in the first book of Caesar’s account of the civil war the Caesarians kill four cohorts of Afranius’s men \textit{in conspectu utriusque} (in sight of both armies, \textit{Civ. 1.70.5}). The effect is described as devastating and rated a great success by Caesar: \textit{erat occasio bene gerendae rei. neque vero id Caesarem fugiebat, tanto sub oculis accepto detrimento, perterritum exercitum sustinerem non posse} [\ldots] \textit{cum in loco aequo atque aperto conflagretur} (Here was an opportunity for notable success. Caesar did not fail to realize that an army terrified by suffering such a loss under their very eyes would not be able to hold out [\ldots] if there was a battle on open and level ground, \textit{Civ. 1.71.1}). Furthermore the captives from the battle of Dyrrachium are handed over by Pompey to Labienus, who publicly (\textit{in omnium conspectu}) puts them to death to great effect (\textit{Civ. 3.71.4}). As a result the Pompeians are thrilled: \textit{his rebus tantum fiduciae ac spiritus Pompeianis accessit, ut non de ratione belli cogitarent, sed vicisse iam sibi viderentur} (These events put such confidence and courage into the Pompeians that they did not reflect on the nature of the struggle, but considered themselves to have won already, \textit{Civ. 3.72.1}). In a fashion not dissimilar, the deaths of the Vulteius episode as well will leave the Pompeians and the reader behind in amazement: \textit{ducibus mirantibus ulli / esse ducem tanti} (And their leaders are amazed that to any man a leader can be worth so much, \textit{BC 4.572–73}).

Lucan opens the Vulteius episode with a focalization in which he directs the reader’s view (\textit{BC 4.402–10}). He takes his starting point from the worldwide perspective of \textit{totum \ldots per orbem} (all the world), thereby again universalizing the extent of this war. Then he narrows the reader’s outlook down to the Adriatic Sea and finally the island of Curicta, where on the shore’s edge Antonius has been enclosed by enemy troops. One might read strength of will into Vulteius’s name and character by suggesting a wordplay on \textit{velle-vult}.\footnote{40. Cf. Maltby 1991, 657 for \textit{vultus-velle} and Henderson 1987, 139.} In addition the Vulteius episode also features a multitude of viewing and seeing vocabulary, personified by \textit{Vult-eius} himself, the face-man, as Henderson dubbed him.\footnote{41. On this pun cf. Eldred 2002, 60 and Henderson 1987, 139.} Much of the action in this episode is motivated by the desire to be seen or to remain hidden. There is also a play on darkness and light in the Vulteius episode
with the word lux being used to denote both daylight and life.\textsuperscript{42} Indeed daylight plays an important role in structuring this passage: while nightfall interrupts the fighting (pacemque habuere tenebrae “darkness brought on peace,” BC 4.473), daybreak lets it resume again (BC 4.529). Finally, the passage’s theatricality has invited analysis of the Vulteius episode as a naumachia, which places the Opitergii in a natural theater and turns the raft into a stage.\textsuperscript{43}

Food and Drink

A further topos that plays a major role in Caesar’s Commentarii and is taken over and illustrated in gory detail by Lucan is that of lack of food or drink. Indeed from time to time this seems the decisive factor in military success and can be identified in many cases as the main motivator of the action, thus surpassing the nefas (sacrilege) of killing Romans.\textsuperscript{44} Lucan’s Caesar is well aware of the functioning of hunger in the struggle for power, as is made clear by his thought: namque asserit urbes / sola famem (only famine sets cities free, BC 3.56–57). Not only does hunger reign in Caesar’s camp at Ilerda (BC 4.94) but Caesar also takes advantage of the lack of water in Afranius’s camp (BC 4.292–336), an episode related just before the Vulteius narrative. Later in this very episode hunger will offer its services, too. In the sentence auxilium fecere famem (they make their hunger help them, BC 4.308) auxilium could even be read as the military term “auxiliary troops.” At the end of the Afranius episode Lucan seizes the opportunity to make hunger the theme for a short moral treatise calling for moderation. The generically rather low-grade topos of food and drink, at home in comedy or satire, has here been built up to the dimensions of epic.\textsuperscript{45}

At the very beginning of the Vulteius episode we witness a variation on the unquenchable thirst of Afranius’s troops earlier in BC 4: the conquest of Antonius’s army by insatiable hunger: si sola recedat, / expugnat quae tuta, famem (secure from war’s attack if only famine would recede, BC 4.409–10). In contrast to other passages in both Caesar and Lucan, here hunger does not

\textsuperscript{42} Cf. Saylor 1990. Cf. vicino cum lux altissima Cancro est (when the sunlight is highest and Cancer near. BC 4.527) and stabat devota iuventus / damnata iam luce ferox (determined to die, the soldiers stood with life already renounced, fierce, BC 4.533–34).

\textsuperscript{43} Cf. Leigh 1997, 259 on BC 4.492–95.

\textsuperscript{44} Cf. Caes. Civ. 1.48–52 esp. 52, Caesar’s lack of food because of flood. Cf. Civ. 1.71, 78, 81, 84 for Afranius’s lack of water. Cf. further Civ. 3.47 and 49, where Caesarian soldiers are willing to live on bark from the trees in order to succeed, while at the same time the Pompeians are short of water as Caesar has built dykes to block their water supplies.

\textsuperscript{45} Gowers 1993, 2–8 points to literary inhibitions to describe food.
bring with it narrative closure but rather the opposite. For the rafts have to be sent from the mainland to help Antonius’s troops to escape—not from the pressing enemy but from hunger. Hunger thus initiates a story line not unlike its Ovidian counterpart—we remember the impressive personification of Fa-mes in Ovid’s Metamorphoses 8, which infects Erysichthon with deathly hunger.

**Fortuna**

Fortuna is a further agent in Caesar’s narrative who features large in Lucan’s epic as well: ac se Fortuna inclinaverat (and Fortune had so tipped the scales, Civ. 1.52.3) is where she appears first. In Caesar’s characteristically terse account the use of an abstract noun as persona agens seems noteworthy and prompts a commentator to speak of “the idea of an active power whose wishes change things.” Adam 1993. Fortune is clearly a prominent feature in Caesar’s narrative. Consequently in Lucan’s hyperbolic opus she is of even greater prominence—I count 146 instances of fortuna. In the search for gods (or similar) in Lucan’s godless epic the role of Fortuna has attracted much attention. Watching Caesar battling the über-storm in Bellum Civile 5 confirms the notion that in Lucan’s epic Fortune usually sides with Caesar (BC 5.654–671). Nevertheless both the Vulteius and the succeeding Curio episode in BC 4 are portrayed as adverse blows of fortune for Caesar, as highlighted already in their very first lines (BC 4.402–3 and 4.513–14). Moreover there are eight instances of fatum in the Vulteius episode, all but one employed in the sense of death, a stark contrast to what fatum usually denotes in less gloomy epics such as Virgil’s Aeneid. Accordingly the apparent futility of all human concerns in Lucan’s world driven by Fortuna and Fatum opens up Vulteius’s story to a nihilistic reading. It remains to be seen, however, whether this passage invites such a view or whether it nevertheless displays traces of poetic self-consciousness or ideology.

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46. Cf. Carter 1993 ad Civ. 1.52.3. Further instances can be found in celeriter fortuna mutatur (fortune swiftly changed, Civ. 1.59.1); cur denique fortunam perictaretur (and why should he tempt fate? Civ. 1.72.2); hic subitam commutationem fortunaed videre licuit (and now a sudden change of fortune could be observed, Civ. 3.27.1); sed fortuna, quae plurimum potest cum in reliquis rebus tum praecipue in bello, parvis momentis magnas rerum commutationes efficit; (but luck, universally powerful but particularly so in war, brings about great changes of circumstance by slight adjustments of her balance, Civ 3.68.1), and especially ut ipsa fortuna illum obicere Pompeyo videretur (so that fortune herself seems to be putting him [Domitius] in Pompey’s path, Civ 3.79.3).
In typical Lucanian synecdochic style we have found that the Vulteius episode stands *pars pro toto* for the whole civil war and that it forms a *mise en abyme* of the entire epic as it includes, mirrors, and retells many of its main issues. It features its own epilogue and asserts its uniqueness with the statement *pietas ferientibus una / non repetisse fuit* (the single duty of those who strike was not to repeat themselves, *BC 4.565–66*). The Vulteius episode thus even has its own sense of closure in a world of endless repetition.

Lucan likes tableaux, likes to place his characters and usually puts them on a carefully prepared stage. In the Vulteius episode, then, we find ekphrasis of landscape (*BC 4.455–61*) and the place where the raft is captured has long been recognized as a *locus horribilis*, which subverts elements of Virgil’s Carthaginian bay and leads the reader to expect no good. Lucan associates the two parties of the civil war with the elements of land and sea, assigning land to Caesar and sea to Pompey as the elements that side with them. Caesar thus crosses the Alps with ease but is threatened by rivers, while the sea favors Pompey at Brundisium. The cliffs the raft is caught at, however, do not really fit into either category, as they combine elements of both land and sea. Even though, following the rule outlined above, the reader expects a Pompeian victory because we are confronted with Caesarians on a water vessel, this setting makes us aware that the outcome of the conflict may not prove as clear-cut as one would expect; a surprise is in the offing. As I have indicated earlier, the fabrication of the rafts will give us some indication of how this passage is asking to be read.

While the Cilicians stick to their traditional guile, the project of building the rafts is described as *nova furta...exquisita* (a new trick was sought, *BC 4.416*). The word *furtum*, however, can also bear the sense of literary theft and plagiarism (OLD 1c), a meaning that certainly catches the attention of readers alive to the poetics of repetition. This construction—so we are told—will not be

49. Cf. chapter 2 on Erictho and Thessaly. Masters 1992, 150–78 on the Thessalian excursus has illuminated the important role played by Lucan’s descriptions and excursus on landscape in this process.


51. Schönberger 1960 gives some examples.


53. Cf. also at *Pompeianus fraudes innectere ponto / antiqua parat arte Cilix* (but Pompeius’s Cilicians with their skill of old prepare to weave stratagems in the sea, *BC 4.448–49*), a verse that as Sklenar 2003, 26 has observed exudes a certain irony as the Cilicians were renowned pirates in Roman historical memory and it was precisely Pompey who stopped this activity.
what we expect: *neque enim de more...* (they do not follow custom, BC 4.417). The ship’s building material will be used in an unusual way (*sed firma gerendis / molibus insolito contexunt robora ductu* “but in a strange line they link together timber to carry a great bulk,” BC 4.418–19). The phrase *insolito... ductu* (BC 4.419) becomes even more conspicuous if one considers the use of *ductus* as a rhetorical term for structure, employed as such by Quintilian (*Inst. 4.2.53* and 9.4.30). The term even appears in the Epitaphium Lucani (*poet. minores V 74, 3*) characterizing his writing style: *continuo numquam derexi carmina ductu, quae tractim serpant: plus mihi comma placet* (I have never written the verses in continuous flow to creep along draggingly: I prefer the short phrase, trans. J. A. Crook).\(^\text{54}\) In addition the verb *contexere* (*contexunt, BC 4.419*), usually employed for “joining timbers together,” also denotes composing writings and weaving texts: OLD 1 + 2 provides (amusingly) the example *Caesaris... commentarios... contexui* (I have joined together Caesaar’s commentarii, Hirt. Gal. 8.pr.2). Furthermore, the timbers used here are of special strength (*firma... robora, BC 4.418–19*). Again the word *robur* that appears here is no poetically innocent term, but often serves in Lucan as a metaphor for the literary tradition.\(^\text{55}\) And even the word *moles* (*molibus, BC 4.419*) boasts remarkable versatility. It can denote substructures for a defensive structure (*moles, OLD 3b*), a large crowd of people (OLD 1), or simply an “epic” undertaking or enterprise (OLD 6). The raft’s building process thus brims with metaliterary vocabulary suggestive of the composition of a work of literature.

### Fama

This leads us to the second, much discussed aspect of this passage’s exemplariness, that of virtue and its resulting fame. Vulteius lures his soldiers into suicide with the promise that this action will turn into a memorable exemplum, a lasting monument surpassing those of the past.

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nescio quod nostris magnum et memorabile fatis
exemplum, Fortuna, paras. quaecumque per aevum
exhibuit monimenta fides servataque ferro
militiae pietas, transisset nostra iuventus.
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\(^{54}\) Cf. the definition by C. Chirius Fortunatianus (probably 4th century AD), *Ars rhetorica 1.5 quid est ductus? Quo modo tota causa agenda sit.* (What is ductus? The way in which the entire case is treated).

\(^{55}\) Masters 1992, 27 and 29 with n. 44; Leigh 1999 on the philosophical implications of this building material.
[In our fate, Fortune, you intend some great and memorable example. All the records that loyalty and the soldier’s duty observed by the sword have shown throughout the ages, our army could have surpassed.] (BC 4.496–99)

The desire to gain fame lies behind the desire to be seen and to have both armies (and even Caesar, if only this were possible) as witnesses. Accordingly in his speech Vulteius constantly reassures his troops of their audience: in conspicua (in the open, BC 4.492), praebebunt testes (we have been seen, BC 4.493), spectabunt (they will watch, BC 4.495); and at the end of the passage, Lucan can trumpet this raft’s fame: 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).

Again let me point to Caesarian precedents. Caesar lists renown as one of the causes of the conflict between him and Pompey. Pompey envies the fame of the Caesar (invidia atque obtrectatione laudis suae “he twisted his judgment from malice and jealousy of his own renown,” Civ. 1.7.1). Soon thereafter Caesar emphasizes his desire to harm Pompey’s reputation: tertio ut auctoritatem qua ille maxime apud exteras nationes niti videbatur minueret, cum fama per orbem terrarum percrebruisset illum a Caesare obsideri neque audere proelio dimicare (and third to undermine the authority that his opponent [Pompey] seemed to enjoy, especially with foreign nations, when the whole world came to hear that he was under siege from Caesar and did not dare to fight him on the field of battle, Civ. 3.43.3).

The primacy of his own fame and reputation is of the utmost importance for Caesar: sibi semper primam fuisse dignitatem vitaque potiorem (indirect speech: “For himself [Caesar said] his standing had always been the leading consideration, more important than his life,” Civ. 1.9.2). The significance of both fame and rumor can be seen from further examples: rumor management is particularly effective for improving Caesar’s situation: multa rumore fingebant, ut paene bellum confectum videretur (They invented much by way of rumor, so that the war seemed practically over, Civ. 1.53.1).56 There are even cases in which rumor takes over a leading role in the plot and plays a vital part in conducting the war.57 When the Pompeians spread the fama of their victory at Dyrrachium, Caesar runs into considerable difficulties: fama percrebruerat pulsam fugere

56. Cf. also extinctis rumoribus “with the rumors scotched” (Civ. 1.60.5).
57. Cf. nuntiatum est adesse Scipionem cum legionibus, magna opinione et fama omnium; nam plerumque in novitate [rem] fama antecedit (there came the news, accompanied by much rumor and general speculation, that Scipio and his legions were near; for when some new development occurs, in most cases rumor outruns the fact, Civ. 3.36.1).
Anatomizing Civil War

Caesarem paene omnibus copiis amissis. haec itinera infesta reddiderat, haec civitates nonnullas ab eius amicitia avertebat (and a wildly exaggerated rumor had spread, that Caesar had been routed and was fleeing with the loss of nearly all his men. This news had not only made the journey dangerous, but was even turning some communities against him, Civ. 3.79.4). It takes Caesar a while to catch up with fama who had preceded him (sed eo fama iam praecurrerat “but he was preceded there by rumor,” Civ. 3.80.2). But soon enough he manages to outrun her: et [Caesar] Metropolim venit, sic ut nuntios expugnati oppidi famamque antecederet (Caesar came to Metropolis, so that he arrived there before the news or the rumor of [Gomphi’s] storming, Civ. 3.80.7). In the end he is even able to counter the false rumors spread about him. After Pharsalus, however, it will be Pompey who is haunted by rumors about Caesar’s imminent arrival (BC 3.102.8). Last but not least, as Caesar’s clementia toward the Mysilians demonstrates, reputation can be of much use even for those who have been defeated: Caesar magis eos pro nomine et vetustate quam pro meritis in se civitatis conservans (Caesar spared them, more in accordance with the fame and antiquity of their state than with what they deserved of himself, Civ. 2.22.6).

As we have seen from my brief survey, there are already multiple facets and aspects of fama inherent in Caesar’s account, many of which Lucan employs in the wider scope of his epos as well, as we have seen in chapter 2.

The death of Vulteius and his men seems a distortion of the idea of devotio, the quasi-sacrificial death of the one for the many that Roman history and the Aeneid glorify. In Vulteius’s case this is turned into the death of the many for one. Moreover this “one” is not the charismatic leader of the raft but rather the overarching leader, Caesar. It has been argued that through the lack of naming and individuality given to the men in their death their glory is confined to the epilogue of the passage and that thus their attempt to become an exemplum has failed. According to this reading Lucan’s reassurance of fame would be deeply ironic.

This interpretation, however, misses out on the rhetoric embodied in this passage, composed with insistent emphasis on repetition. Vulteius speaks to his men but also to us; and, as Quintilian reassures us, he continues to do so when his speech becomes the topos of many suasoriae, rhetorical showpieces that

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58. Cf. also per orbem terrarum fama ac litteris victoriam eius diei concelebrabant (they made that day’s victory famous, by letter and by word of mouth, to the whole world, Civ. 3.72.4).
59. Cf. isdem permoti rumoribus, portas clauserunt— . . . cognito ex captivis— portas aperuerunt (being swayed by the same rumors, they shut their gates . . . when they heard [of the fate of Gomphi] from prisoners . . . they opened the gates, Civ. 5.81.1).
60. Eldred 2002, 72 and 76 with n. 38.
give imaginary advice.\textsuperscript{61} For Vulteius’s men, the \textit{Opitergini}, succeed in becoming an exemplum—in rhetorical handbooks at least.\textsuperscript{62} We might even assume that the \textit{Opitergini} had already found their way into the rhetorical schools in Lucan’s time. Moreover the tax relief the city of Opitergium received in their honor from Caesar, together with Livy’s account of their deeds, will have helped to keep their memory alive. The speech of Vulteius can thus be read as a rhetorical exercise, with the audience well aware of its role as a typical exemplum—in both the moral and the rhetorical sense.

What is more, there are parallels between the preceding Petreius scene and the Vulteius episode.\textsuperscript{63} Both leaders face similar situations and both influence the motivation of their troops with a fiery speech. Thus the two parties, the Pompeians under Petreius and the Caesarians under Vulteius, serve as exempla of opposing positions. While one side chooses to surrender and is then allowed to live a peaceful life outside the Roman army (BC 4.383–85), the other opts for (Stoic) self-disembodiment lest it be absorbed by the enemy’s military body. They are keen to keep their identity, so that their fame may not disappear, absorbed by and merged with Pompey’s army. We know from our sources that the rest of Antonius’s army, which Vulteius’s men are part of, surrenders in the end—it is subsumed within the Pompeian army and must fight for the other side: \textit{his Antonianos milites admiscuerat} (with these [soldiers] he had mixed the soldiers who had been serving with Antonius, Caes. \textit{Civ.} 3.4.2). Accordingly one might take Vulteius’s raft as a quasi-funereal pyre on which the men have thrown themselves willingly in a repetition of the Herculean idea of constructing one’s own pyre and dying in dignity as long doing so is still possible (BC 2.157–58).

One question scholarship has focused on is whether Vulteius’s men win fame through virtue or eventually fail to display real virtue. Repeatedly the argument has been brought forward that the passion of \textit{furor} (anger) taints Vulteius’s men’s Stoic virtue, and that their attempt to gain virtue is thus ultimately

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{61} Cf. Quint. \textit{Inst.} 3.8.23 in a passage on deliberation: \textit{ita propter id ipsum non est necess, quia perire potius licet; denique non fecerunt Saguntini nec in rate Opitergini circumventi} (the situation itself does not make surrender “necessary,” because it is open to them to die. To clinch the point, the Saguntines did not surrender, nor did the men from Opitergium who were surrounded on the raft); and especially \textit{Inst.} 3.8.30: \textit{Saepe vero et utilitatem despiciendam esse dicimus ut honesta faciamus . . . (ut cum illis Opiterginis damus consilium ne se hostibus dedant, quamquam perituri sint nisi fecerint} (Often indeed we say that expediency must be spurned, so that we can act honorably [as for instance when we advise the men of Opitergium not to surrender, though they will die unless they do so]).
\item \textsuperscript{62} For an exemplum used as a rhetorical term cf. Cic. \textit{Inv.} 1.49 and Quint. \textit{Inst.} 5.11.1.
\item \textsuperscript{63} Radicke 2004, 294.
\end{itemize}
doomed. \(^{64}\) Lucan, however, need not be aiming to design a coherent philosophical system in his epic, but rather follows the logic of civil war. \(^{65}\) I would like to suggest, following Fantham’s proposal, that we read Caesar “as the actual representative and embodiment of the divine anger which overthrew the Roman Republic and the liberty of its elite.” \(^{66}\) The phrase *furor est* *(BC 4.517)* would then provide a clear marker that the inspiration for suicide is loyalty to Caesar, the divine anger, for he provides the men’s identity, as their *dux* (leader). \(^{67}\) By taking on board the ultimate emotion of civil war, *furor*, the men of Vulteius themselves become part of the civil war and thus follow a different though perhaps unheroic code. \(^{68}\) As far as the question of virtue is concerned, both sides employ *fraudes or furtam* (tricks) in the first instance, which may already indicate that they are not following the usual path toward glory. \(^{69}\) In the end, however, as we have noted, *fama* will praise not the men but the raft, which as we have seen is a metaphor for Lucan’s poetic production *(BC 4.573–74, quoted above)*. It is thereby ultimately the poet who earns fame in and with this passage, not the men.

**Repetition**

To conclude and to return to the leitmotif of repetition, I shall continue with some more general thoughts and make a bold suggestion about Lucan’s language. Critics have repeatedly noted “offensive repetitions” and a “pointless redundancy of expression” in Lucan’s epic style and even accused him of “a general lack of care” and go on to note “the more casual repetitions in the commentary.” \(^{70}\) Suggestions as to why these occur seem not entirely satisfactory: “It may be that Lucan was insensitive in an unusual degree to repetition; but it seems more likely that it was haste of composition in a refined medium that led to unwelcome echoes.” \(^{71}\) Goreman, however, shows how Lucan pounds

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\(^{65}\) Cf. Fantham 1992a, 12 on Lucan: “Young men usually have more immediate interests than philosophy and few problems that require its assistance.”  
\(^{66}\) Fantham 2003, 249.  
\(^{67}\) Only after their death are Vulteius’s men released (cf. *remittere*, BC 4.571 and OLD 6 for *remittere* as releasing an army).  
\(^{68}\) Only at Pharsalus does war turn into *rabies*.  
\(^{69}\) Cf. Sklenar 2003, 28. He argues that this constructs a moral balance between Caesarians and Pompeians.  
\(^{70}\) Mayer 1981, 13. Cf. also the lists of “careless” repetitions in Heitland’s introduction to Haskins 1887, lxxxi–lxxxiv.  
\(^{71}\) Mayer 1981, 13. Sometimes, however Lucan’s repetition is part of a greater scheme: Lucan
the same note by listing examples of his exuberant and repetitive use of body imagery in the slaughter scene of the Vulteius episode (BC 4.540–73). Moreover there are even more instances of repetition, in many cases of words embodying key concepts of the passage: exemplum (497, 575), dux (466, 540), virtus (470, 491, 512, 558, 576, 581), fama (509, 574), lux (447, 473, 483, 527, 534, 568), ratis (420, 430, 434, 446, 453, 457, 466, 471, 507, 571, 574), mors (479, 491, 506, 509, 517, 533, 538, 557, 558, 570, 580). One could argue that Lucan simply knows how to drive home his point (repeatedly).

We might, however, also elevate this feature to a conscious dogma of Lucan’s style (Stilprinzip). Wills in his book on repetition in Latin poetry directs attention toward repetition in Lucan used meticulously and to great effect. However, these examples fall under the category of “figured” repetition, syntactic and positional structures that we readily accept as figures of repetition, commonly understood as conveying some deeper meaning. Contrariwise, Wills points in his epilogue to the phenomenon of “unfigured” repetition: “unfigured” for us in our own poetic, or in our knowledge of ancient poetics. In a final footnote he goes on to suggest: “In a more diffuse way, apparently irregular repetitions may play a role as recurrent images which contribute to the articulation and development of theme in a play or epic. [. . .] perhaps it should be seen as a condensed use of formula or leitmotiv.” Schönberger provides a valuable account of the workings of leitmotifs in Lucan and the refined techniques of variation the poet applies. He demonstrates how Lucan connects the threefold depiction of Pompey’s floating corpse only through the threefold repetition of the word truncus while varying the other elements of that image: truncusque. . . iactatur aquis (the corpse is tossed by the water, BC 8.698–99); aequore truncus / conspicitur (the corpse is visible in the water, BC 8.721–22), ad truncum, qui fluctu paene relatus . . . pendebat ( . . . to the corpse, which, almost

72. Cf. Goreman 2001, 282: dextra (hand), BC 4.542, 559; manus (hand), 460, 562; viscera (entrails), 545, 566; vulnera (wound) 543, 546, 551, 559, cruor/cruentus (blood) 567, 570.

73. Similarly Paratore 1992, 34 lists all instances of repetition with which Lucan hammers home the fact that Antaeus regains strength from the earth (“Su questo batte il breve spunto lucaneo con tipiche iterazioni di parole”): vires, BC 4.598, 636, 604; tetigere parentem, 4.599, contingere matrem, 4.615, tactae . . . parentis, 4.645.

74. Cf. Wills 1996, 220–21 on fratibus incurruit fratres (brothers attack brothers, BC 4.563) where the repetition represents equivalent combatants; on BC 4.556–59, where a polyptoton of mors (death) is flanked by two lots of falling youth, and the repetition of dux (leader) in BC 4.572–73 ducibus mirantibus ulli / esse ducem tanti.

75. Wills 1996, 475.

76. Wills 1996, 477 n. 14 (my emphasis).
carried off by the waves, was hanging [on the edge of the shore], BC 8.753–54).\textsuperscript{77} In this vein I suggest that Lucan’s constant repetition serves to point to key concepts in specific passages or the entire epic, while simultaneously it may be perceived as a leitmotif that points to the poetics of repetition in civil war and as symptomatic of Lucan’s awareness of his role as epic successor.

Repetition and Endings

Direct verbal repetition apart, in the epic texture the adverbs \textit{iterum} and \textit{rursus} (again/repeatedly) function as clear indicators of Lucan’s poetics of repetition. As we have seen, these two words frequently serve Lucan in the \textit{Bellum Civile} as markers of programmatic reiteration: the return to chaos and the prophecy of the \textit{matrona furens} in \textit{Bellum Civile} \textit{1}, as well as the frame of the old man’s speech in \textit{Bellum Civile} \textit{2}, all sport this feature. And already in the \textit{Aeneid} the \textit{iterum . . . iterum} of the Sibyl of Cumae predicts that the Trojans will have to fight the Trojan War all over again: \textit{causa mali tanti coniunx iterum hospita Teucris / externique iterum thalami} (The cause of all this Trojan woe is again an alien bride, again a foreign marriage! \textit{Aen.} 6.93–94).\textsuperscript{78} Lucan, too, does not tire of pointing out that we witness repeats and that the factions rise once more. The \textit{matrona furens} thus sees the factions rise again and makes her virtual journey through the world repeatedly: \textit{consurgunt partes iterum, totumque per orbem / rursus eo} (BC 1.692–93). This notion of a second, reiterated fight is expressed at many junctures: in BC \textit{4} superhero Hercules has to seize giant Antaeus a second time (\textit{iterum}) and repeats their fight (BC 4.640–42) and Lucan fills out the silence of the Delphic oracle with a reference to a second tyrannicidal Brutus as murderer of Caesar: \textit{vindicis an gladii facinus poenasque furorum / regnaque ad uliores iterum redeuntia Brutos, / ut peragat fortuna, taces?} (Are you silent on the deed of the avenging sword, the punishments of madness and tyranny again returning to vengeance of the Bruti, to enable Fortune to perform them? BC 5.206–8). Consequently we are not surprised when the battle at Pharsalus is fashioned as a second Gigantomachy (\textit{iterum}), a repeat of the fight between gods and giants (BC 7.144–48). In addition Pompey could easily resummon his forces and launch a further battle, a second Pharsalus: \textit{cunctas impellere gentes / rursus in arma potes rursusque in fata redire} (you [Pompey] could again impel to war all the nations and again return to your former fortune, BC 7.717–19). This constant doubling culminates in a cameo at the epic’s very end when

\textsuperscript{77} Cf. Schönberger 1961, 31–36.
\textsuperscript{78} Quint 1989, 33.
Caesar himself is subject to repeated attacks (*nam rursus in arma / auspiciis Ganymedis eunt ac multa secundo / proelia Marte gerunt* “again they go to fight, now under the command of Ganymedes [and not Achillas any more] and wage many battles with success,” *BC* 10.530–32) Here repetition has become self-propelled: war will go on despite the fact that its instigator Achillas has been cut out. Shortly before the text’s abrupt end Lucan spells out repetition, one of the epic’s formative concepts. We as readers are left to ponder Lucan’s key issues now that the narrative has subsided.\(^{79}\)

Throughout the epic we encounter reiteration on a smaller scale as well. Consequently not only tree trunks in the Massilian grove fall and rise again (*iterum, BC* 3.417–19) but human bodies, too, are resummoned for necromancy by Erictho. As the witch is the epic’s most powerful character, only she has the power to promises closure in death. As reward for his service she promises eternal rest to the reawakened corpse: *sit tanti vixisse iterum: nec verba nec herbae / audebunt longae somnum tibi solvere Lethes / a me morte data* (Think this worth the cost of a second life: neither words nor drugs will dare destroy your sleep of lengthy Lethe, once death is given by me, *BC* 6.768–70). Repetition is even written into the epic landscape on both geographical and cosmic level as rivers such as the Tigris are born again from a new source (*BC* 3.261–63), stars move in circles, and Libra swings always back into balance (*BC* 4.58–59). Lucan also extends his program of repetition to the political and textual body. Accordingly Pompey is shown reassembling the senate at Epirus. Here Lucan’s unmaking of Rome reverses Aeneas’s progress from Buthrotum toward future Rome as told by Virgil in *Aeneid* 3.\(^{80}\) The reader feels *Aeneid* 3 shining through when Lucan draws attention to the repetition by piling *rursus* onto *redeunt: omnia rursus / membra loco redeunt* (now all the limbs return to their place again [note the body imagery], *BC* 5.36). What is more, a second senate meeting looms ahead in *Bellum Civile* 8, a direct repetition of the earlier scene.\(^{81}\) Lucan has a habit of scattering motifs and morsels of information around his epic, which gain their full significance only at one specific point.\(^{82}\) One example of this technique is the frequent resounding of the Cilicians’ reputation for being pirates (*BC* 3.228, 8.257–56), which comes to full bloom at this theme’s last occurrence, when Cato scorns the Cilician Tarcondimotus by accusing him of reverting to being a pirate: *o numquam pacate Cilix, iterumne rapinas / vadis in aequoreas?* (O Cilician, never pacified, again do you proceed to plunder on the seas? *BC* 79. Masters 1992, 247–59 defends the epilogue as it stands as the epic’s end Lucan intended and thus reads it as the author’s final contribution to the epic’s discourses.


81. Schönberger 1961, 91–92 analyzes how these two scenes are connected by leitmotifs.

82. Schrijvers 1989 points to Lucan’s technique of autointerpretation on a larger scale.
9.222–23). Lucan here relies on the reader to be acquainted with this topos at this point as no further explanation is offered.

Another figure immersed in repetition is Pompey’s wife, Cornelia. She is his second wife, and is left behind by him twice, first on Lesbos and then at the shores of Egypt: iterumne relinquor, / Thessalicis summota malis? (Am I deserted a second time, kept away from Thessaly’s disaster? BC 8.584–85). Repetition will become her role, as she reiterates mourning for Pompey wherever she appears. After his murder this becomes her life: sed magis, ut visa est lacrimis exhausta solutas / in vultus effusa comas, Cornelia puppe / egrediens, rursus geminato verbere plangent (but when Cornelia was seen, as she left the ship, worn out by tears, with loosened tresses spread across her face, still more they wail, their blows again redoubling, BC 9.171–73).  

Apart from Erictho the only character in the epic able to break through the rings of repetition is Caesar, who manages to escape the endless up and down of the über-storm in BC 5 when a wave sets him on land rather than “casting him down from the sea’s high heap”: nec rursus ab alto / aggere deiecit pelagi (BC 5.673–74). Not only will Caesar push things further by instituting a new form of government, but he even assumes ascendancy over time. According to Roman practice Caesar as consul lends his name to the year of the battle of Pharsalus (BC 5.391–92). This tradition comes close to being meaningless once the princeps is installed and the consuls are reduced to mere shadows of a name: tantum careat ne nomine tempus / menstruus in fastos distinguit saecula consul (except to prevent time lacking a name, consuls for a month mark out the ages in the calendar, BC 5.398–99). Caesar’s calendar reform will reempower time again and writes his own name into the months of every year—till kingdom come.

Stepping back from my examples, let me introduce more general considerations about the logic of repetition in Lucan and start with looking at repetition in some of Lucan’s epic predecessors. In his examination of the Aeneid Quint differentiates between negative and positive repetition. The former manifests itself in “an obsessive circular return to a traumatic past,” through the repeatedly failing attempts to found new versions or replicas of Troy. The latter is the rerun of the Trojan War as a war against the native Latins. What makes it positive is that this is a repeat “with a difference.”

83. Keith 2008, 236–53 traces Cornelia’s lament throughout the epic.
84. Caesar even announces his powerful plans: media inter proelia semper / stellarum caelique plagis superisque vacavi, / nec meus Eudoxi vincetur fastibus annus (always in the midst of battles I found time for higher things, for regions of the stars and sky, nor will my own year be worsted by Eudoxus’s calendar, BC 10.185–87). Cf. Feeney 2007 on aspects of Caesar’s calendar and Schmidt 2005, 331 for the dissolution of time in Seneca’s tragedies.
85. Quint 1989, 10.
86. Quint 1989, 10. I reproduce Quint’s highlighting.
will be the winners; we set sail toward Rome and fall into line with Virgilian teleology. In contrast, Lucan takes negative repetition to the extreme in endless circles of civil war.

Ovid’s penchant for self-repetition makes him repeat himself internally within a work and also finds him reusing material from earlier works, so that he becomes his own continuator. This helps Ovid to connect and unify his poetic corpus. Lucan follows Ovid’s example when repeating himself internally to bind his fragmented epic together. Repetition is here deliberately harnessed in structuring the epic text. *Bellum Civile* 9, for example, gains much of its structural coherence from repeatedly returning to the motif of Cato’s *virtus*.

The reader, however, is left to ponder whether Lucan’s lack of teleology leaves us caught in the endless repetition of civil war, or better whether Lucan’s teleology must depend at least in part on the viewpoint of his audiences, implied or actual. On the *Aeneid* Quint observes: “The victors experience history as a coherent, end-directed story told by their own power; the losers experience a contingency that they are powerless to shape to their own ends.” For the *Bellum Civile* this means that some may perceive it as a narrative that leads straight to the reign of Nero as announced by the author at the beginning. Others, however, may get lost in a degrading, disconcerting, depressing labyrinth of repetitious cycles of violence.

Nevertheless, to the modern reader’s surprise, we also find readings of Lucan that are far from complaining about Lucan’s lack of closure. Some, as we shall see, simply create their own ending in order to come to terms with the epic’s end as it is transmitted. Others seek more radical solutions by restructuring: the middle-Irish translation of Lucan, *In Cath Catharda*, breaks off after the battle of Pharsalus. If, however, we collect together the medieval *argumenta* of the *Bellum Civile*, which for centuries flanked the reader’s entry to each of its books, and if we then assemble these to form one continuous line, they form a coherent account, and succeed in creating the impression of a continuous narrative. Moreover this very short history of the civil war (as told by Lucan) is studded with line endings from the *Bellum Civile* (as marked below), rooting itself firmly in Lucan’s text. Above all, as we shall see, it provides its own interpretation of how the epic ends.

89. Quint 1993, 9.
90. Henderson 1998c, 125–26 thinks about a Roman dispute whether the civil war between Caesar and Pompey ever ended at all, i.e., was separated from the second-triumvirate-through-to-Actium war.
91. Cf. Harris 1998, ch. 5. Mayer 1981, 26 n. 2 proposes a lack of interest in what follows on the translator’s side as the reason for this end point.
ARGUMENTA LUCANI

1.
Proponit primus liber, invehit, invocat atque exponit causas, cursus properantis ad urbem Caesaris et nimios hic narrat in urbe timores.

[The first book sets out the subject, rebukes, invokes, and sets out the causes and the onset of Caesar as he hastens to the City, and relates the overreaction of the City.]

2.
Quadruplices questus libri pars prima secundi continet; eiusdem pars proxima verba Catonis et Bruti. dicit, quo foedere Martia nupsit. hostis in occursum ducit pars tertia; Magnum opposuisse manus notat et quod Caesaris ira cuncta ruunt. arc-esque capit, cedentibus instat. ast uni vitam tribuit qui nuntius hosti, exemplumque fuit; quo viso Magnus ad omnes turmas ipse suas hortandas magna minatur. hinc pars quarta notat Pompeium tunc properasse Brundisium; tandemque videns maris ostia claudi Hesperiam puppesque duas in parte reliquit.

[The first part of the second book contains four laments; the second part tells the words of Cato and Brutus. It tells by what pact Martia (i.e., Marcia) was wedded. The third part leads us to the coming together of the enemy, notes that Magnus set up his opposing force, and that at the wrath of Caesar there was total commotion (ruinous collapse). He captures the fortresses and presses upon the withdrawing enemy. But he spared the life of one man, who went and told the foe and was an example: beholding which, Magnus goes round all his troops exhorting them and threatening mightily. The fourth part tells us how Pompey then hurried to Brundisium, and finally, seeing the portals of the sea were closed, he abandoned Hesperia, leaving two vessels behind.]

3.
Tertius exponit primo quid Iulia dixit, quid Magnus fecit, audax quo Curio missus. altera pars libri dicit, quod Caesar in urbem
The third book describes, first, what Julia said, what Magnus did, whither bold Curio was sent. The other half of the book tells how Caesar proceeded to the City and handed the treasure to the troops at Rome against the will of Metellus and notes who followed the standards of Magnus Pompey. The last part tells how Caesar on the way to the shores of Spain stopped at Massilia, but Brutus defeated this city at sea.

4.
At quarti libri narrat pars prima, quod ivit
Caesar in Hispanos ad iussa ducesque reversos.
mortem Vultei cum multis altera pars dat.
ultima, quod Varum pepulit campoque fugavit
Curio, fraude Iubae cecidit qui strage suorum.

The first part of book 4 tells how Caesar went against the Spanish who returned to the commands of their generals. The second part gives us the death of Vulteius and many others. The last part has how Curio repelled Varus and chased him from the field, Curio, who fell by the deceit of Juba amid the slaughter of his men.

5.
In prima quinti Pompeio Roma regenda
est data. multa timens pro se responsa recepit
Appius; exponit pars proxima seditionem sedatam poena. mare transit urbe relict
Caesar, qui questus, quod non Antonius ultra
iverat, expertus fuit ipse pericula ponti.
ultima, quod posita mansit Cornelia Lesbo.

At the beginning of book 5 Rome is given over to Pompey to rule. Appius fearfully receives many oracles on his own position. Part 2 sets out the mutiny, quelled by punishment. Caesar leaves the City and crosses the sea; and, complaining that Antony has not gone further, himself experiences the perils of the ocean. The last part has how Cornelia stayed put on Lesbos.
6. “Postquam castra” notat, quod Caesar victus ab hoste fugit in Emathiam, quamvis clausisset is ipsum. Hinc et Thessaliam quae sit gentemque profanam describit. damnat Sextum non digna petentem.

[“Postquam castra” tells how Caesar, worsted by the enemy, fled to Emathia, although he had hemmed them in. Then it describes Thessaly and its godless people. It condemns Sextus for making an ignoble petition.]

7. “Segnior Oceano” casu quo bella geruntur ostendit primo, sic et quae dixit uterque. proxima pars bellum describit, et ultima, Magnum devictum cepisse fugam. sed Caesar habendas militibus monstravit opes castrisque recedit.

[“Segnior Oceano” first tells for what reason fighting arose, and likewise what both generals said. The next part describes the war and the last part how Magnus, defeated, took flight. But Caesar shows his soldiers the booty they can have and returns to camp.]


[“I am super Herculeas” relates where Magnus fled to and what he said . . . when he determined to search out the Parthians: but the purpose of Magnus was unfulfilled. The second part tells how Pompey was carried off by an unworthy death, and the last part records his tomb in Egypt.]

9. “At non in Pharia” dicit, quod bella Catoni libertate placent, qui Sextum multa minantem corripuit, postquam scivit de funere Magni. altera pars multos correptos voce Catonis dicit per Syrtes fore multa pericula passos.
tertia quod Caesar simulavit ferre dolorem 
nec doluit saevus generi cervice recisa.

["At non in Pharia" tells how war is pleasing to Cato by means of liberty, 
how he chided Sextus, who was making many threats when he heard of 
the death of Magnus. The next part tells how the multitude was chided 
by the voice of Cato and suffered many dangers through the Syrtis. The 
third part tells how Caesar pretended to bear sorrow but, the sadist, was 
not sorry to see the severed head of his son-in-law.]

10. 
"Ut primum" primo notat ut perrexit ad urbem 
Aegypti Caesar et ut est Cleopatra locuta. 
et dapibus sumptis Nili disquisitur ortus. 
parsque secunda refert famulos qui fata parabant 
prava duci caesos adversa nefandaque passos.92

["Ut primum" first tells how Caesar reached the city of Egypt and what 
Cleopatra said, and at the banquet there was discussion of the source 
of the Nile. And the second part tells how the underlings who had pre-
pared a wicked fate for the leader were killed, after suffering reverses and 
unspeakable fates.] (trans. J. A. Crook)

Having followed this account through (as without doubt over the centuries 
many a student lacking the time to take in the entire epic will have done) we 
gain the impression of reading a well-rounded story of war, murder, and final 
revenge. In particular, by focusing the end of this summary on the killing of 
Achillas and Lucan’s subsequent apostrophe hailing another victim sacrificed 
to the shade of Pompey (altera, Magne, tuis iam victima mittitur umbris, BC 
10.524), the author of the argumenta gives the plot a strong sense of closure. 
The argumenta thus cut out the final 16 verses of the epic and in this version 
the Bellum Civile terminates with a prophetic utterance of the authorial voice 
predicting the murder of Caesar (BC 10.529). What we would miss out on in 
this reading is the epic’s final spin toward repetition, which, looking back to 
the Scaeva episode simultaneously, builds up tension and concern for Caesar’s 
safety.93 Rossi observes that “the narrative stops abruptly, both creating the im-

92. Anth. 806 (carmina saeculi xii–xiv), quoted from Riese 1906. For books 2 and 4 there also 
exist poetic versions; cf. Anth. 719c.

93. Rossi 2005, 256–58 explores the ambiguity inherent in the epic’s end. The epic breaks off 
close to where Caesar’s own account terminates and follows the Homeric model of ending with the 
pression that the story is interrupted in medias res and building a clear expectation for a sequitur to come.”

In the immediate future, outside the scope of the epic we might have witnessed a further aristeia of Scaeva, confirming that the *Bellum Civile* is a narrative that moves in circles. For sure, however, once Caesar is murdered by his peers he will become a version of Pompey, another failed Magnus, fit closure for Lucan’s story. The authorial voice manifests here through its comments on contemporaneous imperial Rome that the murder of Caesar, not unlike the murder of Remus, forms the beginning of yet another story of civil war (BC 10.526–29).

It has been suggested that we as readers could, or even should, reduce our focus on the killing of Turnus as the *Aeneid*’s final scene: “the real ending of the story of Rome is found instead in the survey of Roman history on the shield of Aeneas at the end of Book 8.” Following this suggestion, the real ending of the *Bellum Civile* would be found in the melee of the battle of Pharsalus, when Lucan’s lengthy apostrophes foreshadow the gloomy fate of Imperial Rome (BC 7.387–459 and 7.535–43). Accordingly the actual ending of Lucan’s epic, which is endowed with the “poetics of the fragmentary text” and an “ideology of timelessness,” only “underscores the contradiction of a genre which identifies itself with history and should therefore be endless, but which is simultaneously limited by its need to impart meaning and give closure to the story it tells.”

There have been repeated attempts to mend the somewhat unorthodox end of the *Bellum Civile*, which does not meet the conventional expectations of closure. Those who do not simply cut off what disturbs them, or defend the end as it stands, naturally choose to add to the poem, striving for completion. As a result the Renaissance commentator Johannes Sulpicius Verulanus supplemented the abrupt end of the *Bellum Civile* with eleven hexameters. In this version, then, the epic fades out after Caesar’s rescue from the immediate danger at the mole:

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PHARSALIAE LUCANI APPENDICULA
erexit mentem trepidi tam fortis imago;
et facturus erat memorandi nobile leti
exemplum: sed fata vetant, et fida salutis
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echoes of Remum novos transiluisse muros ([the story has it] that Remus jumped over the newly built city walls, Liv. 1.7.2) in the final words of the *Bellum Civile*, calcantem moenia Magnum (BC 10.546), recalling “the brotherly strife that marked the very foundation of the city of Rome.”

95. Hardie 1997, 140 remarks how “closure as an artistic device imposing completed form on a segment of formless time is sabotaged by the ‘real-life’ refusal of time to stand still.”
98. Fowler 1997, 22 describes the feeling that the “real” ending is not necessarily the one for us.
ostendit Fortuna viam, nam laevus amicas
prospexit puppes, nando quas ausus adire,
ecquid stamus? ait, vel iam per tela fretumque
eripiar: iuguli vel non erit ulla potestas
eunucho concessa mei. tunc puppe relictia
prosilit in pontum. siccus fert laeva libellos,
dextra secat fluctus. tandemque illaesus amico
excipitur plausu clamantis ad aethera turbae.

[So strong an image aroused the spirit of the frightened man, and he
was about to give a noble example of a memorable death. But the Fates
forbade it, and faithful Fortune showed the path to safety. For on his left
he beheld friendly ships, and boldly swam to join them. What do we
stay? he cried: either I shall escape, through the weapons and the strait
or there shall be no power over my throat granted to the eunuch. Then,
leaving the ship, he leaped into the sea. His left hand bore the papers,
dry, his right hand cleaves the waves; and at long last, unscathed, he is
welcomed with the friendly applause of a crowd clamoring to the heav-
ens.] (trans. J. A. Crook)

As the reader will easily make out, Sulpicius feeds here on one of Lucan’s
model texts, the Bellum Alexandrinum. This “supplement” to Caesar’s commentarii
composed in all likelihood by his secretary Hirtius after the commander’s
death—we might note this as a parallel with Sulpicius’s verses—describes in a
short section the battle of Pharos and Caesar’s escape by swimming to safety.

Caesar quoad potuit cohorando suos ad pontem ac munitones continere
eodem in periculo uersatus est postquam uniuersos cedere animaduertit in
suum nauigium se recepit. quo multitudo hominum insecuta cum inrum-
peret neque administrandi neque repellendi a terra facultas daretur fore
quod accidit suspicatus sese ex nauigio eiecit atque ad eas quae longius
constiterant naues adnatauit. hinc suis laborantibus subsidio scaphas
mittens nonnullus conservauit

[A crowd of men followed him, swarming on board and not allowing
any opportunity to work the ship and push off from shore. Guessing
what was going to happen, he jumped overboard and swam to the ships
that had stopped somewhat further away. From here he sent boats to
help his men in difficulties, and saved some, while his own ship did in-
deed sink under the number of soldiers, and was lost along with them.]
(Bellum Alexandrinum 21)
What is more, Sulpicius also fills in details from the account of this military encounter in Plutarch’s Life of Caesar:

...and thirdly, when a battle arose at Pharos, he sprang from the mole into a small boat and tried to go to the aid of his men in their struggle, but the Egyptians sailed up against him from every side, so that he threw himself into the sea and with great difficulty escaped by swimming. At this time, too, it is said that he was holding many papers in his hand and would not let them go, though missiles were flying at him and he was immersed in the sea, but held them above water with one hand and swam with the other; his little boat had been sunk at the outset. (Plu. Caes. 49.4)

Sulpicius thus remains faithful to history and provides an appropriate closure to this section of the narrative without attempting explicit interpretation.

Continuation of Lucan on a larger scale can be found in Thomas May’s Continuation of the Subject of Lucan’s historica1 poem till the death of Iulius Caesar, first published in 1630. In seven books this man of letters puts into verse what Lucan might have written had he lived. The English version was soon to be followed by a Latin one in hexameters, the Supplementum Lucani (1640). In his meticulous examination of the English and the Latin version Bruère establishes that the Supplementum repeatedly presents the material of the Continuation “pruned, rearranged or amplified.” It thus constitutes not only a translation but also a reworking in its own right.

As Thomas May includes Sulpicius’s lines among the commendatory verses at the beginning of his Supplementum Lucani (1640), Thiel puts forward the suggestion that May initially drew inspiration from these lines and then made the decision to continue the Bellum Civile with a more substantial appendix. However, to escape a potentially problematic start for his supplement, May supplies the epic in his 1627 translation with a gesture of closure by appending 50

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100. First published in Leyden (May 1640), then in London six years later (May 1646); cf. Bruère 1949, 145. We can observe a similar process with Sebastian Brandt’s Das Narrenschiff (Basel, 1496), whose great success prompted Jacob Locher to release an authorized Latin version in 1497 to make the work accessible to the non-German-speaking humanist intelligentsia.

101. Bruère 1949, 150.

verses to book 10. He thus provides us with an indication of which motifs and themes he deemed prominent enough for inclusion in the epic’s epilogue. This compact passage thereby enables us to gain insights into May’s reading strategy.

But he must live until his fall may prove
Brutus and Cassius were more just than Jove.
Now all alone on seas doth Caesar float;
Himself the oares, the Pylot, and the boate;
Yet could not all these offices employ
One mans whole strength, for his left hand on high
Raised, holds up his papers, and preserves
The fame of his past deedes, his right hand serves
To cut the waves, and guard his life alone
‘Gainst th’ Oceans perills, and all darts, which throwne
From every side doe darken all the sky,
And make a cloud, though heaven it selfe deny,
Two hundred paces thus alone he swam
Till to the body of his fleete he came,
His ore-joy’d souldiers shouting to the skies
Take sure presage of future victoryes.

As I have indicated, May picks up on the recurrent body imagery in the *Bellum Civile* with his play on multitasking hands. Not soldiers but rather an anonymous mass of hands are on display: “and so a glorious fall / (Slain by a thousand hands at once) had met, / Or else enobled by a death so great / Those thousand hands.” The Roman state and military body are present when Caesar’s body becomes representative for the ship of state: “Himself the oares, the Pylot, and the boate.” Furthermore there is a strong reference to Lucan’s description of the battle of Pharsalus where the many missiles shut out the sunlight in “and all darts, which throwne / From every side doe darken all the sky.” The military encounter at Pharos might be just as critical as the battle of Pharsalus but, crucially, May makes very clear that this is the place where repetition ceases: “if like him I dy, / I do not imitate, but Caesars feate / Rather confirmes that Scaevas act was great.” May takes us to a point from which we can look back to the epic and choose our perspective, ponder its meaning. For he also provides us with his reading of what the *Bellum Civile* is all about. Besides joining in with Lucan’s teleology culminating in the death of Caesar as projected toward the very end of the epic as it stands, May employs Plutarch’s account in his *Life of Caesar* to focus on a further point. Accordingly May depicts Caesar not only

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105. Compare “But he must live until his fall may prove / Brutus and Cassius were more just than Jove” with Lucan’s rally for Pompey’s revenge in *BC* 10.524–29.
swimming for his life but also desperately seeking to preserve his fame: “[Caesar] holds up his papers, and preserves / The fame of his past deeds.” Surely, we shall conjecture that Caesar holds in his hand a copy of his *commentarii de Bello Civili*. He becomes a micro-image of the poet by trying to make his own story survive—which later will also become Lucan’s in his civil war epic. In May’s reading as well, then, Lucan’s *Bellum Civile* seems the epic of fame, not fate. In this interpretation the epic’s real end point, its actual culmination, is its claim for eternity.

In his continuation proper May displays his political conviction by including a eulogy of Augustus modeled on the *Laus Neronis* of BC 1.33–66. Accordingly he spells out the *Bellum Civile*’s drive toward the principate and can afford to draw flattering parallels with the contemporaneous British royal establishment.

For thee, great Prince, and thy insuing State  
Was Rome opprest, and Iulius fortunate;  
For thee were Marius crimes, and Sylla’s wrought:  
For thee was Thapsus and Pharsalia fought,  
That Rome in those dire Tragedies might see  
What horrid dangers follow’d libertie.

It is most telling that May omitted the entire eulogy in the Latin version of his poem after he had changed political camps from monarchists to republicans. May’s move away from monarchy toward republicanism is also reflected in the expanded prefatory poem of the 1650 edition of his *Continuation*. Already in the first version of this poem, entitled “The Complaint of Calliope against the Destinies,” the deaths of Orpheus and Lucan are conflated through the image of Orpheus’s severed head continuing his poetry with disembodied voice as conjured up by Virgil in *Georgics* 4.523–27. However after the decapitation of Charles I in 1649 May prevents “associations with the elegiac cult of Charles the artist-martyr” through additional verses and a thematically connected engraving that redefines Caesar’s (and Charles I’s) blood as the sacrifice necessary for the completion of the poem. Here Calliope revives Lucan’s shade with a drink of royal blood so that he may continue his song. May’s interpretation of Lucan’s *Bellum Civile* thus shifts from one extreme to the other, a poem written to embalm monarchy turns into a poem that celebrates liberty.

My outline has demonstrated how looking at readers’ responses to Lucan’s epic, and in particular its end, opens up new perspectives on Lucan’s teleology. We have seen how the epic’s open-endedness empowers the reader’s viewpoints. What is more, whatever reading an audience chooses authorizes it to exploit Lucan’s epic for its own purposes. In the end it is thus tempting to suggest a further parallel with Caesar’s civil war account: “Caesar’s Civil War is an unfinished masterpiece. It is incomplete not owing to untimely death, however, but was abandoned by an author who found himself living in a different world than that which saw the work’s commencement.”¹⁰⁹ One might well substitute Caesar with Lucan at the beginning of this sentence.