

Lucan's Natural Questions: Landscape and Geography in the *Bellum Civile*

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Abstract

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This dissertation is an analysis of the role of landscape and the natural world in Lucan's *Bellum Civile*. I investigate digressions and excurses on mountains, rivers, and certain myths associated aetiologically with the land, and demonstrate how Stoic physics and cosmology – in particular the concepts of cosmic (dis)order, collapse, and conflagration – play a role in the way Lucan writes about the landscape in the context of a civil war poem. Building on previous analyses of the *Bellum Civile* that provide background on its literary context (Ahl, 1976), on Lucan's poetic technique (Masters, 1992), and on landscape in Roman literature (Spencer, 2010), I approach Lucan's depiction of the natural world by focusing on the mutual effect of humanity and landscape on each other. Thus, hardships posed by the land against characters like Caesar and Cato, gloomy and threatening atmospheres, and dangerous or unusual weather phenomena all have places in my study. I also explore how Lucan's landscapes engage with the tropes of the *locus amoenus* or *horridus* (Schiesaro, 2006) and elements of the sublime (Day, 2013). The

epic's first simile, which compares the end of the Republic to the Stoic theory of cosmic conflagration, is a programmatic image expressed through landscape and environment.

The geographical scope of the Roman civil wars, stretching from Spain to Greece and even including parts of Northern Africa, is reflected in Lucan's poem and in my reading of it. My first chapter focuses primarily on Italy, from the Rubicon in the north to Brundisium in the south; aside from being the center of Roman power, in *Bellum Civile* 1 and 2 Italy is defined by its transgressed *limites* and is home to a countryside ravaged by time and neglect. Chapter Two focuses on the battle at Massilia in Gaul and the flood and conflict at Ilerda in Spain. The progression of events at Massilia – cutting down the grove, the siege, the sea battle – and the deluge and floods in Spain both demonstrate the threatening aspects of nature and the consequences of its violation; both episodes are venues for renewed images of cataclysmic destruction. The topic of Chapter Three is the geologic and mythic history of the Greek landscape in Delphi and Thessaly, and the climactic moment of tension and disarray in the Stoicized universe of Lucan's poem. My fourth and final chapter is devoted to Libya, as portrayed during Curio's campaign against Juba in book four and Cato's desert march in book nine. The environment is bound to anxieties about water and the changing boundary between land and sea, as well as by the characteristic heat, aridity, and pathlessness of the desert. Mythical digressions on Hercules and Antaeus (book four) and Medusa (book nine) introduce creatures native to Libya that, in their confrontations with Romans, embody the dangers inherent in the landscape.

Dedication

To my grandparents

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Introduction

*Etiam periire ruinae.*¹ So Lucan describes the site of Troy at the end of the ninth book of his *Bellum Civile*. When Caesar travels to Troy on his way to Egypt in pursuit of Pompey after the battle of Pharsalus, Lucan portrays the ruins of the once-great city as crumbling and so overgrown that they are unrecognizable to anyone without local knowledge. Caesar's visit to Troy is not recorded in any extant historical text, but Lucan looks to Alexander the Great's visit to Troy as a model for Caesar's.² Vergil's Aeneas, who tours Evander's Pallanteum and the pre-Roman Capitoline in *Aeneid* 8, provides another model, this time within the Roman epic tradition.³ The abundant vegetation that grows without order on the future site of Rome in *Aeneid* 8, though itself more reminiscent of the poetic Golden Age, has a parallel in the overgrown ruins of Troy, reclaimed by nature.⁴ With its layers of historical and poetic significance, Lucan's Troy is, as Spencer presents it, "graveyard, *locus amoenus*, and urban ruin all at once."⁵

The nexus of past grandeur, current decay, and an atmosphere augmented by the presence of nature in a sometimes-urban context binds Troy's fall into ruin to the narrative of the civil wars and the end of the Roman Republic. Troy and Rome are, for Lucan's illustrative purposes,

¹ *BC* 9.969.

² Rossi (2001) 313-14. See also Ahl (1976) 215, Bartsch (1997) 132, Johnson (1987) 119, Zwierlein (2010) 416-20.

³ Thompson and Bruère (1968) 17-18, Zwierlein (2010) 421-24. Hardie (2013) 111 argues that Lucan's Vergilian model is threefold, including Troy (*Aen.* 2), the site of Rome at Pallanteum (*Aen.* 8), and the miniature replica of Troy at Buthrotum (*Aen.* 3).

⁴ From Lucan's description of Troy: the great city walls are not easily visible (*magnaue Phoebai quaerit vestigia muri*, 9.965), woods and rotting trees grow where the palace once stood (*iam silvae steriles et putres robore trunci / Assaraci pressere domos*, 9.966-67), roots hold the temples (*templa deorum / iam lassa radice tenent*, 9.967-68), and brambles cover the whole site (*tota teguntur / Pergama dumetis*, 9.968-69); the wood has reclaimed Anchises' home (*silvaque latentes / Anchisae thalamos*, 9.970-71), the great stream of the Xanthus has dwindled (*inscius in sicco serpentem pulvere rivum / transierat, qui Xanthus erat*, 9.974-75), and even Hector's grave is overgrown with grass (*in alto / gramine*, 9.975-76).

⁵ Spencer (2005) 54.

identical and interchangeable.⁶ Troy is an appropriate place, therefore, for Caesar's promise: to build a new Roman Pergamum (*grata vice moenia reddent / Ausoniae Phrygibus, Romanaque Pergama surgent*, 9.998-99). Caesar is an architect, ready to build a new world on the ruins of the old, transforming not merely Italy, but the nearly all parts of the Mediterranean region into a new Roman "imperial landscape."⁷ Lucan's pessimistic, and even antagonistic, approach to the principate in the *Bellum Civile*, however, makes this new imperial world a pale, corrupted imitation of its predecessor. The ruins of the Republic are the foundation for the new Rome under the Caesars, where, in both spatial and intellectual ways, ruins built on ruins predict "a cycle of destruction and rebirth [that] has ground to a halt."⁸

The image of a city, ruined by war, neglect, and time, resonates throughout the *Bellum Civile*. The overgrown remnants of Troy in *Bellum Civile* 9 are returning to nature, but on a literary level seem almost to be the answer to a riddle posed in *Bellum Civile* 1. The abandoned fields and unkempt growth throughout the Italian countryside (1.24-29) and the fall of civilization to an uncaring, encroaching nature, implicitly ask the question: where are the people and their grand accomplishments? Where is Rome? Clues to the answer of this question are present in every episode of every book that follows: Rome and its people are caught up in the civil wars. Yet these battles would not have completely emptied the countryside and they did not leave the state in utter disrepair. In Lucan's poetic universe, however, hyperbolic portrayals of the mechanism and results of conflict present landscapes that are alternately defined by their inhabitants and empty of people, that oppose the advance of armies and are used by those armies

⁶ Rossi (2001) 323. See also Ahl (1976) 212-19, and Narducci (1979) 47-48. Gowing (2005) 94 also connects the ruins of Troy to the devastation caused by the battle of Pharsalus and, looking back to the beginning of the *Bellum Civile*, the landscape of Italy (1.24-32). Hardie (2013) 107 notes that "Troy and its destruction are a point of origin for Rome, her successive foundations, destructions, and refoundations."

⁷ Spencer (2005) 48. For Caesar figured as architect, see Rossi (2001) 325.

⁸ Spencer (2005) 52.

to advance themselves, that are ruined by war and themselves prove ruinous to humans and their institutions. What emerges is a narrative focused on civil conflict that is dependent on an awareness of the natural world or environment, its role in warfare, in poetry, and in the constructed universe of the *Bellum Civile*, itself built using elements of Stoic physics and cosmology. Moreover, it is precisely this centrality of nature to Lucan's poetry that makes his concentration on the end of the Republic, represented by a great deal of apocalyptic imagery, so relatable to the twenty-first century reader, familiar with news cycles and scientific reports dedicated to climate change, water resources, and environmental toxicity.

A fundamental way of understanding nature for the ancients was through human intervention in the natural world and human control of the environment. Cicero, in his *De natura deorum*, attributes to his Stoic character, Balbus, a description of the extent of human influence on various elements of nature:

quasque res violentissimas natura genuit, earum moderationem nos soli habemus, maris atque ventorum, propter nauticarum rerum scientiam, plurimisque maritimis rebus fruimur atque utimur. terrenorum item commodorum omnis est in homine dominatus: nos campis, nos montibus fruimur, nostri sunt amnes, nostri lacus, nos fruges serimus, nos arbores; nos aquarum inductionibus terris fecunditatem damus, nos flumina arcemus, derigimus, avertimus; nostris denique manibus in rerum natura quasi alteram naturam efficere conamur. (*DND* 2.152)

We alone have control of those things which nature made most violent, the sea and the winds, due to our knowledge of navigation, and we enjoy and use many things from the sea. Likewise, every profit from the earth is controlled by man: we enjoy the plains and mountains, the rivers and lakes are ours, we sow fruits and trees; we give watery fertility by irrigating the lands, we bridge, direct, and avert streams; finally we attempt to bring about by our hands a second nature, as it were, in this world.

From maritime knowledge to agriculture to engineering around rivers, control over nature and the ability to make a humanized landscape (*alteram naturam*) characterizes one Roman approach to the natural world and provides evidence for humanity's excellence beyond other species.

Spencer (2010) has demonstrated the primacy of the human element in Roman depictions of

nature, examining the aesthetics of landscape, the relationship between observer and observed, and the importance of considering cultural context in landscape texts.⁹ Dinter (2012) argues a similar point: that the importance of landscape to Greco-Roman epic lies in the actions of the humans who inhabit a particular place, allowing the environment to serve “as narrative mirror and metapoetic matrix.”¹⁰ These points are true of Lucan, whose depictions of the natural world cannot be read in isolation; the landscapes of the *Bellum Civile* reflect poetic and rhetorical devices inspired by Lucan’s predecessors, the political environment of Rome during the civil wars as well as the Neronian period, and the philosophical doctrines about the physical world promulgated by Stoic philosophers including Seneca.

Before undertaking an exploration of the role of the natural world and environment in Lucan’s text, however, it is necessary to survey, if briefly, the terminology for landscape and nature that existed in Latin. Did the ancients have a conception of nature comparable to what is conveyed by the modern term “landscape?” Possibly originating in the medieval period as a term for “a system of cultivated plots” in the countryside, “landscape” was adopted by the elites in aesthetic and recreational contexts as well.¹¹ “Landscape” has always been a visual term, connected to use and appropriation of space, and indicating “control and domination over space as an absolute, objective entity.”¹² The combination of spatial organization, a visual element, and the inclusion of human figures (if only as observers) can be found in ecphraseis that describe nature in both Greek and Latin poetry. Though neither Greek nor Latin had a single term

⁹ Spencer (2010) 5-7 also summarizes a variety of perspectives on landscape as a philosophical, semiotic, or aesthetic term. Coates (1998) 110 also interprets landscape in terms of humanity, as “places that are the combined product of human and bio-geological forces.”

¹⁰ Dinter (2012) 66.

¹¹ Coates (1998) 111. Dutch and Flemish painters in the 16th and 17th centuries (such as P. Brueghel and P. P. Rubens) painted rural scenes and used the term “landskip” for both the scenes and the paintings themselves.

¹² Cosgrove (1985) 45.

equivalent to “landscape,” the same considerations involved in the depiction of a landscape can be found in ancient texts,¹³ where basic landscape forms and patterns familiar from the modern period (the beautiful, the grand, the terrible) can also be found in the poetry of authors including Homer, Apollonius of Rhodes, Vergil, and others.¹⁴

While “landscape” is a term without an ancient equivalent, “nature” in all its varied and nuanced meanings corresponds to *natura* and φύσις, manifold meanings included. Since its earliest recorded uses in Homeric poetry, φύσις has had many shades of meaning, from the essence of a thing to the condition of normalcy, from a word for the “collective mass of physical phenomena” (the *rerum natura*) to a personified force that controls the world.¹⁵ In the Hellenistic period, the Epicureans and Stoics used φύσις to denote the physical world, its mechanism, and its governing force.¹⁶ It is this conception of φύσις that influences – or, perhaps, parallels – the definition of *natura*, a noun etymologically linked to the verb *nascor* and its indication of birth and growth. In the first century CE, two helpful sources for the meaning of *natura* and its relation to the natural world are Seneca’s *Naturales Quaestiones* and Pliny’s *Naturalis Historiae*. Seneca’s debt to his Stoic predecessors is clear in his figuration of *natura* as a divine creative force that arranges the forms in the world (*mundus*) to maintain balance.¹⁷ A similar divine *natura* and *mundus* can be found in Pliny’s text, where *natura* is essentially equivalent to “the world, both as a whole and as its separate components, ... both the creator and the creation.”¹⁸

¹³ Leach (1988) 10-11 notes that ecphrasis “might be called a mode of achieving verisimilitude through *enargeia*,” and that both landscape and ecphrasis require a spectator in order to exist or be effective.

¹⁴ Jenkyns (1998) 48.

¹⁵ Rosenmeyer (2000) 100-101.

¹⁶ Rosenmeyer (2000) 102-103. The Epicureans did not personify φύσις, while the Stoics did. The later personification of *natura* in Lucretius is likely due to influence from Stoic doctrine.

¹⁷ Rosenmeyer (2000) 110. Cf. Seneca, *NQ* 3.10.3.

¹⁸ Beagon (1992) 26 cites Pliny, *NH* 2.2: *sacer est, aeternus, immensus, totus in toto, immo vero ipse totum, infinitus ac finito similis, omnium rerum certus et similis incerto, extra intra cuncta complexus in se, idemque rerum naturae opus et rerum ipsa natura.*

Moreover, the tenet of the Old Stoa, that microcosm and macrocosm were parallel, created a natural bridge between the lives of humans and the course of the *mundus*, as governed by *natura*.¹⁹ For Lucan, writing in a time and place saturated with the natural philosophy that inspired Seneca and Pliny, *natura* would have been a crucial element in the depiction of any poetic world and, due to its universality, the natural world is the ideal locus for the representation of the themes associated with a civil war narrative. Writing about the natural world could also be therapeutic to Stoic philosophers experiencing civil strife or imperial corruption during the Neronian period. Williams describes how the Stoic philosopher's study of a universe governed by reason could provide "at least a measure of solace or protection against the vagaries of the world," and how an understanding of humanity's place in the cosmos enabled those enduring "the vulnerable subservience of life under a Claudius or a Nero" to achieve peace of mind.²⁰

My goal in this dissertation is to explore in detail the landscapes of the *Bellum Civile*, including the portrayal of the natural world, the relationship between Lucan's human characters and their environment, and how Lucan molds and warps the features of this world to best convey the themes of the poem. Landscape in the *Bellum Civile* can act as a gateway, making issues such as Rome's place in the world (geographically and politically) and the positive or negative aspects of human industry more accessible. I argue that Lucan, rather than exploring or defining new places, inherits and modifies his predecessors' (and contemporaries') descriptions of landscape and geography so that they can locate the origins and trace the spread of the moral corruption inherent in civil conflict. These depictions of nature and its reactions to human action demonstrate how Rome and the Romans themselves fit into their world.

¹⁹ Rist (1969) 211-12.

²⁰ Williams (2012) 48.

An ever-growing body of scholarship on Lucan and his poetry has provided a basis for my own research. The work undertaken by Masters (1992) has been invaluable to this project; this rich metapoetic reading of the *Bellum Civile*, revealing patterns, models, and innovations, has demonstrated Lucan's text to be as full of meaning as the endlessly signifying world he described.²¹ In his book, Masters examines the interaction between poetic subject and tradition, history and landscape, among other topics, but aside from acknowledging Lucan's debt to Stoic doctrine, does not pursue the influence of philosophy on the text. My analysis of the epic, while also focused on the world of nature, factors in Stoic physics, cosmology, and perceptions of the natural world. One aspect of the Stoic way of thinking about natural philosophy is the understanding of the universe as a living organism, leading to an abundance of anatomical metaphors within the *Bellum Civile*, about which Bartsch (1997) and Dinter (2012) have written at length. The work of Day (2013) on the sublime in Lucan's text has also aided my interpretation of the grand and sometimes simultaneously monstrous landscapes of Massilia and other Lucanian locations. Like the sublime, landscape itself depends on the presence of an observer, an idea that overlaps with the work of Leigh (1997) on gladiatorial allegory and epic as *spectaculum*. I have also benefited greatly from the work of Ahl (1976), one of the founders of modern Lucan scholarship, as well as the studies of Johnson (1987) and Morford (1967). Johnson's focus on Lucan's "heroes" – Cato, Caesar, Pompey, and, perhaps, Erichtho – illuminates their places in "the poem's dissolving design;"²² Morford's study of Lucan's application of rhetorical and declamatory training and themes includes analyses of Caesar's character, storms, and divination, all topics pertaining to Lucan's vision of the world.

²¹ Masters (1992) 106.

²² Johnson (1987) xi.

Because I approach Lucan's text from three directions – the presentation of geography and space, poetic descriptions of the natural world, and the influence of Stoic philosophy, particularly physics and cosmology – a number of sources more strictly devoted to each of these research vectors has also informed my work. Romm's (1992) exploration of the ancient Greek conception of the world and its extent, in combination with the analysis of real and literary space in Apollonius' *Argonautica* in Thalmann (2011), has provided a basis for my study of space and geography. My focus, more specifically, on Roman sources has benefitted from Riggsby's (2010) work on geography in Caesar, as well as from Bexley's (2009) analysis of Lucan's Romanocentric world and the ongoing process of dislocation or decentralization over the course of the poem.

The connections between visual elements and literary representation as explored by Leach (1988) have also provided a solid foundation for reading ecphrasis in Lucan. This descriptive mode is often associated with pastoral elements such as the *locus amoenus*, on which Hinds (2002) has written with a focus on Ovid, while Spencer (2010) has given a more general treatment in respect to Roman authors like Varro, Columella, Statius, and Pliny. Lucan's darker poetic universe is more suited to what Schiesaro (2006) calls a *locus horridus*; it is also inundated with gigantomachic imagery, a background for which is provided in Hardie (1986), a volume focused on power and conflict and the cosmic overtones often associated with them.

My exploration of the cosmic scope of metaphor and conflict in Lucan's narrative draws on the approach to physics and cosmology taken by members of the Old Stoa including Zeno and Chrysippus, whose teachings survive in fragmentary form, collected as *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* by von Arnim (1921-24). Rist (1969) has summarized the physical doctrines in these fragments, while Long (1985) has provided a comprehensive understanding of the Stoic world-

cycle theory and the related phenomenon of *ekpyrosis*. The language and terminology of conflagration is collected in Lapidge (2010; originally published in 1979), who explores the representation of *ekpyrosis* in Lucan and his contemporary, Manilius. The work of Seneca is the basis for much knowledge of the school in Rome; his *Naturales Quaestiones*, thoroughly analyzed by Williams (2012), represent the body of knowledge in Rome related to physics and the Stoic approach to the natural world. While Lucan was not a philosopher himself to the same degree that Seneca was, he made use of many elements of Stoic doctrine in the construction of his poetic universe. Thus Seneca's work is useful as *comparanda* to Lucan's literary portrayal of the world, and Williams' book has been a timely and important resource for my project. Though I had begun work on Stoicism in Lucan already, *The Cosmic Viewpoint* provided a detailed and engaging portrait of Senecan natural philosophy that helped me take my own pursuit of similar topics in Lucan to the next level.

In my first chapter, I examine the landscapes of Italy including those near the Rubicon in the north, the line of the Apennines that spans the length of the peninsula, and the harbor at Brundisium in the south, all of which occur in the first two books of the *Bellum Civile*. Lucan's approach to the natural world within his epic is established in the proem: the Italian countryside is overgrown, while fields are abandoned with no one to cultivate them; this environmental and agricultural crisis evokes both the primordial wilderness of a pre-civilized Italy and the specter of ruin and collapse tied to the civil war narrative. The proem also introduces Pompey and Caesar by characterizing them in terms of nature: Pompey is like an old oak tree, while Caesar possesses the power and numinous essence of lightning. Finally, Lucan uses the first simile of the *Bellum Civile* to establish the importance of Stoic philosophy to his poetic universe, by comparing the

fall of the Republic in the civil wars (here equivalent to the fall of Rome) to the process of collapse and conflagration that marks the end of the Stoic world-cycle.

My examination begins with Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon and capture of the nearby town, Ariminum; in the transgression of boundaries, *nefas* action is marked by the reaction of the natural world. The river's flow increases to block Caesar's legions, and later the atmosphere in Ariminum evokes the gloom of the underworld or of a *locus horridus*. This is also the beginning of Lucan's use of Stoic language (e.g., *solvere*) in association with Caesar's advances and the Republican faction slowly losing the war. At Brundisium Caesar is like a force of nature, undertaking processes more suited to the environment: felling forests, filling in the harbor, manufacturing his own land. The repetition of landscape manufacture or engineering at Caesar's direction, in conjunction with the continuing imagery of cosmic collapse, indicates that something is wrong in the Stoic-influenced world of the *Bellum Civile*.

In Chapter Two, I concentrate on areas which can be considered to be on the fringe of the Roman world, whether geographically, politically, or mytho-historically: Massilia and Ilerda. I demonstrate how Lucan represents the landscape, its stability or mutability, and the connection between the environment and the actions of the people who inhabit it. Lucan's treatment of Massilia in *Bellum Civile* 3 includes a geographical ecphrasis that not only describes the land, but addresses how the environment provides resources for the Romans' earthworks and fortifications. The deforestation of the area surrounding Massilia includes one of the more literarily resonant scenes in the episode: the destruction of a sacred grove, which is ancient, gloomy, sanctified by blood, and ultimately more of a *locus horridus* than a *locus amoenus*. While the destruction of the grove can be read as a representation of Lucan's approach to his poetic predecessors, it is also symptomatic of the larger cosmic destruction image that is repeated

again in the burning of the Roman siege works and in the conflagration, set at sea for even greater effect, of ships during the subsequent naval battle. I argue that this is also the introduction of a dichotomy between fiery death and watery death that continues throughout the remainder of the poem and parallels Seneca's own identification of conflagration with a world-ending deluge in *Naturales Quaestiones* 3.

In the second half of Chapter Two I focus on the flood and conflict at Ilerda in *Bellum Civile* 4. The excursus on Ilerda's geography and environment includes the rugged terrain, the difficulty of traversing it, and the varied and wild weather. Extensive rains cause the Sicoris to flood, leading to a paradoxical lack of (potable) water in the midst of an excess of floodwater. I suggest that the flood and resulting hardships at Ilerda provide an ideal opportunity to examine the effects of the landscape and environment on people. Within the interconnected universe proposed by Stoic philosophy and emulated by Lucan in the *Bellum Civile*, landscape is something that is shaped and defined by people (as when Caesar modifies the channels of the Sicoris during the process of recovery from the flood), and simultaneously has the power to shape and destroy people. The actions and reactions of Caesar and the Pompeian soldiers during and after the Spanish floods demonstrate how people can gain or lose power over their surroundings, determining whether or not they will be at the mercy of the natural world.

In Chapter Three, I focus on Lucan's representation of Greece through the landscapes of Delphi and Thessaly. Digressions on the geologic and mythical history of these places as well as typically Lucanian hyperbole centered on the violent consequences of warfare are at the heart of *Bellum Civile* 5, 6, and 7. Throughout these episodes, Lucan emphasizes the fact that a decisive battle in his Romanocentric world takes place somewhere outside Italy with its own complex

social and mythic history.²³ The dislocation of Roman activity to Greece and the subsequent battle of Pharsalus are concurrent with the climax of the imagery of cosmic dissolution built up through all the preceding books of the poem.²⁴ In this chapter I demonstrate how the landscapes and geography of Greece represent the climactic moment of tension and the disarray of Lucan's poetic universe.

The landscape of Delphi has a rich mythological past and can be read as a *locus amoenus*, but I argue that it is Delphi's physical correspondence to Stoic theories about the world and divination that make Lucan's representation significant. In order to demonstrate the mechanism of prophecy, Lucan relies on Stoic theories about the deterministic nature of the cosmos, which are dependent on the pervading force of *πνεῦμα* or *spiritus* that binds the physical world together. Delphi and Thessaly bookend the events in the *Bellum Civile* that take place in Greece; in both places, creation and destruction, as well as geographical excursus and cosmic cataclysm, are bound up in the depiction of the natural world. In the detailed excursus that introduces Thessaly, Lucan places himself among the ranks of the *docti poetae*, and even his geographical inconsistencies serve as deliberate literary gateways to alternate or symbolic histories. This creation narrative is balanced in *Bellum Civile* 7 by the poem's central battle and the apocalyptic imagery that accompanies it. Lucan writes of an environment that actively seeks to repel the soldiers marching to battle. Later, Caesar's perspective on the land after the battle provides a point of contrast: the landscape he sees is not only corrupted by corpses, but even constructed using them as materials.

Chapter Four is devoted to the two separate Libyan episodes from the *Bellum Civile*. The final portions of *Bellum Civile* 4 involve Curio's campaign against Juba near Carthage, while

²³ Masters (1992) 150-78.

²⁴ Lapidge (2010) 322-23.

much of book nine is devoted to Cato's trek through the deserts of Libya with the remnants of the Republican army and a series of encounters with a variety of environmental and faunal hazards. Both episodes also include mythological reasons for the names, shapes, and dangers inherent in the landscape, which add a dimension of unreality to Lucan's Libya. I explore how these myths (Hercules's wrestling match with the giant Antaeus; the connection between Medusa, her decapitation by Perseus, and the indigenous snakes of Libya) augment the atmosphere of the landscape in which they are located.

Close readings of Lucan's description of the Libyan landscape – as it appears in a region near the ruins of Carthage as well as further east, in the desert between Berenice and Leptis Magna – depict a place that is full of dangers for incoming Romans. An environmental and geographical excursus depicts a land that is dry, barren, and unmapped; it is undefined and indefinable. The climate is harsh to the point of being hostile to any but its native inhabitants, and the natural features of the region – the Syrtes, the desert sands, sandstorms, dry winds, and proximity to the torrid zone – make differences from the pastoral idealism of Greco-Roman locales manifest. Moreover, in contrast to the sea battle at Massilia, to the great flood at Ilerda, and to regions defined both geographically and politically by rivers (e.g., the Rubicon, the rivers of Thessaly), water in Lucan's Libya tends to be dangerous, where it exists at all. I argue that Lucan gives his water imagery a transfusion in the desert: rather than the flowing water that exists in the other parts of the world, the unknown and constantly shifting land in Libya is awash with other fouler liquids: saltwater, sweat, blood, pus, and venom. In this pattern of elemental confusion, Lucan goes even further, trading the waves of the Mediterranean for an ocean of sand. As Cato and his soldiers traverse the desert, they navigate by the stars, as they would on a ship at sea, and observe the earth hardening when they leave the desert and arrive in Leptis, like a liquid

coagulating or freezing into a solid. In this land full of peculiarities, opposites and inversions, and aetiological stories that can also serve as allegories, even the landscape itself is shifty and ambiguous.

In these chapters, I argue for the importance of landscape, environment, and nature in Lucan's poetry. The presence of Stoic language and imagery, elements of geography, and poetic techniques (including ephraseis and the *locus amoenus* model) both make the natural world of the *Bellum Civile* accessible and, by their prominence, demonstrate its significance. I also aim to show how Stoic physics – in addition to Stoic ethical theories – is a crucial part of interpreting Lucan's depiction of the world. What, in Seneca, is a way of understanding humanity's place in the world by observing and comprehending the world itself is, in Lucan, a pervasive and dynamic means by which to explore civil conflict and, moreover, the role of Caesar and the subsequent Julio-Claudian emperors.

The significance of landscape and environment to Lucan's poetry is not limited to the topics I have explored in this dissertation. Other episodes in the *Bellum Civile* set in other parts of the ancient world also conform to Lucan's narrative of cosmic collapse and moral ruin; these include Vulteius' raft near Illyria in book four, Caesar and the storm in book five, Pompey's camp at Dyrrachium in book six, Pompey's voyage through the Greek isles in book eight, and the depiction of Egypt – especially the Nile – in books eight and ten. Due to the limits of time and the scope of this dissertation, my research here constitutes the first installment of this project, to be continued and augmented in the future.

Chapter 1: Italy

The geography and environment of Italy, occupying significant portions of books one and two, make up the first poetic landscape in the *Bellum Civile*. The proem (1.1-182) establishes the causes of the civil wars and, as a related issue, the condition of the Roman state and the Italian landscape. Lucan describes the geography and landscapes of Italy as a whole, but focuses most closely on borders and the periphery. Rome may be thematically and geographically central to his narrative,¹ but landscapes and environments outside of Rome are the *loci* of the majority of the action: the northern *limes* represented by the Rubicon and the nearby city of Ariminum see Caesar's invasion; Brundisium, in its liminal position between Italy and the open sea, sees Pompey's departure.

In books one and two, Lucan traces the events of the civil war as defined by and expressed in the landscapes of Ariminum, Brundisium, and other parts of Italy. He draws on poetic models created by Vergil and Ovid, on the geographical aspects of historiography, and on the theoretical foundation provided by Stoic physics and cosmology. The interconnected nature of the Stoic cosmos and its theoretical cataclysmic end contribute imagery suited to civil war and affect the structure of the poem as a whole. In this epic, much as in Stoic philosophy, an understanding of the physical world is necessary to build and observe ethical and moral processes.² Stoic values can be used to interpret, positively or negatively, the characters of Caesar, Pompey, and Cato, precisely because elements of Stoic philosophy are present in the structure of Lucan's poetic world. Ideas about the structure of the world and the interconnectivity of all its constituent parts find physical expression in the landscape, as it reacts to and interacts

¹ Bexley (2009).

² Williams (2012) 3-5.

with the human players in Lucan's narrative. Nature and environment in the *Bellum Civile*, then, are a poetic representation of this physical world. The Italian countryside and its natural features show the actualization of the moral decay and political collapse inherent in the civil war. This landscape is more than scenery or background: it must be understood in order to give context and scope to the actions, thoughts, and ethical positions of the characters.

I. Universal Landscape: Italy and the Stoic Cosmos

In the proem Lucan demonstrates the connections between the natural world, its inhabitants, and the philosophical system that governs his narrative. The apostrophe to Rome includes the *Bellum Civile*'s first representation of the natural world. The focus lies indirectly on the geography and landscape of Roman Italy as it differs – in many cases unfavorably – with foreign lands. These locations of potential foreign conflicts and of the subsequent expansion of Roman *imperium*³ contrast with the devastating effects of civil war on Italy's land and cities. In placing Rome in the context of the wider world, the apostrophe also emphasizes Rome's geographical and political centrality. Although the land itself, absent any buildings or settlements, occupies merely two lines, Lucan contrasts this vision of Italy with the optimistically pastoral landscapes of his poetic predecessors.

at nunc semirutis pendent quod moenia tectis
urbibus Italiae lapsisque ingentia muris
saxa iacent nulloque domus custode tenetur
rarus et antiquis habitator in urbibus errat,
horrida quod dumis multosque inarata per annos
Hesperia est desuntque manus poscentibus arvis, (1.24-29)

But now the walls are sagging, while the houses are half-ruined,
in cities of Italy and, since the defenses have collapsed,

³ Roche (2009) 118-20 *ad* 15-18, comments on reading the geography as symbolic of the epic's major antagonists. Since Pompey is consistently identified with the east and Caesar with the north, these lines include "a subtle foreshadowing" of Caesar's eventual victory.

huge stones lie in ruins; the house is held by no guardian
and the infrequent inhabitant wanders in the ancient cities;
Hesperia is bristling with thorn bushes and has been unplowed
for many years, and hands are missing from the fields that ask for them;

Within four lines, Lucan refers to the land by two different names: *Italia* and *Hesperia*. The crumbling cities have buildings seemingly suspended in time in the moments before collapse;⁴ these are more closely identified with the word *Italia*. Lucan uses this word only seven times throughout his epic and prefers *Hesperia*, which he uses twenty times.⁵ *Italia* is a more geographical or even cartographical term, whereas *Hesperia* is poetic. Since both appear in this passage, Lucan unites the combined historiographical and poetic aspects of the *Bellum Civile* in the image of the decaying cities and overgrown lands of Italy.⁶ *Hesperia* is a particularly weighted term in this regard, a nod to the Greek poetic tradition and a term that foreshadows the role of Rome and Italy in later books of the poem.⁷ It may also allude to Lucan's literary predecessors, who combined Greek and Italian influences in their Roman world-building.⁸ Moreover, Lucan's use of *Hesperia*, the "western land," for Italy, itself a central power and

⁴ Roche (2009) 52 cites the *OLD* definition 7b of *pendere*, "to be a suspended state before falling," a meaning that emphasizes the precipitous nature of the timing and events of book one.

⁵ *Italia*: 1.25, 1.468, 2.397, 2.435, 2.659, 2.701, 5.579; used only when the narrative is set in Italy, with the exception of 5.579, used by Caesar when trying unsuccessfully to cross back from Greece to Italy during the storm. *Hesperia*: 1.29, 1.224, 1.404, 1.555, 2.196, 2.410, 2.433, 2.441, 2.608, 2.614, 2.734, 3.4, 3.66, 5.38, 5.266, 5.534, 5.691, 6.322, 8.189, 8.768.

⁶ Roche (2009) 19-30 for poetic models and influences; 42-43 for historical sources. Lucan's vocabulary also reflects his historical sources; prior to the *Bellum Civile*, both *semirutus* and *habitor* were used in prose, especially by Livy.

⁷ Roche (2009) 126 *ad* 29 suggests the term may derive from Apollonius of Rhodes' adjective ἑσπερίης at *Argonautica* 3.311. In Greek, words cognate with *Hesperia* originally denoted the time of day: at or towards evening (ἑσπερίος: Homer, *Odyssey* 2.385, 9.452, 15.505; Pindar, *Nemean* 6.38) or of the evening star (ἑσπερος: Homer, *Iliad* 22.318; Sappho 95). Since the sun sets in the west and night follows, secondary meanings indicating the west or a western location were common (ἑσπερίος: Homer, *Od.* 8.29; Theocritus 7.53; Aratus 407; ἑσπερος: Aeschylus, *Persians* 350; Sophocles, *Ajax* 805; Callimachus, *Hymn to Delos* 174). Similarly, the Ἑσπερίδες, daughters of Night, lived on the western edge of the world (Hesiod, *Theogony* 215; Euripides, *Hippolytus* 742). In the transmission of Rome's history, Dionysius of Halicarnassus quotes the Hellenistic elegist Agathyllus, who names Italy Ἑσπερία in his version of Aeneas' story.

⁸ Ennius, *Annales* 24; Vergil, *Aeneid* 1.530; Horace, *Carmina* 3.6.8; Ovid, *Fasti* 1.498.

location in the poem, fosters a sense of dislocation between reality and poetry by verbally locating Rome as if from an outsider's perspective. The preference for *Hesperia* or *Italia* also foreshadows the later decentralization of Rome and the institutions of the Republic in the events leading up to the battle of Pharsalus in book seven.

As a word for Italy, *Hesperia*, has a long history in Latin epic, used first by Ennius and later adopted by Vergil. Ennius introduces it in the context of what would become key words in identifying the *locus amoenus*: “*est locus, Hesperiam quem mortales perhibebant*” (there is a place, which mortals call Hesperia).⁹ Due to the fragmentary nature of the *Annales*, the larger context of the scene is mostly lost. Macrobius quotes it from book one, likely the narrative of Aeneas' escape from Troy and arrival in Italy. Appropriately, Vergil uses the same phrase, *est locus, Hesperia*, twice in the *Aeneid* as Aeneas makes his way to Italy.¹⁰ In the Augustan period, around the time Ovid was writing, *est locus* often marked the presence of the *locus amoenus*, which at that time had been established as an ideal landscape pattern in poetry.¹¹

The ruined Italy in *Bellum Civile* 1.28-29 reacts to the trope of the *locus amoenus* and the theme of the Golden Age so prominent in Augustan literature.¹² The idea that in the Golden Age, the earth is naturally fruitful to the point that it produces edibles without cultivation, is countered by Lucan's *Hesperia... inarata*. This particular adjective was common in early Augustan poetry, used to describe a situation best avoided, either by evacuating the unproductive land¹³ or by preventing the land from becoming unproductive by not cultivating it properly.¹⁴ Lucan, as per

⁹ Ennius, *Annales*, cited in Macrobius 6.1.11.

¹⁰ Vergil, *Aeneid* 1.530-33, 3.163-66.

¹¹ Hinds (2002) 125-26.

¹² On this topic, see Leach (1988), especially 197-99 on Augustan painting and poetry involving sacral-
idyllic landscapes, and 210-11 on the contributions of Tibullus and Horace.

¹³ Horace, *Epodes* 16.43.

¹⁴ Vergil, *Georgics* 1.83. Cf. Spencer (2010) 13 summarizes the stereotype the Roman pastoral ideal as a
“community of farmer-citizens whose identity was rooted in working the land” (cf. Varro, *De re rustica*

his reputation for inverting tradition and expectation,¹⁵ sets up his pattern of generally darker themes and images when he describes Italy as unplowed. Not only is the Italy of the *Bellum Civile* no longer part of a Golden Age where the land is productive and cultivation need not happen, it is presented as a wasteland where even the people who could make the land productive are missing.¹⁶

Lucan's description of *Hesperia* also reacts to the idyllic image of pre-Roman Italy as portrayed in the *Aeneid*. *Horrida...dumis* (1.28) alludes to *Aeneid* 8, when Evander leads Aeneas through the Capitolium, on a tour of proto-Rome.

hinc ad Tarpeiam sedem et Capitolia ducit
aurea nunc, olim silvestribus horrida dumis.
iam tum religio pavidos terrebat agrestis
dira loci, iam tum silvam saxumque tremebant. (8.347-50)

From this place [Evander] leads him to the Tarpeian seat and the Capitoline,
golden now, at that time bristling with sylvan thickets.
Even then terrible awe of the place terrified fearful peasants,
even then they trembled at the wood and rock.

In Vergil's narrative, the land is wild and overgrown because it has yet to be settled and tamed by the Romans. Lucan, playing with time, uses identical phrasing to recall this scene and contrast it with his Italy, which is overgrown again, but lacking the numinous power of its past.¹⁷ Vergil's landscape is terrifying in its power and unfamiliarity; Lucan's is terrifying for its emptiness and

2); she also finds anxiety in Sallust's writing about Romans losing touch with the landscape and rustic life, because "a weakened relationship with the land, however, imaginary, threatened the autochthonic qualities of Rome's historical imagination and impaired access to a collective historical memory."

¹⁵ Thompson and Bruère (1968) 1 call the poem an "anti-*Aeneid*." Cf. Casali (2011).

¹⁶ Roux (2008) 40 writes of the empty fields and deserted land, "Vergil... had already developed the *topos* of war emptying the fields." Cf. *Georgics* 1.507, *squalent abductis arva colonis*; *Aeneid* 8.7-8, *latos vastant cultoribus agros*.

¹⁷ Spencer (2010) 50 calls this episode a famous example of a temporally complex landscape that "configures space as a synchronous sequence of tagged landmarks: a hypertext." In their anonymity, Lucan's cities (listed merely as *urbibus...lapsis*) read as untagged landmarks. Thompson and Bruère (1968) 3 cite Lucan's response to Vergil as a reduction of Italy to the "primitive state" in which Aeneas found it at his arrival.

state of disrepair. The phrase *horrida...dumis* occurs in one other place in Latin epic: to describe the woods in which Euryalus dies in *Aeneid* 9.¹⁸ These two Vergilian passages give the impression of forests as something to be feared and respected.¹⁹ Though Lucan's *horrida...dumis* does not apply to a specific tract of forest, the rarity of this phrase helps introduce similar implications for his Italian landscape and to apply them to the whole expanse of Italy rather than a single forest or grove. The land has the potential for danger, but in Lucan's case, this danger comes from abandonment and neglect rather than lack of knowledge or primitive divinity.²⁰ Thus *horrida* applies both to the state of the countryside, bristling with overgrown vegetation, and to its pathetic effect on observers, shuddering as if in reaction to a perilous place.

The crumbling buildings that are in the process of being reclaimed by the landscape emphasize the distinction between the Italian *locus amoenus* of Ennius and Vergil and the post-apocalyptic imagery of Lucan's Italy. The stones that comprised the walls and defenses of these *urbes* were once quarried from the land but now escape the constructs of humanity and, in an almost entropic process, lie in ruins. Lucan's portrayal of these buildings is predicative. In the introductory verses of the *Bellum Civile*, the destruction of the war is still chronologically nebulous: Caesar has not crossed the Rubicon, seized Ariminum, or inspired the evacuation of Rome; in Lucan's own time, these battles and whatever devastation the war wrought on the land and cities of Italy are long past. In Lucan's narrative, though, the walls and homes are neglected to the point that they are falling apart²¹ and the cities themselves are nearly deserted (*rarus et*

¹⁸ Roche (2009) 125 *ad* 28 cites *Aeneid* 9.381-82: *silva fuit late dumis atque ilice nigra / horrida*.

¹⁹ Hardie (1994) on *Aeneid* 9.381-3.

²⁰ Groves with the same forbidding atmosphere as the one on Vergil's proto-Capitoline do exist in Lucan's poem, however, most notably in book three, near Massilia, but also in book one, in Gaul.

²¹ At this point Italy and its civilization is only partially in ruins. The roofs are *semirutae* (1.24), a word used only one other time in the *Bellum Civile* to refer to Carthage's buildings, as seen by Curio as he arrives in Libya. The word itself is primarily used by historians and is a particular favorite of Livy; Lucan employs *semirutus*, then, to increase the historical flavor of his poetry. Another literary approach to the

antiquis habitator in urbibus errat). The first glimpse of Italy in the *Bellum Civile*, then, is a vision of a land already in ruin and suffering from the kind of damage caused by time and war. Both parts of this vision look forward to later episodes in the epic: book two sees Pompey and his allies evacuate the cities and flee in the face of Caesar's advance; book nine locates Caesar in the ruins of Troy, crumbled and overgrown almost beyond recognition.

The extended introduction to the *Bellum Civile* also includes the poem's first simile (1.72-80), which functions as a programmatic image that helps define the rest of the poem. In these verses, Lucan uses the framework of Stoic cosmology and physics to give cosmic significance to the Roman civil wars. A basic overview of the more relevant parts of Stoic physics – especially those pertaining to the structure and consistency of the material world that makes up the universe – is necessary to put this simile in perspective before analyzing its constituent parts. The most important aspects of Stoic natural philosophy for this specific study are those relating to the cohesive nature of the universe, the elements from which it is made, and the place of conflagration or *ekpyrosis* within the world cycles posited by Stoic philosophers. The evidence for these theories as they were originally put forth by the leaders of the early Stoa (Zeno, Cleanthes, and Chrysippus) is fragmentary and often represented by writers hostile to the school, such as Plutarch. For this reason, the representation of Stoic physics can be obscure and rife with interpretive problems.²² Despite these difficulties, the collected fragments of the early Stoics (*Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*) do provide a basis from which to work.

The Stoics agreed on the concept of a materialistic universe. Reality was made up of things that *existed* (corporeals) and things that *subsisted* (incorporeals, such as time, space, the

passing of time and its potentially ruinous effects can be found in Seneca's *Ep.* 12 when Seneca describes a visit to his villa and the effects of time and age on the buildings and people.

²² White (2003) 151-52.

void, speech, etc.).²³ Within this framework were what Zeno called the active (τὸ ποίον) and the passive (τὸ πάσχον), roughly equivalent to “god” (or some divine force) and “matter.”²⁴

According to Diogenes Laertius, the Stoics thought the universe was composed of ἀρχαί, ungenerated and indestructible principles, and στοιχεῖα, which were identified as the traditional elemental categories of earth, air, fire, and water and were destroyed during the *ekpyrosis*.²⁵ The status of fire as an element is one of the problematic issues in Stoic physics, as it is represented in conflicting ways by various sources.²⁶ Plutarch quotes Chrysippus’ treatise *On Providence* as identifying fire with πῦρ τεχνικόν, the creative fire equivalent to the active principle or god.²⁷ In other sources, πῦρ τεχνικόν itself generated the four elements, including fire.²⁸ The role of fire in the cosmos matters so much because when it is identified with πῦρ τεχνικόν, the active principle, it can also come to be identified with πνεῦμα. πνεῦμα itself was often conceived of as a combination of the elements of air and fire which pervaded everything in the universe²⁹ and had a role in keeping the balance (τόνος) in the universe that made it a single cohesive unit.³⁰ The obscure connection between πνεῦμα and πῦρ τεχνικόν leads to interpretive problems on the issue

²³ Sellars (2006) 83.

²⁴ Sellars (2006) 86-87. The Stoics conceived of the universe as self-contained, active and passive, acting upon itself.

²⁵ Diogenes Laertius 7.134.

²⁶ White (2003), 133-34.

²⁷ Plutarch, *St. rep.* 1053b; *SVF* 2.605. For a similar representation, see Origen, *Contra Celsum* 4.14; *SVF* 2.1052. Sellars (2006) 92 explains that the Stoic “god” is in Nature to such a pervasive extent that “god” essentially *is* Nature and the cosmos can be conceived of as a kind of living being.

²⁸ Diogenes Laertius 7.136. Stobaeus attempts to sort out the confusion between the element and active principle by suggesting that there were two kinds of fire; see *Ecl.* 1.25.3 (*SVF* 1.120).

²⁹ Philo of Alexandria in his treatise *Quod deus sit immutabilis* 35 (*SVF* 2.458) associates πνεῦμα with the nature or φύσις of plants, the soul of animals, and the rational soul of human beings. Sellars (2006) 91 elaborates on the three conditions of πνεῦμα (which reflect τόμος): 1) cohesion (ἔξις), which gives unity to a physical object; 2) nature (φύσις), by which something can be alive; and 3) soul (ψυχή), the principle of life in animals that have the power of perception, movement, and reproduction. These three principles exist on a continuum.

³⁰ Sambursky (1959) 5.

of the πνευματικὸς τόπος that keeps the universe together,³¹ even during the conflagration phase of the universe's cycles. Temporally, the cosmos was also cohesive; for the Stoics, events were predetermined, connected in a causal chain that bound the beginning of the universe to the end. During the conflagration or *ekpyrosis*, everything in the universe is subsumed into divine, creative fire.³² If πνεῦμα can be understood as something equivalent to this force, as Chrysippus would have it, it expands from pervading everything in the universe to *being* everything in the universe.³³ This would mark the end of one world cycle and the beginning of another,³⁴ these cycles were ruled by reason and were thus in their ideal state at all times, at least in theory.³⁵ At its heart, this is a fairly positive interpretation of cosmology. Although the universe ends in a vast conflagration, the omnipresent and constant force of πνεῦμα is what drives the next iteration of the cosmos.³⁶ The end of one world cycle is the beginning of the next.

Lucan's representation, however, is far darker. He uses and reinterprets elements of the traditional Stoic universe, its cyclical nature, and periodic world-ending conflagration in a way

³¹ Lapidge (2010) 291-95 emphasizes the importance of Chrysippus to the physical theory of the early Stoa and suggests that he introduced the idea of πνεῦμα as a creative force to resolve the inconsistencies in the cosmological theories of his predecessors, Zeno and Cleanthes.

³² Sellars (2006) 96-99. The living cosmos is spherical and surrounded by an infinite void. During the process of *ekpyrosis*, the fire expands into the space of the extra-cosmic void.

³³ Plutarch, *Comm. Not.* 1067a (*SVF* 2.606) writes that during the conflagration, "no evil whatsoever remains, but the whole is then sagacious and wise;" at *St. rep.* 1052 c (*SVF* 2.604), "the soul of the cosmos is not separated but continually grows until it consumes its matter into itself."

³⁴ Sellars (2006) 99 notes that the conflagration and reformation of the cosmos is repeated and cyclical. Because the cosmos is governed by reason (λόγος) it is in its ideal configuration at all times. Therefore, instead of an endless series of cycles it can be thought of as a single cycle, repeated *ad infinitum*.

³⁵ Hahn (1977) 185.

³⁶ Long (1985) 20-21 compares the transformation of matter to fire at *ekpyrosis* to something like the modern principle of the conservation of energy.

that furthers his narrative.³⁷ While addressing the causes for the conflict about which he will write,³⁸ Lucan compares the condition of the Roman state to the universe itself.

sic, cum conpage soluta
saecula tot mundi suprema coegerit hora,
anticum repetens iterum chaos, omnia mixtis
sidera sideribus concurrent, ignea pontum
astra petent, tellus extendere littora nolet
excutietque fretum, fratri contraria Phoebe
ibit et oblicum bigas agitare per orbem
indignata diem poscet sibi, totaque discors
machina divolsi turbabit foedera mundi.
... tu causa malorum
facta tribus dominis communis, Roma, nec unquam
in turbam missi feralia foedera regni. (1.72-80, 84-86)

So, when, with the structure unbound,
the final hour of the world will drive together so many ages,
seeking again ancient chaos; all the stars will rush together
with other stars mixed in; the fiery stars will seek the sea,
the earth won't stretch out its shores and will shake off the sea;
Phoebe will go away from her brother and disdain to drive her
chariot through a world askew, will demand the day for herself;
and the discordant machine will throw into disorder every bond
of the overturned world. ... You were the cause of evils, Rome,
made common to three masters, and the fatal bonds of kingship,
never shared among a crowd.

Lucan equates the fall of the republic with the end of the world, in Stoic terms.³⁹ The first simile of an epic is one that draws attention and can be seen as an organizing principle, especially for the poetic universe of a particular poem.⁴⁰ Lucan's choice to use Stoic imagery, language employed by other philosophers (Stoic and otherwise) to explain cosmology, and elements that

³⁷ Sklenář (1999) 281 calls Lucan a “dark, sinister, and grimly parodic poet.” For other analyses of Lucan along these lines, see Johnson (1987), Henderson (1988), and Masters (1992).

³⁸ Lintott (1971) 498 examines the historicity of Lucan's portrayal of the civil war and notes that the way Lucan does not give a lengthy or in depth analysis of the war's immediate causes, possibly because “complex and devious negotiations and political maneuvers do not make for inspiring poetry.” In the context of poetic world modeled on the theories of Stoic cosmology, Lucan does not need to outline the causes of the war in any great detail, since the deterministic chain of events makes the conflict inevitable.

³⁹ Getty (1940) 141-43; Roche (2009) 147-48; Lapidge (2010) 309-312.

⁴⁰ Feeney (2014).

clearly show his reception of earlier texts including Ovid's *Metamorphoses* inflates the importance of the civil wars to a cosmic level. In doing so he draws on a wide range of sources that touch on the theoretical construction of existence and the literary precedents that describe it.

Lucan was not a philosopher himself, but in his studies would have been exposed to Stoic philosophy through the texts of authors including Cicero, Cornutus, and Manilius⁴¹ as well as those of his uncle Seneca, who wrote about and analyzed philosophical doctrine and theories from a Stoic perspective. These philosophers drew much of their material from the writers of the early Stoa, including Chrysippus.⁴² Although Roman philosophers tended to be more interested in ethics, they recorded and transmitted theories about physics and cosmology. In doing so, they created and perpetuated a shared Latin vocabulary for these philosophical ideas. Cicero's *De natura deorum*, especially Balbus' speech in book two, presents Stoic philosophy to a Roman audience and establishes Latin terms for Greek philosophical language.⁴³ Cicero's Latinization of Greek terms influenced later first century CE writers; Lucan's diction contains echoes of previous works including Seneca's *De Beneficiis* and *Naturales Quaestiones* and Manilius' *Astronomica*.⁴⁴ The influence of philosophy, especially Stoicism, on poetry during the first century of the empire is striking and unparalleled in antiquity.⁴⁵ Similarities between Lucan's epic and Seneca's *Naturales Quaestiones* are especially compelling, given that both texts were

⁴¹ Lapidge (2010) 297 cites all these potential sources for Lucan's absorption of Stoic thought, putting special emphasis of Manilius.

⁴² Sklenář (2008) 185 discusses Stoic aspects of Seneca's tragedies as "the product not only of a Stoic author, whose cast of mind reveals itself even when he is not pursuing an explicitly Stoic agenda, but of an intellectual culture steeped in Stoic concepts and of a literary culture steeped in Stoic language."

Lucan, though not a philosopher himself, nevertheless would have been affected by this same culture.
⁴³ Cicero, *De Natura Deorum* 2.15. Volk (2009) 233 explains the connection between Cicero's Balbus and the cosmology of Manilius' *Astronomica*.

⁴⁴ Lapidge (2010) 306 on Lucan and Seneca; Volk (2009) 1 on Lucan and Manilius.

⁴⁵ Gill (2003) 56 considers the genres of satire (Persius), tragedy (Seneca), and epic (Lucan, as well as the presentation of *fatum* in Vergil), among other representations.

written during the reign of Nero, at a time when both Lucan and Seneca became estranged from the emperor and were connected with a conspiracy against him.⁴⁶

Lucan uses this Latinized philosophical vocabulary to describe the end of the world. The Stoic terminology at 1.72-80 conveys the imagery of bonds, chains, and their connectivity or lack thereof. Lucan begins his simile with *conpage soluta*. Within the next three lines, he uses *coegerit* and *concurrent* as well. The repetition of the prefix *con-* is consistent with the portrayal of the universe as connected, as if by bonds or a chain. This goes back to Chrysippus' idea of πνεῦμα pervading and connecting everything and stabilizing the universe: a δεσμός πνεύματος binding things together.⁴⁷ A series of words that described this (συνέχω, συνέχεια, συνοχή, συμμονή)⁴⁸ imbued Chrysippus' cosmological system with the imagery of binding and connecting and were translated into Latin by authors like Cicero with words prefixed by *con-*. In his *De natura deorum*, Balbus, when explaining the composition of the material world and the relationship between its various components speaks of “*tanta rerum consentiens, conspirans, continuata, cognatio*.” Shortly thereafter, Balbus says that the *spiritus continuatur*, using a phrase Cicero probably intended to represent Chrysippus' πνεῦμα συνεχές.⁴⁹ *Solvere* is another programmatic word with Stoic overtones in the *Bellum Civile*. It is a Latin corollary for Greek

⁴⁶ Both the *Bellum Civile* and the *Naturales Quaestiones* were likely written between 60 and 65 CE. For Lucan's composition dates – and corresponding biographical details – see Ahl (1976) 39. For the circumstances involved in Seneca's composition, see Williams (2012) 10, especially note 26.

⁴⁷ Lapidge (2010) 293. See *SVF* 2.441. Sellars (2006) 103 explains the idea of cosmic sympathy: because the cosmos is permeated by πνεῦμα, there is a continual interaction between all parts of the cosmos despite their distance (e.g., the moon and tides, the butterfly effect). Gill (2003) 40 on Seneca's demonstration of the universe's rationality: it does not remove the divine, but rather makes it “divine” in Stoic terms, by nature of being “rationally intelligible as a coherent nexus of cause and effect.”

⁴⁸ Lapidge (2010) 291-93 provides a series of citations for these terms from the *Storicorum veterum fragmenta*. See also Arnold (1958) 100-125 for a general overview of Stoic philosophers in Rome. Gill (2003) 50 on Cicero as translator of Greek philosophical terms into Latin.

⁴⁹ Cicero, *De natura deorum* 2.19. For Chrysippus' πνεῦμα συνεχές see *SVF* 2.911; cf. Lapidge (2010) 295-96.

verbs like ἀναλύω, used by Chrysippus and translated by Manilius.⁵⁰ Lucan's use of *con-* compounds, *solvere*, and other terms for the cohesive structure of the *cosmos* reflects the practice among the Stoics whose works he had read. *Solvere* in particular becomes something of a signpost, indicating by its presence (or that of its cognates) an ongoing process of collapse and dissolution.

Conpage soluta, while being part of this wider language of binding and cohesion, actually serves to represent exactly the opposite in this simile. The fundamental connections of the universe exist here, but even from the beginning of the epic, have been undone. Lucan's use of *conpages* is very apt. In addition to its echo of the language of Stoic cosmology and universal cohesion, in its more general meaning of "framework" or "structure," *conpages* expresses the imagery of ruin that runs throughout the poem. Indeed, the *conpages solutae* of the larger cosmos are mirrored in the crumbling infrastructure of Italy (1.24-29)⁵¹ as well as the socio-political ruin of the state.

The imagery of bindings undone continues in *foedera mundi* (1.80) and *foedera regni* (1.86). The first instance, part of the simile itself, shows the bonds of the world thrown into confusion in the midst of the large scale cosmic collapse; the second instance neatly sums up the meaning of the simile and identifies its literal counterparts.⁵² Just as the whole of the universe – here denoted by the term *mundus* - is coming apart at the seams, so too do social and political bonds relating to mode of government damage the Roman state. Lucan's comparison of state and the universe expands the importance of his poem's subject and demonstrates the shifting scales

⁵⁰ Lapidge (2010) 292-94. See *SVF* 2.596 (cf. 602, 609-10, 614, 618-20). Compare Manilius 2.807, *resoluto... mundo*.

⁵¹ Roche (2009) 123 *ad* 24-26 notes that similar imagery of "architectural ruination" continues throughout the poem.

⁵² Fratantuono (2012) 14 notes that the phrase *feralia foedera* here is unique to Lucan. He also credits Lucan's use of *foedus* in the context of the Stoic model of the universe to Seneca (cf. *Medea* 336, 606).

(macrocosm vs. microcosm) that continue throughout the poem.⁵³ The combined images of connection and broken bonds are programmatic, especially as represented by *foedera*; Lucan uses the same language in the proem, citing the *rupto foedere* (1.4) as a reason for civil conflict.⁵⁴ In the context of the simile Lucan portrays a universe constructed in terms of Stoic physics⁵⁵ and what happens to this universe affects it at every level: the cosmos, the state, the people, and in an especially vivid way, the landscape. Lucan connects the universe and the state even further by echoing *turbabit* (1.80) with *turbam* (1.86). The disorder Lucan implies with the broken bonds of the universe (*conpage soluta; anticum... chaos; divolsi... mundi*) finds another outlet in the imagery of the *turba* and actions associated with it.⁵⁶

To construct his comparison of state with cosmos, Lucan also draws on the poetic model provided by Ovid,⁵⁷ who drew on various schools of philosophy and their terminology to write about the creation of the world in his *Metamorphoses*. Lucan's description of the *ekpyrosis* describes part of the process as a movement back towards the primordial state of the universe, chaos (*anticum repetens iterum chaos*, 1.74). In the beginning of book one, Ovid describes the formation of the world out of a similar state of chaos.

ante mare et terras et, quod tegit omnia, caelum
 unus erat toto naturae vultus in orbe,
 quem dixere Chaos, rudis indigestaque moles
 nec quicquam nisi pondus iners congestaque eodem

⁵³ Lapidge (2010) 359; Sklenář (1999) 283.

⁵⁴ Lapidge (2010) 310-11 notes that “for Chrysippus, the binding force of πνεῦμα restrained the elements, and its force was described metaphorically as a δεσμός; for Lucan, as for Manilius before him, the ‘foedera mundi’ correspond to the Stoic δεσμοί. When these ‘foedera’ are broken, the universe dissolves into fire.” Cf. Vergil, *Aeneid* 10.91, *foedera solvere furto*.

⁵⁵ Lapidge (2010) 302-4 demonstrates how *foedus* is used in specifically cosmological terms by Manilius in his *Astronomica*. Cf. 1.247-54, 2.60-66.

⁵⁶ Compare Seneca, *Epistle* 7 on reasons to avoid the crowd.

⁵⁷ *Fert animus* (1.167) is taken directly from the first line of the *Metamorphoses* (*in nova fert animus...*). O’Hara (2005) 151 demonstrates how the phrase shows Ovid’s inspiration as something internal rather than divine, and how this would appeal to Lucan. Cf. Anderson (1997) 150-52 and Haupt (1903) 13 *ad* 1.1-4.

non bene iunctarum discordia semina rerum. (1.5-9)

Before the sea and lands and sky, which covers all things,
there was a single face of nature in the whole world,
which they called Chaos, a rough and unarranged bulk,
nothing but a dead mass, with discordant seeds of
poorly joined elements congested therein.

Ovid draws on the philosophy of various thinkers including Posidonius and Lucretius as well as the teachings of philosophical schools, primarily Epicurean and Stoic. In his representation of the creation of the world, he uses Stoic terminology, though he has no commitment to Stoic philosophy.⁵⁸ His version of chaos corresponds in many ways to Stoic cosmological doctrine,⁵⁹ but Ovidian chaos is *iners*, while the Stoic Chaos is permeated with $\pi\nu\epsilon\delta\mu\alpha$ or some divine creative force. From this chaos, the three regions that will make up the world (*mare, terras, caelum*) represent three of the basic elements that make up reality: water, earth, and air.⁶⁰ Ovid begins with this tripartite division of the world, but soon adds a fourth element by dividing *aer* into lighter and heavier parts.⁶¹ The lighter *aer* takes the form of the *aether*, which Ovid describes as occupying the higher parts of the *caelum* and connects to fire, in that it can shine or flash (*emicuit, Met. 1.27*). These four elements of the Ovidian universe (*elementa, Met. 1.29*) are essentially equivalent to the $\sigma\tau\omicron\chi\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ of the Stoics – those Empedoclean elements identifiable as earth, air, fire, and water.⁶² That these *semina rerum* are themselves *discordia* is significant on a

⁵⁸ For Ovid's various potential sources see Robbins (1913), O'Hara (2005) 155-56, McKim (1985) 97-100. Wheeler (1995) 96-98 also looks at some of Ovid's sources for the creation of the world and expands on the idea of the demiurge (cf. *Met. 1.21: deus et melior... natura*) as divine fabricator, something akin to the Stoic allegorical interpretation of the *Iliad*, where Hephaestus and the shield of Achilles represent fabricator and cosmos.

⁵⁹ Haupt (1903) 14 *ad* 1.7 cites more generally the cosmology of Posidonius as one of Ovid's sources, but compares *chaos* to that described by Stobaeus at *Ecl. 1.11.5* and Diogenes Laertius at 7.137.

⁶⁰ Anderson (1997) 153 *ad* 5.

⁶¹ Barchiesi (2005) 150-151 *ad* 1.5 describes the many literary and philosophical models and sources Ovid had to work from in composing the cosmogony at the beginning of the *Metamorphoses*.

⁶² Haupt (1903) 15 *ad* 9. Anderson (1997) 153 *ad* 9 also defines *semina* as a metaphorical term for "constituent matter that emphasizes potential creativity." Cf. Kirk, Raven, and Schofield (1983) fr. 426 (Simplicius, *Physics* 25.21).

intertextual level, as well. Philosophically, *discordia* recalls the idea of strife as one of two productive processes, as posited by Empedocles.⁶³ Within the *Metamorphoses* itself, *discors concordia* (1.433) later describes part of the process of regenerating life after the flood. Horace had already used a similar noun-adjective combination, *concordia discors*,⁶⁴ when describing the operation of the physical universe in conjunction with Empedocles. In another later example, Manilius uses a similar phrase, *discordia concors* as one possible configuration of the cosmos in his discussion of the universe and its constituent elements.⁶⁵ Each phrase describes the state of the cosmos in some way, emphasizing the balance of or tension between harmony and discord. The noun and adjective are etymologically related, differing only in their prefix (*con-* or *dis-*); the paradox inherent in this particular combination of words – harmony and discord, order and chaos – is an appropriate description for the tension (τόνος) the Stoic believed to exist in the universe. Lucan’s *concordia discors* (1.98) looks back to all these previous examples, mirroring Horace precisely and alluding to Ovid and Manilius in the process. The other textual similarities between Lucan’s first book and Ovid’s depiction of the creation of the world, as well as their shared genre, make Lucan’s reception of Ovid particularly interesting, however. Where Ovid’s chaos with its disordered elements is set to create the whole of existence, Lucan’s is the destination in a breakdown of the world.⁶⁶ Fantham notes how the frequency of *discors* and

⁶³ Kirk, Raven, and Schofield (1983) fr. 423 (Simplicius *Physics* 158.1) and 424 (*ibid.*, 158.13).

⁶⁴ Horace, *Epistles* 1.12.19.

⁶⁵ Manilius, *Astronomica* 1.142. Volk (2009) 30 sees the general cosmogony in Manilius as composed ideas that were shared widely enough that Manilius’ readers would not have attributed them to a specific philosophical school. The exception is the exclusion of the fifth element, *aether*; Manilius, like the Stoics, placed fire at the top of the elemental hierarchy. Cf. Diogenes Laertius 7.137 (*SIF* 2.580), wherein the Stoics sometimes used *aether* to refer to the fire from which the heavenly bodies were composed.

⁶⁶ Tarrant (2002) 357-59 traces the way Lucan reverses Ovid’s “chaos-to-cosmos” process. He also describes the way Neronian writers like Lucan and Seneca could use chaos as a “synonym for the Underworld.”

discordia in Lucan is “as important in his presentation of subhuman and supernatural conflict as of human political strife.”⁶⁷

When Lucan uses Ovidian language, he is exploiting the more Stoic aspects of a non-Stoic poem and doing so in a way that introduces the universal scope of Ovid’s epic to the historically and geographically limited scope of his own civil war narrative. Moreover, by connecting his text to a more philosophically inspired episode from the *Metamorphoses*, Lucan immediately contrasts Ovid’s imagery of world building with his own account of cosmic dissolution. He continues to invert expectations and literary traditions. The *ekpyrosis* should be a relatively positive image that precedes a new cycle of creation, but within the scope of the *Bellum Civile*, it is not. Not only does *ekpyrosis* mark the moment when everything in the universe is subsumed into the divine creative fire, but it also resolves into a new universe.⁶⁸ In his first simile, however, Lucan hijacks this theory with apocalyptic imagery of death and destruction. Sklenář explores the nihilistic approach Lucan takes to this philosophy, the reversal of the significance of the *ekpyrosis*, and the way the whole process is represented in the *Bellum Civile* as “a terrifying vision of the fire at the end of time (*suprema hora*).”⁶⁹ In a way, the difference between the traditional *ekpyrosis* and a more nihilistic approach may be a matter of perspective. At a cosmic level, the destruction is both end and beginning, but when the cosmos is representative of a state at war with itself, the conflagration is not impartial or meaningless.

⁶⁷ Fantham (2010b) 211.

⁶⁸ Sklenář (1999) 284 notes that *ekpyrosis* is a rational process that renews the cycle of the universe following its destruction. He also quotes Philo’s *Indestructibility* 87-93, which points out a problematic aspect of this theory: that “if fire requires the other elements for fuel, then by exhausting them it destroys its own means of sustenance; when all the fuel is gone, the fire must necessarily be extinguished altogether, and be left with no power to generate a new cycle.”

⁶⁹ Sklenář (1999) 284. Moreover, this universe Lucan writes, according to Sklenář is governed by *ἀλογία*, rather than the tradition Stoic *λόγος*.

The proem continues and Lucan introduces the two chief antagonists in his epic, Pompey and Caesar. Much scholarship has been devoted to the morality of the characters and the various mythological and historical allusions associated with them.⁷⁰ Particularly notable are the pair of similes that compare Pompey and Caesar to an oak tree and a lightning bolt, respectively. In early epic, oak trees have been symbolic of Zeus and his power; later in the *Aeneid*, Vergil compares Aeneas to a mighty, deep-rooted oak.⁷¹ Pompey is introduced to the poem by a simile comparing him to an oak tree, that is, in terms that associate him with the natural world. Unlike Aeneas, Pompey's oak is no longer strong and is instead liable to fall.

stat magni nominis umbra;
 qualis frugifero quercus sublimis in agro
 exuvias veteris populi sacrataque gestans
 dona ducum nec iam validis radicibus haerens
 pondere fixa suo est, nudosque per aera ramos
 effundens truco, non frondibus, efficit umbram;
 et quamvis primo nutet casura sub euro,
 tot circum silvae firmo se robore tollant,
 sola tamen colitur. (1.135-43)

He remains, the shadow of a great name;
 just like a lofty oak in a fruitful field, bearing
 the spoils of an ancient people and the sacred
 gifts of generals, no longer clinging with strong roots,
 it is fixed by its own weight; sending out through the air
 bare branches from its trunk, it makes a shadow, not with leaves;
 and although it nods, about to fall under the east wind,
 and so many trees stand tall around it with firm strength,
 the oak alone is tended to.

⁷⁰ For greater detail on the characterization of Caesar and Pompey, see: Ahl (1976), Johnson (1987), Rosner-Siegel (2010), Feeney (1986), Helzle (2010), Blisset (1957).

⁷¹ Rosner-Siegel (2010) 186 cites Vergil's connection of oak imagery to Aeneas (*Aeneid* 4.441-49). For further discussion of oak trees and epic characters, see Roux (2008) 43-44; Ahl (1976) 156-57; Johnson (1987) 73-74. Masters (1992) 9 notes that Quintilian uses a dead but sacred tree to represent Ennius (*Inst. Or.* 10.1.88). For a discussion of trees in the *Aeneid*, see Gowers (2011).

Just as the civil war is directly compared to cosmic collapse, Pompey is likened to a part of the natural world as it falls into ruin.⁷² The Italian countryside overgrown with thorn bushes and full of crumbling infrastructure and untilled fields is not just an allusion to the unsettled, pre-Roman Italy of Evander's Pallanteum. It is parallel to Pompey himself and thus, too, to his cause, that of the old Rome. There is irony here, however. While the Italy presented in the proem is already in disrepair and agriculturally neglected (*multosque inarata per annos / Hesperia est desuntque manus poscentibus arvis*, 1.28-29), Pompey as oak tree is tended to (*colitur*). Likewise, the Italian countryside is *horrida... dumis* and experiences a crisis of productivity, while the area around Pompey's symbolic oak is more akin to the fruitful spaces of pastoral landscape (*frugifero... in agro*). The *silvae* of Pompey's simile provide a contrast not only in terms of cultivation, but in strength and substance as well. They have the oak-like strength (*robore*) that Pompey's oak should have. Likewise, the lack of leaves highlights how the tree and, figuratively, Pompey himself are no longer productive; the tree can still cast a shadow, but only because its trunk is so massive (*effundens truco, non frondibus, efficit umbram*). The shadow remains even when the tree has lost its vitality; like Pompey, it stands as the shadow of a great name (*stat magni nominis umbra*).⁷³ The cultivation and bucolic surroundings are an illusion.

The Pompey simile brings together both the earlier description of the Italian landscape and the first simile's comparison of the republic's fall to collapse on a universal level. Pompey's oak, though its roots are useless, is fixed by its own weight (*pondere fixa suo est*). This comparison functions on a programmatic level in the *Bellum Civile*; Lucan repeatedly represents Pompey building camps or fortifications that should be immobile, like an oak, but instead are

⁷² Cf. 1.24-29.

⁷³ Feeney (1986) examines the deeper meaning of this phrase in terms of Pompey's actions and achievements and traces the significance of the *umbra* metaphor throughout the *Bellum Civile*.

threatened to the point that Pompey “uproots” himself and his soldiers to move elsewhere.⁷⁴ Moreover, *pondere* looks back to the image of the dissolving *cosmos* at 1.72-80, which describes “*graves sub pondere lapsus / nec se Roma ferens*” (a grave downfall, and Rome couldn’t bear herself under her own weight), 1.71-72.⁷⁵ Pompey is like the huge but feeble oak tree and he is another representation of Rome’s troubles on a cosmic scale. Using the related verb *pendere*, this thematic continuity reaches as far back as the collapsing buildings of Lucan’s Italian cities at 1.24-5 (*at nunc semirutis pendent quod moenia tectis / urbibus Italiae lapsisque... muris*). The interconnectivity of the universe as conceived by Stoic philosophers underpins the *Bellum Civile* and, on a literary level, conveniently combines with the Roman poetic penchant for intertextuality. The dissolution of the universe and its structure is represented on both microcosmic and macrocosmic levels.⁷⁶ Lucan uses it as a simile for the destruction wrought on the Roman state by civil war, in the actions and morality of his characters, and as something reflected in the natural world interpreted as the landscape.

Pompey’s comparison to the old oak tree is paralleled by a programmatic simile that characterizes Caesar as a lightning bolt: swift, bright, dangerous, and unstoppable.⁷⁷ Caesar, as lightning bolt, is more than human;⁷⁸ he is a force of nature.

qualiter expressum ventis per nubila fulmen
aetheris impulsu sonitu mundique fragore
emicuit rupitque diem populosque paventes
terrui obliqua praestringens lumina flamma:
in sua templa furit, nullaque exire vetante
materia magnamque cadens magnamque revertens

⁷⁴ Rosner-Siegel (2010) 191-92.

⁷⁵ Compare Lucan’s attention to *pondus* with Seneca, *NQ* 3.10.3: *nihil deficit quod in se redit: omnium elementorum alterni recursus sunt; quicquid alteri perit, in alterum transit, et natura partes suas velut in ponderibus constitutas examinat, ne portionum aequitate turbata mundus praeponderet.*

⁷⁶ Bartsch (1997) 17.

⁷⁷ Roche (2009) 192 *ad* 151-57: the simile highlights Caesar’s “mobility, speed, impatience, ...destructive capabilities, [and] capacity to inspire fear.” See also Rosner-Siegel (2010).

⁷⁸ Lapidge (2010) 319.

dat stragem late sparsosque recolligit ignes. (1.151-57)

Just as lightning has flashed out, pressed through the clouds by the wind, with the sound of stricken aether and the crash of the universe, and has broken the day, and terrified the fearful populace, dazzling their eyes with sideways flame: it rages against its own quarters, and with no substance preventing its departure, both falling and returning, gives great destruction far and wide and recovers its scattered fires.

By comparing Caesar to lightning, Lucan makes him essentially a force of nature. Unlike Pompey, however, who, while still characterized in terms of the natural world, is notable for his inertia,⁷⁹ it is the violent and effective movement of both lightning and Caesar that makes them so formidable. When prodigies appear in the vicinity of Rome near the end of book one, the fearful response to the lightning (1.526-35) parallels that in Caesar's defining simile (*populos paventes / terruit*). Later still, a similar comparison between Alexander the Great and a lightning bolt (10.25-38) enriches the historic and poetic resonance of Lucan's characterization of Caesar.⁸⁰ The destructive capabilities of the lightning, bringing ruin wherever it goes (*dat stragem late*), also augment Caesar's forceful position in the world of the *Bellum Civile*. *Dat stragem* echoes depictions of natural disasters in earlier poetry: a flooding river,⁸¹ an outbreak of pestilence,⁸² and a destructive storm.⁸³

⁷⁹ Leigh (1997) 105 also equates Pompey's inertia with the "weakness" of his forces as they prepare to face the Caesarians in battle.

⁸⁰ Roche (2009) 192 *ad* 151-57 also sees a parallel between the narrator's "damning moral viewpoint" towards both Caesar and Alexander. Morford (1967a) 55 also compares Lucan two lightning bolt similes to a lost Pindaric description of Hercules, preserved by Quintilian 8.6.71: *non igni nec ventis nec mari, sed fulmini... ut illa minora, hoc par esset*.

⁸¹ Lucretius, *De rerum natura* 1.286-89: *ita magno turbidus imbri / molibus incurrit validis cum viribus amnis, / dat sonitu magno stragem volvitque sub undis / grandia saxa, ruit qua quidquid fluctibus obstat*.

⁸² Vergil, *Georgics* 3.556-58: *iamque catervatim dat stragem atque aggerat ipsis / in stabulis turpi dilapsa cadavera tabo, / donec humo tegere ac foveis abscondere discunt*.

⁸³ Vergil, *Aeneid* 12.454: *miseris, heu, praescia longe / horrescunt corda agricolis: dabit ille ruinas / arboribus stragemque stais, ruet omnia late*.

The lightning simile alone is enough to connect Caesar to the prodigies observed near Rome at the end of book one, but verbal similarities between these two passages strengthen the link between this Caesarian lightning and the subsequent portents. Where the *fulmen* crashes through the air with a sound that resonates through the firmament (*mundi fragore*), one prodigy perceived near Rome involves a ghostly battle, complete with clashing weapons (*tum fragor armorum magnaeeque per avia voces / auditae nemorum et venientes comminus umbrae*, 1.569-70).⁸⁴ The auditory signatures of lightning and prodigy match. The shifting perspective within Caesar's simile, from the lightning itself to the people observing it (*populos paventes / terruit*), also supports a visualization of the lightning as a *spectaculum*, and, correlatively, of Caesar himself as portent and spectacle.⁸⁵

The language of this simile also speaks to the philosophical framework of the poem and the figuration of civil war as cosmic disaster. By describing Caesar not merely in terms of nature, but as a more elemental part of the natural world, Lucan ties him more closely to the fiery aspects of *ekpyrosis* and universal collapse established earlier in the proem. The Caesarian lightning bolt's violence resonates throughout the world (*mundique fragore*), and tears through the constituent parts of the *mundus* (*nullaque exire vetante / materia*). Later, after sowing destruction (*stragem*) far and wide, the lightning recalls itself, literally gathering itself back together (*recolligit*). By applying to Caesar qua lightning a verb often associated with Stoic physics, indicating binding and hence the cohesive nature of the cosmos, Lucan lays the

⁸⁴ See also my discussion of *fragor* at 7.478 in Chapter Three.

⁸⁵ See my later note on Caesar, empire, and spectacle in Chapter Three (note 135).

foundation for the negative narrative of Caesar as force of nature and as world-builder that will unfold along with the epic itself.⁸⁶

II. *Fracta Limes, Rupta Quies*: The Rubicon and Ariminum

Following the proem and extended introduction to the *Bellum Civile*, Lucan describes Caesar's southward trek through Italy, his transgression of riverine boundaries, the geography of his past and present conquests in Gaul and Italy, and the reaction of Rome to portents of its future suffering and memories of past suffering. The pattern of events in the first book are mirrored by those in the second book:

- 1.183-227: Caesar breaks barriers; enters Italy
- 1.183-227: Rubicon river crossing, Caesar advances
- 1.392-465: excursus and catalogue: Gallic geography
- 1.522-695: Rome – portents
- 2.16-233: Rome – memories
- 2.392-438: excursus and catalogue: Italian geography
- 2.478-525: Corfinium and river crossing, Caesar advances
- 2.650-736: Caesar builds barriers; Pompey leaves Italy

Over the course of the narrative in book one, Lucan describes Caesar's departure from Gaul, the crossing of the Rubicon, and the reaction of the Romans living in Italy to what was essentially an invasion by a general ostensibly on their side. The people of Ariminum lament the illegality⁸⁷ of Caesar's actions – leading his army out of the provinces into Italy – and compare it to previous transalpine invasions (1.248-57). After Caesar recalls his troops from the various parts of Gaul to follow him into Italy, an action Lucan narrates with a catalogue of all the Gallic peoples and places left free from Caesar's influence (1.392-465), he approaches Rome itself. The people

⁸⁶ Johnson (1987) 111 calls Caesar the “archetype in whom all the qualities necessary to the monster are perfectly realized;” while Bartsch (1997) 63 notes that in this simile, Caesar “emerges as a personification of the unpredictable power that seems to stand behind Rome's downward spiral.”

⁸⁷ Cf. Sulla's *lex Cornelia de maiestate* in Cicero, *In Pisonem* 21. Sulla had orchestrated a law against treasonous actions, including generals or governors leading armies out of their assigned provinces without senatorial permission.

living there, especially those loyal to Pompey and his faction, flee the city; those who remain behold awful portents that foretell the destruction of Rome (1.523-83).

When considered together, the crossing of the Rubicon and the seizure of Ariminum illustrate the transgression of geographical, political, and moral boundaries by Caesar and his legions. These episodes further the themes established in the proem and set the tone for the battles and conflicts that follow in later books. Caesar's transgressions are bound up in his figuratively supernatural power and both the transgressions themselves and Caesar's agency contribute to the developing sense of cosmic imbalance. Beyond Caesar's perceived immorality and hostility and Pompey's corresponding absence, these scenes are noteworthy for their representation of the invasion of Italy and the inverted expectations of the landscape therein.

Lucan draws on both historical and poetic sources for rivers and, more specifically, the Rubicon. Historically, the issue of land use and ownership in Italy was a cause of intra-Roman conflict in the century leading up to the civil wars. Poets had dealt with this issue before – notably Vergil in his *Eclogues*⁸⁸ – but Lucan expresses Roman anxieties about the land as part of his wider civil war narrative. Other poetic expectations established by writers of the Augustan period associate Italy and its landscape with the idea of the Golden Age and the idyllic setting that accompanied

⁸⁸ Cf. Vergil, *Eclogue* 1. Clausen (1994) 30 (n. 4) traces Vergil's interest in land confiscations to the period after the Battle of Philippi in 42 when tracts of land were seized throughout Italy and given to soldiers as a reward for their service. He credits Appian's *Bellum Civile* 5.12 with the most vivid description: ἀλλὰ ἀνὰ μέρος ἐς τὴν Ῥώμην οἱ τε νέοι καὶ γέροντες ἢ αἱ γυναῖκες ἅμα τοῖς παιδίοις, ἐς τὴν ἀγορὰν ἢ τὰ ἱερά, ἐθρήνουν, οὐδὲν μὲν ἀδικῆσαι λέγοντες, Ἰταλιῶται δὲ ὄντες ἀνίστασθαι γῆς τε καὶ ἐστίας οἷα δοριληπτοὶ (They came to Rome in crowds, young and old, women and children, to the forum and the temples, uttering lamentations, saying that they had done no wrong for which they, Italians, should be driven from their fields and their hearthstones, like people conquered in war; trans. H. White).

it.⁸⁹ The ruined and neglected Italy in books one and two of Lucan's *Bellum Civile* stands in stark contrast.

Here, reversal of earlier models is apparent in the portrayal of Caesar's role as conqueror, the effects of war on the land in which it takes place, and the respective positions of Italy and Gaul in the Roman state and its socio-political hegemony at the beginning of 49 BCE. In book one, Caesar, having conquered Gaul, leaves it behind and enters Italy. One might expect the landscape of Gaul to show the effects of war (earthworks made for sieges, uncultivated fields, the general destruction that follows an army), while the landscape of Italy appears more peacefully agricultural. In Lucan's account, though, Italy's lands, both urban and rural, while not yet the site of civil conflict, lie in ruins proleptically (1.24-29). Meanwhile, the lands of Gaul, left behind by Caesar and the destructive forces that seem to follow him like a cloud in the *Bellum Civile*, are full of vital and relatively healthy natural features.

The landscape described in the Gallic excursus, a catalogue of the natural features and inhabitants of the region, is not exceptional in terms of its geography. It surveys the entire region by listing its smaller parts.⁹⁰ The catalogue is notable, however, for the absence of Roman soldiers from the land where they had been stationed. Roux examines the Roman *topos* of war "emptying the fields" in Vergil's *Aeneid* and *Georgics*, poems associated with the offered end to wartime devastation of the land with Augustus' *pax Romana*.⁹¹ In the Italy of the *Bellum Civile*, Caesar is no savior; the deserted Italian fields (1.29) and devastation wrought by war are his

⁸⁹ Cf. Vergil, *Eclogue* 4.4-5, 8-10: *ultima Cumaei venit iam carminis aetas; / magnus ab integro saeculorum nascitur ordo / ... tu modo nascenti puero, quo ferrea primum / desinet ac toto surget gens aurea mundo, / castra fave Lucina.*

⁹⁰ Riggsby (2010) 28 discusses the geographic space of Gaul in Caesar's *commentarii*. He sees the introduction (*Gallia est omnis divisa*, 1.1) as a way to construct a quasi-cosmographic view of Gaul that sets the limits of the action in Caesar's account.

⁹¹ Roux (2008) 40. Cf. Vergil, *Aeneid* 8.7-8 (*latos vastant cultoribus agros*); *Georgics* 1.507 (*squalent abductis arva colonis*).

doing. Lucan projects a negative image of this narrative of damaged land in his Gaul: war empties the fields of Roman soldiers, but only so that they can go to war elsewhere. The transgression Lucan describes, then, occurs on both a geographical and a moral level, and is illustrated by the landscape itself. The portrayal of Italy and Gaul mirrors the moral decrepitude of Rome's civil war and, according to Lucan, Caesar is responsible for the state of both the land and the conflict.

Lucan's narrative of the Rubicon comes in three parts: Caesar's approach and arrival, a short excursus on the river's origins and flow, and Caesar's crossing of the river and entrance into Italy. When Caesar crosses the Alps and comes to the northern bank of the Rubicon he is met by an anthropomorphic apparition of Rome.

iam gelidas Caesar cursu superaverat Alpes
ingentesque animo motus bellumque futurum
ceperat. ut ventum est parvi Rubiconis ad undas,
ingens visa duci patriae trepidantis imago
clara per obscuram voltu maestissima noctem,
turrigero canos effundens vertice crines,
caesarie lacera nudisque adstare lacertis
et gemitu permixta loqui: 'quo tenditis ultra?
quo fertis mea signa, viri? si iure venitis,
si cives, huc usque licet.' tum perculit horror
membra ducis, riguere comae, gressumque coercens
languor in extrema tenuit vestigia ripa. (1.183-94)

Now Caesar had conquered the chilly Alps in his course
and had taken in mind great rebellions and a future war.
As he came to the waters of the narrow Rubicon,
a mighty vision of the trembling nation appeared to the general,
clear in the dark night and most grief-stricken in appearance,
streaming white hair from her turreted head,
torn as to her hair and with bare arms, she seemed to stand
and spoke, intermingled with groans: 'How far do you stretch?
Where do you bear my standards, men? If you come justly,
if you are citizens, this is permitted up to this point.' Then
horror struck the general's limbs, his hair stood on end, and
beginning to walk, languor held his footsteps at the edge of the bank.

Caesar reenacts Hannibal's Alpine crossing during the Second Punic War in 218 BCE. However, unlike Hannibal, whose crossing and descent of the Alps receives a detailed description in Livy,⁹² Lucan's Caesar crosses the mountains with little apparent difficulty. The Alps are simply another place he can conquer (*superaverat Alpes*) on his way from Gaul to Italy. The crossing and descent is almost an afterthought to Lucan's narrative,⁹³ which focuses instead of the confrontation with the *patriae...imago* on the bank of the Rubicon.

Hannibal's difficult journey through the Alps and the dangers posed by the mountains' terrain and geography in Livy provides a model contrasted by the notable lack of any kind of description of the mountainous terrain in Lucan's first book. Though mountains do play a larger role in later books (e.g., the gigantomachically famous mountains of Thessaly in book six), the Alps in book one are presented as a literarily non-existent boundary and later, in the ecphrasis of the Rubicon's source, as a geographically inaccurate substitute for the Apennines.⁹⁴ Horsfall addresses a similar discrepancy in the accuracy with which places are described in Livy's historiography and Vergil's poetry, noting that even Livy's geographical accuracy does not stand up to the standards of Polybius, to whom "autopsy and the importance of precise geographical information" was a primary concern.⁹⁵ This has interesting implications for a study of landscape in Lucan, as well. If landscape, to some extent, is the interpretation of the features of the natural world through human perception, there is some element of autopsy associated with it. Lucan is

⁹² Livy 21.30-37. Roche (2009) 45-47 refers to Eumolpus' *Bellum Civile* and its focus on moral decline. At *BC* 144-51 Petronius compares Caesar, crossing the Alps, to Hercules; for further discussion of this point, see Connors (1998) 126-27. Cf. Strabo 5.2.9 on the difficult terrain in the pass used by Hannibal and its nearness to Ariminum.

⁹³ Masters (1992) 1 notes that the Alps are a limit "casually transgressed," in comparison to the *limes* formed by the Rubicon. Moreover, he draws attention to the motif of Hannibal's invasion which continues throughout the *Bellum Civile*. Ahl (1976) 107-12 examines Caesar's Hannibalic characteristics in detail.

⁹⁴ Getty (1940) 57 *ad* 219 explores some of the possibilities for this substitution: geographical mistake or simple metonymy.

⁹⁵ Horsfall (1985) 199.

infamous for his geographical inconsistencies, a pattern that affects geography in ancient writing at a more universal level. Horsfall explains:

...in the absence of a precise and universally accepted system of orientation, of the means to measure height, distance, or angles with exactitude, of any serious cartography, and, lastly, of the vocabulary which would have enabled historians of the Roman world to describe places at all coherently, even had they the science and technology to comprehend their outlines accurately – for it is to be suspected that there exists a conceptual and causal link between the abilities to measure accurately and to describe coherently – then we should perhaps rather marvel that Roman authors preserved *any* topographical indications which we can today relate to our precisely arithmeticized world-view.⁹⁶

Scholars have suggested that Lucan's inaccurate geography was not a matter of intelligence or training, but rather a shift in priorities from geographic or topographic accuracy to poetic purpose and rhetorical structure.⁹⁷ So, while observation may create landscape, autopsy clearly did not always play a vital role in Lucan's geography any more than it did in Livy's. Effective literary landscape, then, comes from the interaction between the natural world and the people who inhabit and observe it. There is a clear preference on the poet's part for his art, rather than the historiographical ideals of a true presentation of events, at least as far as the accurate portrayal of the natural world is concerned. The landscape of the *Bellum Civile* is a literary construct that, like other rhetorical tools, enables Lucan to make and emphasize his point more effectively. Any perceived inaccuracy in the geography is thus also part of Lucan's rhetorical technique.

⁹⁶ Horsfall (1985) 205. See especially the catalogue of Gallic peoples and places left behind by Caesar's legions (1.392-465). E. g., 1.397: *castra quae Vosegi curvam super ardua rupem*, where Lucan attempts to identify the Vosegus river with the Vosges mountains. Fantham (1992a) 18 writes that Lucan's interest in geography "was imaginative and aesthetic, not scientific," and therefore was "often inaccurate."

⁹⁷ Getty (1940) xxxv-xliv. Horsfall (1985) 201 describes the place of rhetorical training in the description of landscape as something that provided generic types of locations (the cave, the grove, etc.). Masters (1992) 154, regarding the mountains of Thessaly, argues that the deliberately incorrect geography in the *Bellum Civile* is meant to draw attention and support Lucan's larger poetic ambitions.

Accordingly, an examination of the poetic qualities of Caesar's arrival at the Rubicon is necessary. In light of the epic tradition in which Lucan writes, this episode – the descent, the boundary river, the *imago* of Rome, Caesar's reaction – is potentially reminiscent of another process and place: *catabasis* and the underworld. Of the Rubicon, Lucan first writes, *parvi Rubiconis ad undas*. The construction of this phrase, with the name of a river in the genitive case followed by *ad undas*, with the noun occupying the final foot in the hexametric line was not widely used, but does have precedent in Ennius, Propertius, and Vergil.

Fragments of Ennius' poetry, likely from the seventh book the *Annales*, can be identified with events from the late 3rd century BCE when the Roman Republic was fighting with the Celts in Cisalpine Gaul and hostilities were renewed against the Carthaginians in the Second Punic War. Ennius' *Naris ad undas*⁹⁸ probably refers to the building of a bridge over the river Nar during the construction of the Via Flaminia, which terminated at Ariminum.⁹⁹ Lucan's *Rubiconis ad undas* echoes the construction of *Naris ad undas* and creates a poetic connection between two rivers that shared a single watershed. An examination of the whole Ennian fragment increases the potentially chthonic overtones of Lucan's Rubicon. Priscian quotes Ennius in relation to the Via Flaminia, *sulpureas posuit spiramina Naris ad undas*.¹⁰⁰ The Nar's water is in fact full of sulfur and this makes it a perfect candidate for association with the underworld and, specifically, with an entrance to it. Kvičala and Bierma identify the *spiramina* as openings in the earth that

⁹⁸ Ennius, *Annales* fr. 222 (Skutsch).

⁹⁹ Ashby and Fell (1921) 127-28 address the territorial expansion connected to the construction of the Via Flaminia and the increased contact between Rome and the parts of Italy that adjoined Cisalpine Gaul. They also note the importance of the road during the Second Punic War, since a praetor was stationed at Ariminum. For a detailed discussion of the topography of the Via Flaminia: see 134-66 for the road from Rome to Narni; see 166-90 for Narni to Ariminum. Cf. Strabo 5.1.11.

¹⁰⁰ Priscian 2.222-23. Priscian makes note of the syntax of this phrase before providing comparanda from Ovid (*Met.* 3.675), Vergil (*Aen.* 7.517), and Lucan (2.183).

spew sulphuric vapors;¹⁰¹ Norden identifies the place as a *Ploutonion* and compares its function to the place through which the fury Allecto returned to the underworld after inciting war in *Aeneid* 7.¹⁰²

Naris ad undas also creates a bilingual pun: *nar* was both the Sabine or Illyrian word for *sulphur*¹⁰³ and the Latin for *nose*, emphasizing the distinctive odor of sulphur and the sense – smell – on which it has the most direct impact. Ennius’ verse, whether intentionally or not, does double duty in reinforcing the chthonic characteristics of this river (*sulpureas... Naris*). Lucan echoes the language of this line in book two as well, when describing the physical damage inflicted on the victims of Sulla’s purges. One unfortunate relation of Marius suffered disfiguration involving facial mutilation: *spiramina naris aduncae*.¹⁰⁴ This phrase, differing from Ennius’ wording by only two letters, demonstrates Lucan’s familiarity with Ennius or his poetic legacy.¹⁰⁵ It also serves a double purpose. Lucan reinforces the similarity between the name of the river and nasal anatomical terminology. If this pun is in effect in Ennius’ *spiramina naris ad undas*, it may mean, as Skutsch posits, that Ennius was referring to the holes in the Nar’s banks (the *spiramina*) as if they were the “nostrils of hell.”¹⁰⁶ Moreover, the potential use of such a pun in Ennius, and the clear transformation of the line by Lucan to refer to the nose and nostrils

¹⁰¹ Kvičala (1902) 14, Bierma (1907) 348.

¹⁰² Norden (1915) 25. Cf. Vergil, *Aen.* 7.511-18 (the Nar and its surroundings resound with Allecto’s horn) and 7.561-71 (the *locus horridus* surrounding the entrance to the underworld). For similar natural places associated with entrances to the underworld, see *RE* 10.2386.

¹⁰³ Skutsch (1985) 397-99 *ad fr.* 222.

¹⁰⁴ Lucan, 2.183.

¹⁰⁵ von Albrecht (1999) 234 argues that Lucan had no *direct* knowledge of Ennius, but that he may have had contact with Ennian language through Vergilian borrowing or Cicero’s quotations. For a deeper examination of Ennius’ influence on Lucan, see 233-36. von Albrecht 234 note 1 also addresses the varying levels of skepticism in modern scholarship towards Ennius’ influence on Lucan. While Conte (1970) sees Lucan using Ennian words and images, Skutsch (1985) 16 is more skeptical about a direct line of influence, if only due to Seneca’s own criticism of Ennius.

¹⁰⁶ Skutsch (1985) 399.

contributes to the wider metaphor of the body in the *Bellum Civile*.¹⁰⁷ Later, Propertius and Vergil both use *Acherontis ad undas*,¹⁰⁸ which also finds an echo in Lucan's *Rubiconis ad undas*¹⁰⁹ and is metrically identical. The association between the two rivers, Acheron and Rubicon, exists at a level beyond meter and diction, however, for the Acheron marks a boundary between life and death. In this way, it is a particularly apt comparison to the Rubicon, itself notable primarily for its role as a boundary.

Riverbanks are liminal spaces for Lucan and actions that occur *fluminis ad undas* even transgress the boundary between life and death. Within the Stoic cosmology of Lucan's poetic universe, this kind of boundary transgression – even by implication – indicates a disturbance in the cosmic balance for which Caesar is again largely responsible. Lucan uses portents to show how and where this cosmic imbalance occurs. In the portents that appear to the citizens of Rome in book one, an undead Marius seems to break out of his tomb near the Anio.¹¹⁰ The form of this portent is as significant as its presence: Marius brings with him the memory of civil conflict and its bloody consequences, as suffered by Rome at the beginning of the first century BCE.

The *patriae... imago* – the vision of *Roma* that appears to Caesar – is another allusion to the underworld. When Anchises tells Aeneas about the glorious future of Rome in *Aeneid* 6, he shows Rome claiming power over the world under the leadership of Augustus.¹¹¹ *Berecynthia*

¹⁰⁷ For the body as metaphor for the state, see Bartsch (1997) 10-12, 16 and Dinter (2012) 9-49. Cf. Most (1992) 397-400.

¹⁰⁸ Propertius, *Elegiae* 3.5.13; Vergil, *Aeneid* 6.295. Motto and Clark (1973) 196-97 find a parallel in Seneca, *Epistle* 55, wherein Vatia's villa near Cumae can be read allegorically as the Vergilian gateway to the underworld. Cf. Silius Italicus, *Punica* 12.126. Muecke (2007) analyzes Silius' place in this tradition, noting how he uses the precedent of Vergil and Lucan to explore the infernal aspects of the volcanically active area around Puteoli as seen by Hannibal.

¹⁰⁹ Repeated by Lucan at 7.254, when Caesar uses the phrase during his exhortation before the battle of Pharsalus.

¹¹⁰ *Bellum Civile* 1.582-83: *tollentemque caput gelidas Anienis ad undas / agricolae Marium fracto fugere sepulchro*. Cf. Silius Italicus, *Punica* 17.233.

¹¹¹ *Aeneid* 6.781-87.

mater... turrita identifies Rome by the temple to Cybele built on the Palatine; Lucan echoes Vergil when his *Roma* appears with hair unbound and head bearing a crown shaped like the city walls (*turrigero... vertice*, 1.188). Unlike Vergil's glorious future-perfect *Roma*, however, Lucan's *imago* appears as a woman in mourning. While the turreted crown was a common way to depict personified cities, Lucan uses the same image as Vergil to reimagine the strong, victorious Rome of the *Aeneid*. Alternately, according to Masters, the *imago Romae* could be a play on the literary *revocatio*, an attempt to prevent Caesar from proceeding.¹¹² Caesar reacts to the vision by hesitating (*languor... tenuit vestigia*) and displaying an involuntary physical response to the vision (*perculit horror / membra ducis, riguere comae*). *Horror* is a common response to such a vision and its expression, hair standing on end, is quite fitting. Morford compares Aeneas' vision of Creusa at *Aeneid* 2.774 and Andromache's dream of Hector from Seneca's *Troades* 457; both depict scenes from the fall of Troy and encounters with the dead.¹¹³ The phrase *riguere comae* is not particularly common, but does have a precedent in Ovid. Numa's encounter with Jupiter at *Fasti* 3.332 elicits the same reaction to the supernatural (*deriguere comae*), though in Lucan's later version the god is replaced with a personification of Rome.¹¹⁴ On a more general level, Lucan's most direct use of Vergil's underworld model in *Aeneid* 6 is the witch Erichtho in his own sixth book; shades of underworld imagery in Italy in book one help illustrate the destructive potential of the civil war on the land and its people and highlight Caesar's role.

¹¹² Masters (1992) 7-8 also sees the use of *revocatio* on a metapoetic level, calling Lucan back from the task ahead of him: the composition of his civil war epic.

¹¹³ Morford (1967a) 78. Lucan delights in the connection between Troy and Rome and will take it to its limit in book nine when Caesar visits the ruins of Troy.

¹¹⁴ Statius later uses Lucan's phrase as a model when Hypsipyle narrates the murder of the Lemnian men, specifically when she sees Alcimedea carrying her father's head, having torn it off (*Thebaid* 5.238).

Lucan's description of the Rubicon's source and flow, though relatively brief at only seven lines, demonstrates the extent of his geographical knowledge. It also serves as a focused examination of the natural world, providing background information about a rather small river that stands as a significant geo-political boundary, and furthers the pattern of dissolution introduced in the first simile.

fonte cadit modico parvisque inpellitur undis
 Puniceus Rubicon, cum fervida conduit aestas,
 perque imas serpit valles et Gallica certus
 limes ab Ausoniis disternat arva colonis.
 tunc vires praebebat hiemps, atque auxerat undas
 tertia iam gravido pluvialis Cynthia cornu
 et madidis euri resolutae flatibus Alpes. (1.213-19)

From a small spring the ruddy Rubicon falls and
 is driven by small waves when summer glows hot,
 and it winds through deep valleys and, a fixed border,
 divides Gallic fields from Ausonian colonists.
 At that point winter gave it strength; a third
 rain-bringing Cynthia with laden crescent¹¹⁵ and the Alps,
 melted by the damp breezes of Eurus, increased its waves.

This ecphrasis contains the expected descriptions of the Rubicon's physical attributes. It notes the river's source (*fonte... modico*) and size (*parvis... undis*), the same size seen by Caesar at his arrival and echoing the same language (*parvi Rubiconis ad undas*). The reddish color of the Rubicon (*puniceus*) is noted, contrasting the color adjective with the proper noun of a similar etymological meaning.¹¹⁶ *Puniceus*, like its Greek cognate φοινίκεος, denotes a crimson, scarlet, or generally red hue; Rubicon, because it sounds like *rubor* (redness), *rubidus* (suffused with red), and *rubicundus* (red), puns on *puniceus*. *Puniceus* has the added benefit of its allusion to

¹¹⁵ A tricky bit of translation. Roche (2009) 219 glosses *tertia... Cynthia* as "the third day after the new moon." *Gravido... cornu* has been the topic of debate: Getty (1936) 58 thinks it refers to Earthshine (a reflection of the earth's light on the night side of the moon, or when the new moon seems to carry the old moon "between her horns"); Haskins (tr. 1907) and Roche (2009) prefer the meaning "surcharged with rain."

¹¹⁶ Getty (1940) 57 ad 214 credits this trick to Vergil (e.g., *arduus Acragas*).

Hannibal reinforcing again Caesar's unfortunate historical *exemplum*. Lucan also gives a vague account of the river's course (*perque imas serpit valles*) that depends heavily on the meaning of these particular geographic features to their inhabitants, since it determines their status as Italians or Cisalpine Gauls (*Gallica certus / limes ab Ausoniis disterminat arva colonis*).¹¹⁷ The symbolic position of the Rubicon as *limes* holds greater importance than the accuracy of the presentation of the river's origin and the valleys through which it flows. The Rubicon's location has been debated and, while it may not be known precisely, the inconsistency of the geography in this ecphrasis (e.g., the river flowing from the Alps, rather than the Apennines) is not uncharacteristic of Lucan's approach to the natural world.¹¹⁸ Rather than a detailed literary map, Lucan uses what will serve his poetry best. Here, the Rubicon grows from a small stream to a larger river and serves primarily as a boundary. Moreover, it allows Lucan another chance to include language associated with the overarching image of cosmic dissolution as introduced in the first simile of the poem (1.72-80). Even here, the Rubicon's increased flow is credited in part to snow melting in the mountains (*resolutae... Alpes*). The chemical change of water melting (*resolutae*, 1.219) echoes Caesar's decision to cross the river (*inde moras solvit belli*, 1.204), which itself echoes the crumbling infrastructure of the *cosmos* itself (*conpage soluta*, 1.72).¹¹⁹ While *solvere* has a wide range of meanings, expanding from loosening or untying to releasing from chains, from

¹¹⁷ Strabo 5.1.11 cites the Rubicon as the border of Ariminum, a city inhabited by local peoples and Roman colonists. Here and later at 5.2.10, Strabo describes the changing border between Italy and Cisalpine Gaul: at one time the Apennines near Tyrrhenia, then the river Aesis, and later the Rubicon, which he locates between Ariminum and Ravenna.

¹¹⁸ In the case of the Rubicon's source in particular, Lucan may have been influenced by Polybius' description of the Po and its source. At *Histories* 2.16.6, Polybius gives the Alps as the Po's source; shortly thereafter (2.16.9) he describes the Po's floods in a way very similar to Lucan's account of the Rubicon's flow and volume: *μεγίστῳ δὲ καὶ καλλίστῳ ῥέυματι φέρεται περὶ κυνὸς ἐπιτολήν, αὐξόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ πλήθους τῶν ἀναπηκομένων χιόνων ἐν τοῖς προειρημένοις ὄρεσιν* (...and [the Po] is highest and finest at the time of the rising of the Dog-star, as it is then swollen by the melting of the snow on those mountains; trans. H. J. Edwards).

¹¹⁹ Lapidge (2010) 305 cites Manilius 2. 804-7 for the use of *solvo* and related words as a translation of the Greek Stoic terminology like ἀναλύω.

breaking up and disintegrating to liquifying and melting, and even encompassing the breaking of contracts and the solvency of debts, Lucan tends to use *solvere* in a very physical way, showing unbinding, dissolution, and phase changes.

Caesar's violation of the Rubicon's boundary bookends Lucan's ecphrasis of the river itself. The river is small at first (*parvi Rubiconis ad undas*, 1.185), but when Caesar moves to cross, he is met by waves that are suddenly swollen (*inde moras solvit belli tumidumque per amnem / signa tulit propere*, 1.204-5).¹²⁰ The size of the river, when hindering Caesar's crossing, mirrors its growth from modest spring to proper river (1.213-19) and, as Masters suggests, first contrasts with the importance of Caesar's crossing, and then rises to match it.¹²¹ Increased river volume was expected during the winter (*vires praebebat hiemps, atque auxerat undas*, 1.217), but the precipitous change in flow, seeming to happen before Caesar's eyes, is a poetic exaggeration. The augmented flow (*tumidum... amnem*) attempts to match the scale of Caesar's action (*ingentes... motus*, 1.184), even though the great figure of *Roma* (evenly matched, as *ingens... imago*, 1.186) had already failed.¹²² At the most basic level, the river itself attempts to enforce, by its greater volume, its status as boundary. Human action is met by the landscape; in reacting to Caesar, the Rubicon itself gains agency and participates in the war, if only by attempting to prevent it. The fact that the river flows more heavily may also predict the ecphrasis, where snowmelt from the mountains increases the water volume of the river.

When Caesar's troops cross the river, however, they do so with little trouble. Or perhaps Lucan's attention to any trouble they may have experienced is unfocused, as the entire crossing

¹²⁰ Masters (1992) 1-3 contains a detailed analysis of this change in fluvial volume as well as the larger narrative significance of Caesar at the Rubicon.

¹²¹ Masters (1992) 2.

¹²² Masters (1992) 2.

is, from a literary perspective, very brief. After the explanation of the Rubicon's increased flow, the cavalry and infantry make their way into Italy.

primus in oblicum sonipes opponitur amnem
excepturus aquas; molli tum cetera rumpit
turba vado faciles iam fracti fluminis undas. (1.220-22)

First the cavalry is opposed to the sideways-flowing river
to meet its waters, then in an easy ford the rest of the throng
breaks the yielding waves of the now broken river.

Such a short description is not without precedent. In his own account, Caesar makes Lucan seem verbose by comparison when he does not even mention the Rubicon by name, but skips ahead to the capture of the first city he reaches in Italian territory: *Ariminum... proficiscitur*.¹²³ For Caesar, the omission of the Rubicon steers attention away from the moment of his violation of Roman law. The capture of Ariminum takes precedence as the beginning of the conflict, though its portrayal as a border town emphasizes the liminal themes associated with it in these verses.¹²⁴ Lucan's delay before writing the crossing has been read as another kind of boundary, putting off the civil war, even on the level of literary production. Masters argues that the significance of the Rubicon crossing and its place at the beginning of the poem indicates Caesar's movement "out of the mist of history and into the action of the poem,"¹²⁵ another kind of liminal transgression.

¹²³ Caesar, *De Bello Civili* 1.8.1. Roche (2009) 39-43 laments the loss of Asinius Pollio's *Historiae* and Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita* 109-116, but concludes that Lucan's account of events is essentially in line with what we know from Caesar, Appian, and Plutarch. Tucker (1988) 246 lists the other early authorities on the beginning of the civil war (Cicero, Livy 109-16, and Velleius Paterculus), but notes that only Velleius has an extant mention of the Rubicon (*ratus bellandum Caesar cum exercitu Rubiconem transiit*, 2.49.4). Lucan's narrative is the first extant extended treatment of Caesar's crossing and the initial incursion into Italy. Of the authors that follow Lucan, only Dio Cassius (41.4.1) does not refer to the Rubicon; Plutarch (*Caes.* 32 and *Pomp.* 60), Suetonius (*Div. Iul.* 31-33), and Appian (*B.C.* 2.5.35) all describe the river crossing, Caesar's hesitation at the bank, and include the anecdotally famous quote, ἀνερίφθω κύβος or *iacta alea est*. Morford (1967a) 77 notes that Plutarch, Suetonius, and Appian base their accounts on Asinius Pollio, who was present at the crossing (Plutarch, *Caes.* 32.5). See also Beneker (2011) for an in depth discussion of the beginning of the civil war in the writings of Cicero, Lucan, Plutarch, and Suetonius. Cf. Petronius *BC* 183-208.

¹²⁴ Fantham (1992a) 23.

¹²⁵ Masters 3-6. See also Fantham (1992a) 23-4.

Following this point, I argue that the language used to describe the crossing is, however, in line with Lucan's overall message about the wrongness of the civil war, echoing the proem of the *Bellum Civile*. The broken pact of rule listed among the causes of war (*rupto foedere regni*, 1.4) has a double echo here: the throng of soldiers breaks through the obstructive waves (*rumpit*) of the "broken" (*fracti*) river. The verbal repetition between *rupto foedere* and *rumpit... undas* is noteworthy, since *rumpere* and other verbs indicating breaking, unwinding, loosening, dissolving, and so forth are all indicative of the image of cosmic collapse that shapes the poem.¹²⁶ Caesar and his forces here "break" the river's stream as well as its status as *certus limes* (1.215-16). Within a poem where macrocosm and microcosm alternately represent each other, where the language of broken pacts and connections applies to everything from human institutions to the features of the landscape to the physical construction of the universe, the Rubicon, like the rest of the landscape, enables and expresses the process and consequences of these ruptures. In the passage at hand, even the repetition of the prefix *ob-* (*oblicum*, *opponitur*) emphasizes the way the river resists impious acts that, in Lucan's approach to poetry, will lead to the destruction of Rome and, symbolically, the universe.

Lucan expands upon Caesar's brief account his initial arrival in and capture of Ariminum. Descriptions of the time of day, the quality of the light, the weather, and the sounds of a peaceful city awakened by an invading force all contribute to the general atmosphere of gloom. The natural world reflects and reacts to human activity. The contrast Lucan builds between the loss of idealized peace and the approach of war and its destructive capabilities reinforces Caesar's role as conqueror.¹²⁷ As in the introductory lines of the *Bellum Civile*, the Italy Caesar finds at Ariminum is post-apocalyptic through neglect. The landscape reflects the despair and fear of its

¹²⁶ Lapidge (2010) 303-11.

¹²⁷ Roux (2008) 45 on Caesar's relationship to the landscape of Italy, "the *imperator* regards the Italian land as something to be conquered rather than as a fatherland to be protected from civil war damages."

inhabitants. The pathetic fallacy, though often associated with the *locus amoenus*, transforms this land into something more in line with a *locus horridus*.

The weather and time of day both contribute to the atmosphere in Ariminum and give the whole episode an air of misery and darkness.

sic fatus noctis tenebris rapit agmina ductor
inpiger; it torto Balearis verbera fundae
ocior et missa Parthi post terga sagitta
vicinumque minax invadit Ariminum, et ignes
solis lucifero fugiebant astra relicto.
iamque dies primos belli visura tumultus
exoritur; seu sponte deum, seu turbidus auster
inpulerat, maestam tenuerunt nubila lucem. (1.228-35)

Having spoken thus, the swift general drove his army through the darkness of night; it went more quickly than the bullet twisted from a Balearic sling or an arrow sent from behind a Parthian's back, and the army, threatening, invaded neighboring Ariminum, and the stars fled the sun's fire with the morning star remaining. And now the day that would see the first tumults of war dawned; whether it happened by the will of the gods or stormy Auster drove them on, clouds weakened the gloomy light.

The time of day is clearly established: the army marches swiftly through the night (*noctis tenebris*)¹²⁸ and arrives at dawn, when the light of the sun is bright enough to make most stars invisible (*ignes solis lucifero fugiebant astra relicto; dies... exoritur*). This early morning arrival is deliberate on Lucan's part; marching through the night was not a common practice for the Roman army.¹²⁹ As Caesar threatens the town, he is *minax* like an overhanging cliff or looming precipice. The transition from night to dawn to day takes advantage of the natural change in light to draw attention to the *unnatural* quality of light in Ariminum. It seems that Lucan makes Caesar march through darkness to arrive at dawn, the first natural light of the day, only to

¹²⁸ Getty (1940) 58 *ad* 228 compares Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 11.521, *caecaque nox premitur tenebris hiemisque suisque*.

¹²⁹ Masters (1992) 3, Thompson and Bruère (1968) 7. Cf. Caesar, *BC* 1.8.1, where no mention is made of a nighttime march to Ariminum. If Caesar had undertaken this unusual strategic move in reality, it is likely he would have recorded it in his *commentarii*.

emphasize the absence of expected sunlight.¹³⁰ In fact, the sky is overcast to the point of dimming the light of the sun (*maestam tenuerunt nubila lucem*),¹³¹ though this particular gloomy cloud cover seems to have followed in Caesar's wake, as it did not prevent the Morning Star from being visible. Lucan thus associates Caesar's arrival with a bright star shining in a gloomy atmosphere. Because the Morning Star was associated with Venus, the simile shows Caesar's star outlasting all others in the brightness brought by the sunrise; I will explore Caesar's depiction as a force of nature or a force to rival natural processes and power further in Chapters 2 and 3.

Lucan's Ariminum, especially his portrayal of the natural world in that place, is comparable to certain landscapes constructed by Seneca. In a study of Seneca's use of landscape and in particular, the kind of imagery characteristic of a *locus horridus*, Schiesaro examines specific aspects of nature that contribute to the atmosphere of a scene or define the type of landscape Seneca employs. The quality of light plays a major role in the allusive quality of Seneca's landscape, as in the *Hercules Furens*, when Theseus experiences the liminal nature of the entrance to the underworld.¹³²

non caeca tenebris incipit primo via;
 tenuis relictæ lucis a tergo nitor
 fulgorque dubius solis adflicti cadit
 et ludit aciem: nocte sic mixta solet
 præbere lumen primus aut serus dies, (H.F. 668-72)

...at the outset the way is not obscured by darkness: there falls a faint brightness from the light left behind, a twilight glow of the weakened sunshine, which baffles the eye. Such is the light, mingled with darkness, familiar at dawn or dusk.¹³³

¹³⁰ Compare the simile depicting Caesar as lightning bolt (1.151-57) and the contrasting darkness of his surroundings.

¹³¹ Getty (1940) 60 *ad* 235: Lucan's use of *maestam* to describe the light is a good example of pathetic fallacy.

¹³² Schiesaro (2006) 428f.

¹³³ Translation by Fitch.

As in *Bellum Civile* 1, the scene here deals with darkness (*tenebris*), some remaining light (*relictae lucis*), and the dimness of that sunlight (*solis adflicti*). Could Lucan's Ariminum mirror the underworld entrance in *Hercules Furens*? Not only does this scene represent Seneca's most extensive *locus horridus*¹³⁴ and deal with the appearance and experience of the underworld, it specifically focuses on how similar the light is at dawn or dusk.¹³⁵ Lucan and Seneca were in the same literary and intellectual milieu and had access to the same sources of literature and philosophy; while Lucan did not necessarily take his imagery from Seneca, they operate with a shared set of literary conventions. At the very least, this scene is a useful comparison for consideration of the *locus horridus* and underworld imagery in the context of Lucan's Italy.

In Lucan's Ariminum, however, the overcast sky and ensuing gloom are attributed to either the gods or to a particular weather phenomenon (*seu sponte deum, seu turbidus auster / inpulerat*). Because Lucan composes a poetic world based on Stoic principles, the traditional divine apparatus has no place; the idea that a certain divinity existed in nature, however, validates the use of *deus*.¹³⁶ In this way, the will of the gods includes the wind. Concerning *auster*, Lucan calls it *turbidus* because it was commonly associated with moist and stormy weather. This particular adjective also recalls the language Lucan used to describe the condition of Rome and the *cosmos* in his first simile, where the bonds of the universe are disturbed

¹³⁴ Schiesaro (2006) 430 calls the *locus amoenus* a "distant, impossible foil" to Seneca's tragic landscapes. At 435 the *locus horridus* is "the most appropriate physical correlate for the moral disease affecting Seneca's tragic world."

¹³⁵ Schiesaro (2006) 431 notes that *umbra* is a vital aspect of "idyllic-pastoral landscape," as long as it is in moderation; when *umbra* is excessive it can become dangerous or threatening.

¹³⁶ Seneca, *NQ* 2.45.1-2.

(*turbabit*, 1.80) and Rome deals with issues relating to the crowd (*turbam*, 1.86). Likewise, at Ariminum, the gusting wind that ushers Caesar into Italy is itself *turbidus* (1.234).¹³⁷

Lucan uses the phrase *turbidus auster* again later in book one in a simile that compares the panicked evacuation of Rome before Caesar's arrival to a shipwreck during a storm. Here Lucan does more than provide spectacular¹³⁸ visual imagery to which Rome's abandonment is comparable. He fills the simile with language that alludes to the foreboding weather in Ariminum, the vocabulary of Stoic cosmology established early in book one, and even the repeated language of weight and mass that gives the impression of some great thing about to topple over. Moreover, he foreshadows some of the future events of the civil war.

qualis, cum turbidus auster
reppulit a Libycis immensum Syrtibus aequor
fractaque veliferi sonuerunt pondera mali,
desilit in fluctus deserta puppe magister
navitaque, et nondum sparsa conpage carinae
naufragium sibi quisque facit; sic urbe relicta
in bellum fugitur. (1.498-504)

As when the stormy south wind drives
the immense sea from the Libyan Syrtes, and
the mast with its sails resounds with its broken weight,
the pilot and sailors leap from the deserted ship
into the waters, and with the ship's joints not yet splintered
each man makes the shipwreck for himself: thus with city
abandoned each man fled into war.

Rome is compared to a ship in a storm at the Syrtes. This storm is caused by *turbidus auster*, the wind associated with stormy weather,¹³⁹ much in the same way Ariminum had been

¹³⁷ Lucan takes this epithet from Horace, *Od.* 3.3.3-5: *non voltus instantis tyranni | mente quatit solida neque Auster, | dux inquieti turbidus Hadriae*. Quinn (1980), *ad loc.* notes that the virtues of the man described in this poem are characteristically Roman, but also identifiable as Stoic.

¹³⁸ Leigh (1997) 258 addresses the effect on Lucan's imagination of the *naumachiae* held by Nero, an event where Lucan could have seen a shipwreck for himself, though not one caused by a storm.

¹³⁹ Cf. Seneca, *Medea* 583-84: *hibernos nebulosus imbres / Auster advexit*. Seneca uses Auster as the wind that brings storms in winter. Earlier poets had simply characterizes it as wet and stormy. The *Ostro*, the modern Italian name for the south wind, reaches its peak in the autumn and spring.

overshadowed by *auster*-driven clouds (1.234-35).¹⁴⁰ The fate of Ariminum predicts that of Rome and Lucan maintains the same meteorological terminology and weather effects on the landscape to heighten this link. As the wind drove the clouds into Ariminum (*inpulerat*, 1.235), so it drives the sea against the shallows of the Syrtes (*reppulit*, 1.499).¹⁴¹ The Syrtes, shoals on the North African coast between Cyrene and Leptis Magna, were notoriously dangerous.¹⁴² The wrecked ship in this comparison also serves as a useful metaphor for the larger world, in both its construction and its destruction,¹⁴³ and also corresponds to a Senecan metaphor, where the world-ending cataclysm shipwrecks the world.¹⁴⁴ Described using fairly typical language (*conpage carinae*), the ship maps neatly onto the description of the universe itself in Lucan's first simile (*conpage soluta*, 1.72). In fact, the same imagery appears again in book three during the sea battle near Massilia, another episode Lucan imbues with the imagery of cosmic dissolution.¹⁴⁵ Lucan also echoes in his shipwreck simile the more nebulous sense of mass and precipitousness that he introduced in the early part of his first book with the repetition of the noun *pondus* and the related verb *pendere*. This language of mass and weight connects the crumbling infrastructure of Italy (1.24-25), the comparison of Rome's fall to cosmic collapse (1.71-72), and Pompey's characterization as an old doomed oak tree (1.139). Here, the ship (or,

¹⁴⁰ Coleman (1977) *ad Vergil's Ecl.* 5.82 notes that *Auster* was often associated with storms. Asso (2011) 392 describes *Auster's* hypothetical role in Libyan geography, cf. Lucan 9.466-80.

¹⁴¹ Roche (2009) 311 *ad* 499: *reppulit* more often used in military contexts, however in Lucan also refers to the sea (cf. 2.436, 4.102, 5.648, 6.480, 9.52, 9.450).

¹⁴² According to the *OLD*, the Syrtes are two areas of sandy flats on the coast of North Africa between Cyrene and Carthage which are proverbially dangerous to ships. This early simile depicting the Syrtes also looks forward to the African campaign and the dangers met in Libya by Cato (9.303-47); see Chapter 4. Cf. Leigh (2000) 95.

¹⁴³ Roche (2009) 310 *ad* 498-503 cites the metaphor of the ship of state, familiar to Greek and Latin audiences from authors as far back as Heraclitus and Alcaeus. He also discusses the poetic set piece of the storm at sea as a metaphor for political disorder, citing Vergil's storm in *Aeneid* 1.81-123 as a likely influence on Lucan's simile.

¹⁴⁴ Seneca, *NQ* 3.28.2.

¹⁴⁵ Of the walls of Massilia (3.491) and the structure of the ships during the naval battle (3.563-66). See my discussion in Chapter 2, section 1.

in the spirit of the simile, Rome) resounds under the destructive force of its own broken mast and torn sails (*fracta... pondera*). The ship is broken and Lucan writes its end with the same language he uses for the ruins of Rome's old hero, Pompey, for the ruins of Italy, and for the universe.¹⁴⁶

Throughout the narration of the army's arrival in Ariminum and the response of the people living there, the ongoing disturbance to the town's peace and quiet forms a pattern. Lucan focuses on *quies*, giving it the appropriate sense of peace and rest, but imbuing it unmistakably with auditory meaning as well. *Quies* appears three times in fairly quick succession. First, the peace is broken when the people of Ariminum awake to find Caesar and his legion in the city.

rupta quies populi, stratisque excita iuventus
deripuit sacris adfixa pentatibus arma,
quae pax longa dabat; (1.239-41)

The people's rest is broken, and young men roused from bed
take down the weapons fixed to the sacred penates,
which long peace had given (to neglect);

The ruptured peace of the city adds another dimension to the atmospheric description of Ariminum: not only is the light dim and gloomy, not only does the weather threaten storms, but the army's noisy arrival (*stridor lituum clangorque tubarum | non pia concinuit cum rauco classica cornu*, 1.237-38) disturbs the peace and quiet on a fundamental level. The phrase *rupta quies* first appears in Latin literature in these lines, but a similar idea (*quietem rumpit*) can be found in Seneca's writing.¹⁴⁷ Both Lucan and Seneca are modifying an older model: *secura quies*. One of the most memorable parts of Vergil's second *Georgic* involves praise of farmers

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Seneca, *NQ* 3.10.3, as discussed above. Seneca's use of the image of weights on a scale (*velut in ponderibus*) for the constituent parts of the natural world (*natura*) corresponds at the macrocosmic level to the frequency of *pondus* and *pendere* in *Bellum Civile* 1.

¹⁴⁷ Seneca, *Dialogus* 10.20.5: *dum alter alterius quietem rumpit; Hercules Oetatus* 646 *aurea rumpunt tecta quietem*. Following Lucan's example, both Valerius Flaccus (*Argonautica* 3.46) and Statius (*Thebaid* 2.125) use *rupta quies*. Cf. Lucan 1.4: *rupto foedere* and 1.221-22: *rumpit* of the Rubicon's stream.

and of rustic life. This is a “deliberate invocation” of the golden age.¹⁴⁸ Lucan’s *rupta quies* inverts and disrupts Vergil’s *secura quies* to emphasize the difference between the scene of post-civil war regeneration praised by Vergil (with grotto, lake, and pleasant shady grove included) and the absence of bucolic or, indeed, even pleasant imagery in Ariminum.

The next use of *quies* is part of the Ariminians’ lament over their city’s location and its history of invasion.

‘O male vicinis haec moenia condita Gallis,
 O tristi damnata loco! pax alta per omnes
 et tranquilla quies populos; nos praeda furentum
 primaque castra sumus. (1.248-51)

“O unfortunate, these walls founded in the vicinity of the Gauls,
 O condemned in this sad place! Extensive peace and tranquil peace
 exist through all (other) peoples; we are the prize and first
 camps of madmen.”

In this case, the contrast between *quies* and its absence contrasts the people of Ariminum with – as they say – everyone else (*per omnes*).¹⁴⁹ As they begin their lament, they identify their city’s location as *tristis locus*.¹⁵⁰ It is, very clearly, not a *locus amoenus*, lacking all fixed markers found in scenes like the one Vergil writes in his second *Georgic*.

Finally, *quies* returns to Ariminum, but of a different quality. Before, it had been peaceful and, despite its absence, potentially relatable to the *secura quies* of Vergil’s idyllic scene. Now, however, it has the same sense of desolation shaped by the quality of light and the weather in Ariminum.

...gemitu sic quisque latenti
 non ausus timuisse palam; vox nulla dolori
 credita; sed quantum, volucres cum bruma coercet,

¹⁴⁸ Thomas (1988a) 244-45. See Vergil, *Georgics* 2.467. For other uses of *secura quies*: Lucretius 3.211 (of death), Ovid *Ars Amatoria* 1.639, Seneca *Hercules Furens* 175.

¹⁴⁹ *Tranquilla quies* is only elsewhere found in Seneca: *Hercules Furens* 160 and *Troades* 995.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Ennius *Annales* 108, Vergil *Aeneid* 2.241-42. These passages both include a similar structure (*o... o...*), a pattern that Roche traces back to the Greek expression of lament, *iō... iō...*

rura silent mediusque iacet sine murmure pontus,
tanta quies. noctis gelidas lux solverat umbras. (1.257-61)

... so each man spoken with groans hidden
and none dared to be openly afraid; no voice was trusted
to grief; but as when winter restrains the voices of birds,
the countryside is silent and the middle of the sea lies without sound,
so great was the quiet (here). Light had dissolved the chilly shades of night.

Quies returns as the sun rises: a dawn that Lucan's readers witness for the second time, which, as Masters has pointed out, is a repetition of sorts of the double Rubicon crossing.¹⁵¹ The doubled dawn marks the day as unusual from its beginning; the unnatural silence, as of birds in winter (*volucres cum bruma coercent*), gives the scene an appropriate soundtrack. Rather than the same kind of *quies* that Ariminum had experienced before Caesar's arrival, this *quies*, in combination with the other atmospheric elements of the Ariminian landscape, is more recognizable in the context of literary depictions of the underworld. By comparison, in Vergil's description of the underworld as it appears to Orpheus in his fourth *Georgic*, the appearance and silence of the shades is also compared to birds sheltering from cold or storms.

At cantu commotae Erebi de sedibus imis
umbrae ibant tenues simulacraque luce carentum,
quam multa in foliis avium se milia condent
vesper ubi aut hibernus agit de montibus imber (4.471-74)

And the shades, moved by his song from the deepest seats
of Erebus went by, thin and like phantoms lacking the light,
just as countless birds conceal themselves in leaves
when evening or winter drives a storm from the mountains.

Vergil's birds, representing the infernal shades, are driven to cover by darkness or a winter storm and lend their image to Lucan's birds, which also take shelter from inclement weather (*volucres cum bruma coercent*). The silence (*tanta quies*) in Ariminum is reminiscent of that found in the underworld, but is induced in the Italian landscape by the presence of Caesar and his legion.

¹⁵¹ Cf. 1.231-34. Masters (1992) 3 compares the double sunrise to the way Caesar seems to cross the Rubicon twice, once before and once after the ecphrasis of the river's origin and course.

Moreover, the storm-driven silence of Vergil's simile (*hibernus agit de montibus imber*) finds a parallel in Lucan, when the gloomy dimness seems to follow Caesar down from the mountains and across the Rubicon (*seu turbidus auster / inpulerat, maestam tenuerunt nubila lucem*, 1.234-35). This first episode – the crossing of the Rubicon and the taking of Ariminum – is both Caesar's entrance into Italy and proof of his liminally transgressive character. As he continues south through Italy, Caesar continues to break down established boundaries and begins to construct his own, something I will discuss in more detail in part III.

The obsession with boundary-crossing that permeates the Rubicon and Ariminum episodes¹⁵² is later matched by the boundary-defining catalogue of Gallic peoples and geography. Lucan builds on the combined tradition of previous epic writers to compose this catalogue, but his primary structural source seems to be the catalogue of ships in *Iliad* 2.¹⁵³ Unlike the Homeric catalogue, however, Lucan's Gallic *excursus* is much narrower in scope than the rest of his epic, focusing on peoples who for the most part have no other role in the *Bellum Civile*. This has led scholars studying this catalogue to focus alternately on geography and ethnography or on how the entire *excursus* reflects on Caesar's character.¹⁵⁴

The catalogue is set up in ring-composition based on two correlative concepts: the departure of Caesar and his legion and the subsequent rejoicing of the lands and peoples left behind. The cohorts scattered throughout Gaul (*sparsas per Gallica rura cohortes*, 1.394) desert their posts (*deseruere*, 1.396) and by leaving the region unguarded, introduce the list of Gallic tribes. The catalogue ends with the cohorts defending the Rhine also leave (*Rhenique feroces / deseritis ripas*, 1.464-65), bookending the list with Roman departures. Within this ring-

¹⁵² Myers (2011) 401.

¹⁵³ Roche (2009) 277.

¹⁵⁴ Williams (1978) 222 calls this a "catalogue in reverse," since it lists the tribes left unguarded by Caesar in favor of invading Italy. Batinski (1992a) 23 claims that this focus reinforces the idea of Caesar as *hostis*.

composition is Gaul's joy: the river Atax rejoices because it does not carry Roman boats (*mitis Atax Latias gaudet non ferre carinas*, 1.403),¹⁵⁵ and the joy of the Santonus, Biturix, and Suessones tribes (*gaudetque amoto Santonus hoste / et Biturix longisque leves Suessones in armis*, 1.422-23) forms a smaller ring of Gallic *gaudium*. These two concentric ring-compositions include the major content of the catalogue: the names of various natural features, the names of a number of tribes, and how the land and the people who inhabit it are identifiable in terms of one another. Lucan names 20 tribes,¹⁵⁶ other unnamed peoples specified by the geography of their homes, and various natural features in the Gallic landscape including two mountain ranges,¹⁵⁷ one lake,¹⁵⁸ a digression on a section of the Atlantic coast,¹⁵⁹ and eight rivers.¹⁶⁰ What emerges from the text is a rough verbal map of Gaul, defined by its major landforms. Caesar and his soldiers occupy a kind of negative space; any Roman presence or influence is notable only for its conspicuous absence. The catalogue presents Gaul as a place defined by mountains and rivers, parallel to Italy, as the later excursus on the rivers of the

¹⁵⁵ Roche (2009) 283 *ad* 403: the Atax is the modern river Aude, which has its source in the Pyrenees. Cf. Strabo 4.1.14, Mela 2.81.

¹⁵⁶ Lingones (1.398), Ruteni (1.402), Nemetes (1.419), Tarbelli (1.421), Santoni (1.422), Bituriges and Suessones (1.423), Leuci and Remi (1.424), Sequani (1.425), Belgae (1.426), Arverni (1.427), Nervii (1.429), Vangiones and Batavi (1.431), Treviri (1.441), Liguri (1.442), Teutates (1.445), Druids (1.451), and Cayci (1.463).

¹⁵⁷ The Cevennes (1.435) and the Vosges (1.397). The Vosges are identified as *Vosegi*, a term that has caused some debate among modern scholars attempting to identify it. Mendell 13 identifies *Vosegi* as a river in the general region of Lake Geneva. Getty (1936) 59 also names the *Vosegus* as a river, or at least as what Lucan thought was the name of a river. Roche (2009) 280-81 *ad* 397 uses the geographical details from Caesar *B.G.* 4.10.1 and Pliny *N.H.* 16.1.97 to identify it properly as a mountain range.

¹⁵⁸ Lake Lemannus (1.396), now Lake Geneva.

¹⁵⁹ 1.409-19.

¹⁶⁰ The Isara (1.399), the Atax (1.403), the Var (1.404), the Aturus (1.420), the Cinga (1.432), the Rhone (1.433), the Arar (1.434), and the Rhine (1.464). Mendell (1942) 13-15 traces the catalogue's geography using the rivers as boundaries that divide the land but connect to one another. Roche (2009) 283 *ad* 404 notes that the Var was a natural boundary between Italy and Gaul at least since the time of Sulla. The *Lex Roscia* of March 11, 49 BCE formalized the border and granted citizenship to the Cisalpine Gauls living north of the Po. He compares Caesar's treatment of this boundary in his *commentarii* at *B.C.* 1.86.3, 87.1 to show that Caesar treated the Var as the official edge of Italy.

Apennines (2.392-438) makes clear. The primary difference between the Italian and Gallic landscapes is the presence and influence of Caesar, Pompey, and the war they fight.

III. Shifting Power and Transformed Landscapes

The events in book two – the Italian geography excursus, Caesar’s river crossing at Corfinium, and the confrontation at Brundisium that ends with Pompey’s departure – repeat the narrative structure of the previous book, but in reverse. The military action in book one is interrupted by the Gallic excursus and does not become the focus of the narrative again until after the ecphrasis on the Apennines and their river system midway through book two. The two geographical explorations are similar in content as well as function, though the structure of the Apennine ecphrasis is more linear. Lucan takes what seems like a grid-like approach to his verbal map of Italy,¹⁶¹ tracing the north-south axis of the mountains and the rivers that flowed from their eastern and western slopes.¹⁶² The mountains are the central aspect of this ecphrasis: Lucan emphasizes their height (*nulloque a vertice tellus / altius intumuit propiusque accessit Olympo*, 2.397-98), their central position between Italy’s neighboring seas (*mons inter geminas medius se porrigit undas / inferni superique maris*, 2.39-400; *hinc Tyrrhena.../ illinc Dalmaticis*, 2.401-2), and that they are the source of more than a dozen nearby rivers (*fontibus hic vastis inmensos concipit amnes / fluminaque in gemini spargit divortia ponti*, 2.403-4).

¹⁶¹ Fantham (1992a) 153 suggests that the description of Italian geography would have stretched the “spatial imagination” of Lucan’s readers, who most likely would not have been familiar with maps of Italy in its entirety.

¹⁶² Fantham (1992a) 154 credits an earlier representation of Italy as a system of east- and west-flowing rivers divided by mountains to Cicero, who used it as an analogy for the intellectual directions of rhetoric and philosophy (*De Oratore* 3.69). Cf. Riggsby (2010) 61 compares Caesar’s depictions of Gaul and Germany; where the Gallic landscape has an internal structure due to its mountains and rivers, the main geographical features of Germany, forests, signify a corresponding lack of structure. Cf. Strabo 5.1.3 on the Apennines and their place in Italian geography.

Seven rivers – Metaurus, Crustumium, Apis, Pisaurus, Sena, Aufidus, and Po – flow down the eastern slopes of the Apennines, several of which are noteworthy for their historical or mythological significance (2.405-10). The rivers Metaurus and Crustumium begin the geographical line of significant rivers in this list that culminates in the Po. Metaurus, the site of a Roman victory against Hasdrubal Barca,¹⁶³ and Crustumium, the river of Ariminum, both recall invasions of Italy from the north, whether by Carthaginians during the Second Punic War or by Caesar himself earlier in Lucan’s epic. The Po, north of the Metaurus and Crustumium, here called Eridanus, is noteworthy for its volume and geographical influence.¹⁶⁴ The Po’s importance is emphasized by its extensive description, which involves elements of hyperbole (*Hesperiamque exhaurit aquis*, 2.408), the myth of Phaethon as aetiology (2.410-15), and comparisons with both the Nile (*non minor hic Nilo...*, 2.416-18) and the Ister (*non minor hic Histro...*, 2.419-20).

The description of the Po takes up the central third of the Italian geographic ecphrasis. The Po, identified as the mythological river Eridanus, triggers a brief mythological digression on Phaethon.¹⁶⁵ Lucan draws on his poetic predecessors, Vergil and Ovid, for his treatment of Phaethon and the river; all three Roman poets build on the foundations of an older Greek mythological-geographical tradition. Lucan uses Eridanus instead Latin name for the Po, *Padus*, in books one and two.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ Fantham (1992a) 159 *ad* 405-7.

¹⁶⁴ Strabo 4.6.5 writes of the Po: ἐκ δὲ τῆς ἐτέρας πολὺ ταπεινότερος τούτων τῶν χωρίων ἀναδίδωσιν αὐτὸς ὁ Πάδος πολὺς τε καὶ ὀξύς, προϊὼν δὲ γίνεται μείζων καὶ πραότερος: ἐκ πολλῶν γὰρ γενόμενος καὶ πλατύνεται: τῇ οὖν διαχύσει περισπᾶ καὶ ἀμβλύνει τὸν ῥοῦν: εἰς δὲ τὴν Ἀδριατικὴν θάλατταν ἐκπίπτει μέγιστος γενόμενος τῶν κατὰ τὴν Εὐρώπην ποταμῶν πλην τοῦ Ἰστρου. (While from the other spring there issues forth, considerably lower than the region abovementioned, the Padus itself, large and swift, although as it proceeds it becomes larger and more gentle in its flow; for from the time it reaches the plains it is increased from many streams and is thus widened out; and so, because of the spreading of its waters, the force of its current is dispersed and blunted; then it empties into the Adriatic Sea, becoming the largest of all the rivers in Europe except the Ister. Trans. H. L. Jones.)

¹⁶⁵ Mendell (1942) 16.

¹⁶⁶ *Padus* in the *BC*: 4.134, 6.272, 6.278, 9.751, 10.252, 10.278.

Eridanus fractas devolvit in aequora silvas
Hesperiamque exhaurit aquis. (2.409-10)

Eridanus rolls broken forests into the sea
and drains Hesperia of its waters.

Lucan's assignation of *Eridanus* to the Po is likely drawn from the *Georgics*, where Vergil applies the Greek name of a far-off mythological river to an Italian river and its watershed.¹⁶⁷

The river's immense volume seems to drain all the water from Italy (*Hesperiamque exhaurit aquis*), which is again called *Hesperia*, originally a Greek term like *Eridanus*.¹⁶⁸ Indeed, the Po's volume is so great that it is comparable to the Nile and the Danube, archetypally great rivers. The Po is even superior: the Nile, though vast, spreads shallowly over flat sands (*per plana iacentis / Aegypti Libycas Nilus stagnaret harenas*, 2.416-17); the Danube's volume depends on its tributaries (*Hister casuros in quaelibet aequora fontes / accipit et Scythicas exit non solus in undas*, 2.419-20).¹⁶⁹

Lucan's Po is not only comparable to the great rivers of the world, but is also mythologically significant because of its connection to Phaethon's fall. Lucan calls this myth a *fabula*, but shifts the focus from Phaethon himself to the river scene that witnessed his end.

hunc fabula primam
populea fluvium ripas umbrasse corona,
cumque diem pronum transverso limite ducens
succendit Phaethon flagrantibus aethera loris,
gurgitibus raptis penitus tellure perusta,
hunc habuisse pares Phoebeis ignibus undas. (2.410-15)

The story says that this river was first to shade

¹⁶⁷ Vergil, *Georgics* 1.482-84. Cf. Hesiod, *Theogony* 338; Herodotus 3.115; Euripides, *Hippolytus* 737. Apollonius of Rhodes locates the Eridanus in Europe and makes the Rhone one of its tributaries (*Argonautica* 4.626). On the Po, more generally, Polybius (2.16.6-14) also gives Eridanus as an alternate name, but credits it to the poets, while locals called the Po *Bodencus*. Pliny (*NH* 37.11) blames the poets for wrongly associating Eridanus with the Po and later (3.122) explores the etymology of its local name *Bodincus* as meaning "bottomless."

¹⁶⁸ See my discussion of Lucan's use of *Hesperia* and *Italia* above.

¹⁶⁹ Fantham (1992a) 160 *ad* 416-17.

its banks with a crown of poplars, and when Phaethon,
leading the day downward on a transverse path,
set fire to the air with flaming reins, and when streams
were completely torn from the scorched earth,
this river had waves equal to the fires of Phoebus.

The most detailed account of Phaethon's story comes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where Phaethon's bad driving provides an aetiology for the Sahara desert (2.237-8), dries up many of the world's rivers (2.241-59), and his fall into the Eridanus causes his mourning sisters to transform into trees (2.340-66). Lucan's account differs from Ovid's in its brevity, its identification of the Po and Eridanus (while Ovid has Phaethon pass over the Po on his way to Eridanus, 2.258), and the presence of the mourning trees before Phaethon even reaches the river. Vergil's brief reference to Phaethon's myth during his catalogue of Italian heroes is probably the source of Lucan's poplar trees,¹⁷⁰ though poplars were part of the older myth in various Greek authors and had connections to the underworld dating back to Homer's time.¹⁷¹ On a more general level, the myth of Phaethon tells a story wherein the world faces destruction in a conflagration. Given Lucan's continuing focus on the metaphor of the Stoic cosmic conflagration, his inclusion of Phaethon in an otherwise dry geographical ecphrasis constitutes another ekpyrotic moment in the *Bellum Civile*.¹⁷² Lucan's Ovidian allusion has deeper implications for the philosophical and political significance of his poem. As Hinds has demonstrated, Lucan also connects Phaethon, cataclysmic chariot ride and all, to Nero.¹⁷³ During the encomiastic description of Nero's future divine presence, Nero could potentially usurp the

¹⁷⁰ Vergil, *Aeneid* 10.91. Fantham (1992a) 160 *ad* 410.

¹⁷¹ Nagy (1973) 153 cites a fragment of Aeschylus (fr. 73N = 107M) for poplars growing on the banks of Eridanus and finds a parallel at *Odyssey* 10.508-12, where poplars also grow on the banks of Okeanos at the edge of the underworld. Like the Ocean river, Nagy writes, "Eridanus too is associated with the theme of transition into the underworld." Cf. pseudo-catabatic language and topoi at Lucan 1.183-94 (the Rubicon crossing) and Ariminum, discussed above.

¹⁷² Philosophically, the Phaethon myth had already been read allegorically as a story of (recurring) cosmic destruction on earth, in Plato, *Timaeus* 22c.

¹⁷³ Hinds (2006) 48, citing Ovid, *Met.* 2.298-300.

chariot of the sun (1.47-50), aligning the emperor with the “forces of cosmic dissolution.”¹⁷⁴ The allusion is clear, and later, when the story of Phaethon is associated with the real landscape of Italy, Lucan’s Phaethonic characterization of the emperor takes on new life. If Nero has the same kind of destructive capabilities as Phaethon – and because this comparison is made within a poem that literalizes the philosophical narrative of cosmic collapse – we can read the shadow of Nero’s power and its destructive nature into the ongoing account of Rome’s fall during the civil wars.

The rivers on the western slopes of the Apennines follow the digression on Phaethon and the comparison of the Po to Nile and Ister. The seven rivers included here – Tiber, Rutuba, Vulturnus, Sarnus, Liris, Siler, Macra – direct the reader’s focus from central Italy (*Thybrim / unda facit Rutubamque cavum*, 2.421-22), south towards Pompeii (*nocturnaeque editor aurae / Sarnus*, 2.423-24), back north to central Italy again (*Macra*, 2.426), and finally further north to the port of Luna (*procurrit in aequora Lunae*, 2.427). Since Luna was located in Cisalpine Gaul, it mirrors the latitude of the first rivers of the ephrasis, the Metaurus and Crustumium, but on the other side of the mountains.¹⁷⁵ The subsequent miniature catalogue of Italian tribes (*Umbris Marsisque ferax domitusque Sabello / vomere*, 2.430-31) puts the human element back into the Italian landscape and stands in contrast to the Gauls listed at 1.392-465. The entirety of Italy is summed up in this geographical excursus, from Gaul in the north (2.429) to the Straits of Messina in the south (*cum Scyllaeis clauditur undis*, 2.433). From east to west, rivers are the defining geographical features in the Italian landscape.

Where the Rubicon crossing introduced the Gallic excursus and catalogue in book one, in the reversed structure of book two, the Italian river excursus gives way to another problematic

¹⁷⁴ Hinds (2006) 49; cf. Roche (2009) 153 *ad* 74.

¹⁷⁵ Fantham (1992a) 162 *ad* 426-27.

river boundary confrontation. Caesar’s iconic Rubicon crossing continues to loom large: after Pompey has left Rome and set up his camps in southern Italy and Caesar has pursued him, Pompey’s ally Domitius makes a last stand against Caesar at Corfinium. He calls on the river there to wash away the bridge and stop Caesar’s advance.

“socii, decurrite,” dixit
 “fluminis ad ripas undaeque inmergite pontem.
 et tu montanis totus nunc fontibus exi
 atque omnis trahe, gurges, aquas, ut spumeus alnos
 discussa conpage feras. hoc limite bellum
 haereat, hac hostis lentus terat otia ripa.
 praecipitem cohibete ducem; victoria nobis
 hic primum stans Caesar erit.” (2.483-90)

“Comrades,” he said, “hurry
 to the banks of the river and plunge the bridge into the water.
 And you, now, come out from your mountain sources
 and draw down all your waters, stream, that foaming, you might
 carry off the bridge, its joints shaken apart. The war must hold
 to this boundary, on this bank the enemy should slowly waste his time.
 Hold back this headstrong general; victory will be ours
 as soon as Caesar remains here.”

Caesar’s encounter with the *imago patriae* at the Rubicon’s bank is repeated at a new river with Domitius standing in for *Roma*. The Pompeian representative is parallel to *Roma*, aligned with the political world under attack by Caesar. Unlike the Rubicon, the river near Corfinium – the Aternus – is not named in the text. Its place in the poem is still modeled after that of the Rubicon and language used in this episode echoes the original Rubicon scene. Where Caesar had advanced to the Rubicon’s waters (*Rubiconis ad undas*), Domitius urges his comrades to rush to the riverbanks (*fluminis ad ripas*). Likewise, the Rubicon’s *limes* (1.216) is echoed here by the Aternus’ (*limite*, 2.487). Domitius’ soldiers are the force attempting to keep Caesar back, but Domitius addresses them only briefly.¹⁷⁶ Instead, he directs his attention to the river: as natural boundary it might have the power to destroy the bridge and prevent Caesar’s advance. Lapidige

¹⁷⁶ Fantham (1992a) 172 *ad* 483-87: only 1.5 lines to the men, nearly 6 to the river.

has used this episode as further evidence for the prevalence of the cosmic collapse motif in the poem, identifying the *conpages* (i.e., the structure of the bridge) with the greater *conpages* of the universe (*conpage soluta*, 1.72).¹⁷⁷ This point is further strengthened by Lucan’s use of *solvere* to describe the attempted dismantling of the bridge (*amne soluto*, 2.492).

Verbal echoes of the Rubicon’s waters and Caesar’s crossing follow soon after.

Domitius’s appeal for aid is directed to the river, which flows from the mountains and would presumably carry water that originated as snow (*et tu montanis totus nunc fontibus exi*).

Likewise, Lucan attributes the size discrepancy in the Rubicon’s flow, which seemed to increase when Caesar went to cross it, to snowmelt from the mountains. Fantham points out another verbal echo between these two episodes that is more structural: the anaphora *hoc... haerat, hac hastis lentus terat otia ripa* is comparable to *hic, ait, hic pacem... reliquo* (1.225).¹⁷⁸ Even Domitius’ command to the river follows the same verbal patterns as Lucan’s narration of Caesar’s previous crossing. The connection between the Aternus and Rubicon is unsubtly stated by Caesar himself. He boasts that Domitius’ actions and the new river boundary cannot hold him back.

non si tumido me gurgite Ganges
summoveat, stabit iam flumine Caesar in ullo
post Rubiconis aquas. (2.496-98)

The Ganges could not hinder me with its
swollen stream, nor will Caesar now hesitate at any
river after the waters of the Rubicon.

Caesar’s confidence is backed up literally by his past hesitation at and eventual crossing of the Rubicon. In this case, however, he will not pause (*non... stabat iam flumine Caesar in ullo*). Not

¹⁷⁷ Lapidge (2010) 314-15. Moreover, he connects *gurgis* (2.486: the river) to its potential meanings of “vast gulf” or “abyss.” The destruction of the *conpages* does not provide *ekpyrosis* imagery, but still has that sense destruction with cosmic consequences.

¹⁷⁸ Fantham (1992a) 173 *ad* 487-88.

even the hypothetical barrier of the Ganges could stop him (*non si tumido me gurgite Ganges summoveat*), a claim with multiple levels of significance. At the most basic level, rivers, according to Caesar, are no longer an effective boundary or border against him. Lucan's attribution of this claim to Caesar recalls Caesar's description of rivers as a feature of what Riggsby calls "malleable geography" in *De Bello Gallico*.¹⁷⁹ The rivers' function as borders or boundaries ceased to be effective in winter when the rivers froze over, the result of which was the more mobile nature of the Gallic peoples. Caesar's river-crossing ability, then, when read in context of his own *commentarii*, is potentially un-Roman. The Rubicon episode proves that rivers which can be described as *tumidus* cannot hinder him for long (*inde moras solvit belli tumidumque per amnem / signa tulit propere*, 1.204-5). At the level of historical allusion, Lucan's Caesar is poised to surpass – in ability, rather than in actuality – Alexander the Great, who reportedly turned back toward Greece at the Ganges.¹⁸⁰ The river crossing and boundary violation of the Aternus at Corfinium are parallel to those at the Rubicon in book one. Similar representations of landscape – as both setting and participant in the conflict – likewise continue in the following episode, the indirect confrontation between Caesar and Pompey at Brundisium.

Book two ends with Pompey and Caesar at Brundisium. Pompey gives a speech to his soldiers that generally fails to inspire them but serves as a kind of memorial to Pompey's previous great deeds.¹⁸¹ His soldiers' lack of enthusiasm causes Pompey to lose confidence and

¹⁷⁹ Riggsby (2010) 55 examines how the lack of divisions caused by the frozen rivers could exist at both a geographical and social level.

¹⁸⁰ Ahl (1976) 222-29 for Caesar at Alexandria, following the footsteps of Alexander. Fantham (1992a) 174 *ad* 496-97. Green (1978) 1-26. Cf. Leigh (2000) for Cato as Alexander in book nine.

¹⁸¹ Fantham (1992a) 178-79. For Pompey's account of recent Roman history, cf. 2.541-54, 568-72, 576-95. For Pompey's less than inspiration public speaking abilities, cf. Cicero, *Att.* 7.21.1: *timidissimas in oppidis contiones, ignorationem non solum adversari sed etiam suarum cupiarum*.

withdraw from central Italy to Brundisium.¹⁸² Lucan introduces the new location, its history, and its geography in another landscape ecphrasis.

urbs est Dictaeis olim possessa colonis,
quos Creta profugos vexere per aequora puppes
Cecropiae, victum mentitis Thesea velis.
hinc latus angustum iam se cogentis in artum
Hesperiae tenuem producit in aequora linguam,
Adriacas flexis claudit quae cornibus undas.
nec tamen hoc artis inmissum faucibus aequor
portus erat, si non violentos insula coros
exciperet saxis lassasque refunderet undas.
hinc illinc montes scopulosae rupis aperto
opposuit natura mari flatusque removit,
ut tremulo starent contentae fune carinae.
hinc late patet omne fretum, seu vela ferantur
in portus, Corcyra, tuos, seu laeva petatur
Illyris Ionias vergens Epidamnos in undas.
huc fuga nautarum, cum totas Adria vires
movit et in nubes abiere Ceraunia cumque
spumoso Calaber perfunditur aequore Sason. (2.610-27)

The city was once held by Dictaeian settlers,
whom Cecropian ships bore through the Cretan waters
as fugitives, with sails that lied about Theseus being defeated.
From here, Hesperia's side, now concentrating itself into a
narrow space, puts forth into the sea a thin tongue of land,
which shuts in the waves of the Adriatic with curved horns.
Yet this sea sent in through narrow jaws would not be a
harbor, if an island did not break the force of violent Coros
with its rocks and pour back the weary waves.
From here, from there, nature set mountains of craggy cliffs
against the open sea and take away the winds,
so ships may stand at anchor, held by trembling rope.
From here, the whole sea lies open far beyond, whether
a sail is carried to your harbors, Coreyra, or on the left, Illyrian
Epidamnos, sloping into Ionian waves, is sought.
Here is the refuge of sailors, when the Adriatic moves all
its strength and Ceraunia disappears into clouds and
Calabrian Sason is soaked by the foaming sea.

¹⁸² Pompey's exact location at the time of this speech is not explicitly stated in the text. He had previously set up a base of operations in Capua (2.392-98). Fantham (1992a) 178 suggests the speech was given in Luceria, where Pompey stayed at least between the 10 – 19 February 48 BCE. This would fit with Lucan's description of Pompey as *nescius... capti ducis* regarding the fall of Corfinium on 21 February.

The phrase *urbs est* triggers the ecphrasis and focuses attention on the city. As the description continues, the details included are initially mythical, but largely geographical. The focus is the natural features that make up the area near Brundisium, its harbor, and the lands across the Adriatic. In this way, the contrast between nature and human civilization is a crucial part of this description from its very beginning. Though Lucan follows *urbs est* with a verbal tour of Brundisium's geography, it opens the door for consideration of how the power of man and manufacturing compares to nature and potentially comes into conflict with it. The siege works Caesar builds at Brundisium and the efforts made to fill in the harbor literalize this conflict.

The mythical origin story of Brundisium credits the city's foundation to Cretan colonists (*Dictaeis colonis*). These colonists provide a connection to Theseus' voyage from Athens (*puppae / Cecropiae*) to Crete and the subsequent death of his father Aegeus (*victum mentitis Thesea velis*).¹⁸³ This myth is doubly interesting in terms of its relation to geography. Theseus and the sails on his ship allude to Aegeus' suicide and the related aetiology of the name of the Aegean sea. Moreover, the ultimate emphasis in the brief account of this myth efficiently moves the ecphrasis away from its urban introduction (*urbs est*) to something more focused on the location and nature of Brundisium, whose harbor was a refuge for these Cretan sailors (*quos... profugos*), as it would be for Pompey (*profugus... Brundisii tutas... in arces*, 2.608-9). The repetition of *profugus* also evokes one of Lucan's primary models for this ecphrasis, Vergil, whose Aeneas was himself *profugus* on his way from Troy to Italy.¹⁸⁴ Pompey, however, is more of an anti-Aeneas just as the *Bellum Civile* is an anti-*Aeneid*: he is a fugitive from his homeland, but there is no promised land or destined *imperium sine fine* awaiting him elsewhere.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ Cf. Catullus 64.172: *Cecropiae... puppae*.

¹⁸⁴ Vergil, *Aeneid* 1.1-3.

¹⁸⁵ Vergil, *Aeneid* 1.279.

The geography in book one, as represented by the Rubicon ecphrasis and the longer excursus on Gallic people and their territory, has been regarded as only somewhat accurate.¹⁸⁶ Lucan seems to be more concerned with rhetorical effect and thematic continuity than geographic consistency. By contrast, the ecphrasis of Brundisium and its geography is a fair representation of the actual physical features of the area.¹⁸⁷ Deliberate geographical inconsistencies are unnecessary to Lucan's portrayal of place, conflict, and character in this episode. The reader's focus is directed first at the coast of Italy (*latus... Hesperiae*), where the land juts out into the Adriatic Sea in a narrow spit (*tenuem producit in aequora linguam*) and encloses part of the larger Adriatic waterway into a more accessible area (*artis inmissum faucibus aequor*).¹⁸⁸ This particular landform creates a harbor by acting as a natural breaker (*violentos insula coros exciperet saxis lassasque refunderet undas*). Lucan draws the attention of the viewer even closer to show the rocky cliffs (*montes scopulosae rupis*) that protect Brundisium's harbor from the sea and wind (*aperto opposuit natura mari flatusque removit*). From here, the ecphrasis moves to the realm of potential, as it concludes with the Greek islands and cities where a ship using Brundisium's harbor might travel (*Corcyra, Illyris... Epidamnos, Ceraunia, Sason*). These locations are notable for their inhospitable landscapes and weather (*patet omne fretum, vergens... in undas, cum totas Adria vires movit et in nubes abiere, spumoso... aequore*), but also because they mark part of the path Pompey would later follow as

¹⁸⁶ Getty (1936) 59-60.

¹⁸⁷ Ahl (1976) 76 does acknowledge Lucan's "highly impressionistic" and even "surreal" manner, but cites his faithfulness to the details of both historical and geographic fact. For comparison, Strabo 6.3.6. Cf. Caesar *De bello civili* 1.24-29, for the geography of Brundisium as relevant to his siege of the city and harbor.

¹⁸⁸ The proliferation of anatomical metaphors for the natural features in this passage (*latus, artum/artis, linguam, faucibus*) bring the landscape a lifelike aspect. When the perspective of book two shifts back to Caesar at 2.650-79, the description of Rome as *caput mundi* (2.665), while a conventional way to refer to the capital city, recalls these other parts of Italy that can be compared to body parts as well. Cf. Dinter (2012), Bartsch (1997).

he fled from Italy. The opening lines of book three, narrating Pompey's departure and last look back at Italy, contain similar imagery.

solus ab Hesperia non flexit lumina terra
Magnus, dum patrios portus, dum litora numquam
ad visus reditura suos, tectumque cacumen
nubibus, et dubios cernit vanescere montes. (3.4-7)

Magnus alone did not turn his eyes from the land
of Hesperia, until the harbors of his country, and the shore
would never return to his sight, and the peak was covered
by clouds, and he saw the mountains vanish into obscurity.

For Pompey, looking back at the Italian shore, the land itself seems to be swallowed up by clouds and disappears from sight even sooner than it would due to decreasing proximity. Pompey has become the new observer, replacing the anonymous perspective in the Brundisium ecphrasis and gazing upon an increasingly obscure and vanishing Italian landscape instead of the cloudy foreign shores mentioned earlier (*in nubes abiere Ceraunia*). *Solus... Magnus*, Pompey alone observing the increasingly distant shore of Italy, recalls Pompey in his first Lucanian incarnation: the old oak tree, which also stands alone (*sola tamen colitur*, 1.143) as worthy of attention. And like the oak in book one, Pompey represents the fixed traditions of old Rome (*pondere fixa suo est*, 1.139) but cannot maintain his position (*nec iam validis radicibus haerens*) in the face of contemporary threats. The camps in Capua and Brundisium are established then abandoned; even Pompey's location cannot take root.¹⁸⁹

The description of Brundisium is driven by active verbs and shifts in perspective. With the exception of its introduction (*urbs est*), a statement of the harbor's existence (*portus erat*), and a brief pause at the ships anchored therein (*starent contentae... carinae*), the verbs throughout the ecphrasis convey movement and action and bring a sense of vitality to the

¹⁸⁹ Rosner-Siegel (2010) 191-92.

landscape.¹⁹⁰ They shape the land (*producit, claudit, exciperet, refunderet*), they control the direction and force of sea and wind (*opposuit, removit, patet, perfunditur*), and they illustrate the movements of ships and people (*ferantur, petatur, movit*). These verbs also allow Lucan to make use of an impersonal, omniscient perspective that alternately zooms in to examine the details of this landscape and zooms out to show a “sweeping panorama” of the Adriatic Sea and both its coasts.¹⁹¹ The natural surroundings are more than mere background: they are vibrant and active and seem almost to come to life around their inhabitants.

Landscape, the concept of nature as viewed by a spectator, is naturally suited to ecphrasis. By maintaining a nautical perspective,¹⁹² Lucan modifies the examples he had set in previous geographical descriptions. When describing the Rubicon’s stream, he follows its course from spring, through the mountains down to the Po valley (1.213-14). He also reacts to a Vergilian model for the description of Brundisium’s harbor. Expressions of Lucan’s Vergilian inspiration in this episode are numerous and include the description of Pompey, like Aeneas, as *profugus*, as well as an ecphrasis introduced by *urbs est*, which recalls Vergil’s *urbs antiqua fuit*, describing Carthage.¹⁹³ As Lucan’s readers, we are primed to read the harbor where Aeneas makes landfall in Africa in *Aeneid* 1 as a model for the harbor at Brundisium in *Bellum Civile* 2. Vergil, as Lucan later does, describes his African harbor from the privileged perspective of epic narrator:

est in secessu longo locus: insula portum
efficit obiectu laterum, quibus omnis ab alto

¹⁹⁰ Ahl (1976) 79 compares the landscape’s vividness to the active motion of the poet’s “eye” as he surveys it.

¹⁹¹ Ahl (1976) 78. He also demonstrates how Lucan’s descriptions of the ships in the still waters of the harbor are the single pause in this action packed geographical *ekphrasis*.

¹⁹² Likely written from a nautical perspective due to Brundisium’s importance as a sea port; Strabo 5.3.6, in his description of the Appian Way, notes that the more southerly cities on the road (Tarracina, Formiae, Minturnae, Sinuessa, Tara, and Brundisium) can also be accessed by sea.

¹⁹³ Vergil, *Aeneid* 1.13.

frangitur inque sinus scindit sese unda reductos.
hinc atque hinc vastae rupes geminique minantur
in caelum scopuli, quorum sub vertice late
aequora tuta silent; tum silvis scaena coruscis
desuper horrentique atrum nemus imminet umbra.
fronte sub adversa scopulis pendentibus antrum,
intus aquae dulces vivoque sedilia saxo,
nympharum domus: hic fessas non vincula navis
ulla tenent, unco non alligat ancora morsu. (1.159-69)

There is a place in a long inlet: an island offers a harbor
by the obstacle of its sides, by which everything from the deep
is broken and the wave divides itself into remote bays.
Here and there huge cliffs and twin rocks tower
in the sky, under whose summits the whole surface
of the water lies calm; then a stage with shaking woods
above and a dark grove threatens with bristling shadow.
Under the opposing face is a cave with hanging rocks,
inside is sweet water and ledges made from living stone,
a home of the nymphs: here no bonds hold weary
ships, nor does an anchor hold fast with a hooked bite.

The ephrasis begins with a characteristic *est... locus*,¹⁹⁴ and continues on to describe the way the island blocks the harbor from the open ocean (*insula portum efficit*) and how the surrounding cliffs (*vastae rupes*) help make the harbor a safe anchorage (*aequora tuta silent, hic fessas non vincula navis ulla tenent, unco non alligat ancora morsu*). Leach has identified the harbor on Ithaca in *Odyssey* 13.96-106 as a model for this harbor in *Aeneid* 1.¹⁹⁵ Homer used simple paratactic descriptions to convey a series of natural features, a narrative style that seems to follow the observation of someone (e.g., Odysseus) as he experiences it. Vergil takes Homer's model, duplicates and elaborates: there is a progressively more detailed description of the topography (*locus, secessu longo, portum*), relative clauses increase the spatial interdependence

¹⁹⁴ Hinds (2002) 126. Cf. Ennius *Annales* 20: *est locus Hesperiam quam mortales perhibebant*.

¹⁹⁵ Leach (1988) 32.

of the natural features, and prepositional phrases direct the reader's "eye" up and down, adding a third dimension of observable space.¹⁹⁶

Lucan echoes Vergil's imagery in his own harbor scene: the *contentae carinae* (621) are only able to occupy such still water because of the island at the mouth of the harbor serving as a breaker (*non... inmissum faucibus aequor / portus erat, si non violentos insula coros / exciperet*); the still water is guaranteed by cliffs which separate the harbor from the open ocean (*montes scopulosae rupis aperto / opposuit natura mari flatusque removit*). The verbal direction of perspective in Vergil's ecphrasis (*hinc atque hinc*) also finds a place in Lucan's repetition of *hinc* (613), *hinc illinc* (619), *hinc* (622), and *huc* (625). Vergil brings a pseudo-cinematic perspective to his ecphrasis, by alternating between aerial perspective and close detail and by incorporating a vertical axis of sight into the horizontal path traveled by his characters. Lucan does something similar as he describes Brundisium, but shows a preference for the nautical perspective that allows for a panoramic view of the landscape, a perspective which does not require the reader's observation of the scene to be done with a character as proxy.¹⁹⁷ Lucan's use of Vergil, and thus of Homer's Ithacan harbor as well, is à propos: when Pompey eventually departs from Brundisium, he sails in the direction of Ithaca though he, unlike Odysseus, does not experience a homecoming. While this depersonalizes the landscape described in the ecphrasis, it also gives it a kind of autonomy. Caesar and Pompey inhabit the land and affect it, but the landscape does not depend on them for its character or complexity.

¹⁹⁶ Leach (1988) 32. Horsfall (1985) 200 also mentions the similarities between Vergil's African landfall and Homer's harbor on Ithaca. Cf. Thalmann (2011) 7 explores the various types of spatial experience in epic as expressed in Apollonius of Rhodes' *Argonautika*, citing three main types of spatial experience: the "god's eye view," the mortally accessible panorama (e.g., from a mountaintop), and the direct experience of space as perceived while passing through it and interacting with the landscape. Cf. Roux (2008) 45-46.

¹⁹⁷ Ahl (1976) 78 compares Lucan's overview of the landscape to Aeneas looking at Carthage from a hilltop or Vergil's description of Priam's death from the top of the palace at Troy (*Aeneid* 1.418-36, 2.453-553).

When Caesar besieges Brundisium and its harbor, he modifies the landscape by building earthworks and partially filling in the harbor in order to prevent Pompey's departure. He is unsuccessful despite the monumentality of his efforts and Pompey manages to navigate a path to the open sea and leave Italy behind. As book two ends, the perspective shifts from Pompey (in Brundisium, instructing his sons on their next moves) to Caesar (conquering his way into the city and building siegeworks) and back again to Pompey (puzzling over his escape route and then leaving) all within just over one hundred lines. Their location is the constant factor that keeps these lines from seeming disconnected. Caesar changes the land, modifying it to better suit his purpose; Pompey works around the land's natural shape and Caesar's changes to it.

The Lucanian modifications to the historiographic record are crucial to his characterization of Caesar and Pompey at Brundisium. Masters has pointed out that Caesar's earthworks, which received such a detailed account in Lucan, only appear elsewhere in Caesar's own *commentarii*.¹⁹⁸ Instead, it is Pompey's earthworks that are recorded in most sources and omitted entirely by Lucan. Masters is certainly correct in attributing Lucan's emphasis on Caesar's earthworks to an overarching poetic concentration on massive structures.¹⁹⁹ I would also argue that this repeated attention to grand structures and projects, as well as to the process of construction, is more than a rhetorical reflection of the epic poet's task. In light of the elements of Stoic physics that underpin Lucan's poetic universe, the *pondera*, *moles*, and engineering projects not only unify themes between the levels of macro- and microcosm, but even position Caesar, qua force of nature, as a creative force in his own right on par with nature.

Lucan's account of Caesar's siege of Brundisium simplifies the events recorded by Caesar himself in *De bello civili* 1.25-30, both in terms of the siege works and in terms of

¹⁹⁸ Caesar, *BC* 1.25-27. Cf. Appian, *BC* 2.40; Dio 41.12.3; Plutarch, *Pompey* 62.3. For a specific discussion of this issue, see Masters (1992) 31.

¹⁹⁹ Masters (1992) 32-34.

Caesar's motivations. The more tactically peaceful reasons for preventing Pompey's departure are omitted, in keeping with the portrayal of Caesar as devastating bolt of lightning (1.143-57), as willing to break the *limes* of the Rubicon, as a Roman general who took Rome, the *caput mundi*, as spoils of war (*bellorum maxima merces*, 2.655).²⁰⁰ The construction of siege works in the harbor shows Caesar's ambition and drive for victory in his modification of the landscape.

quamvis possederit omnem
 Italiam, extremo sedeat quod litore Magnus,
 communem tamen esse dolet nec rursus aperto
 vult hostes errare freto, sed molibus undas
 obstruit et latum deiectis rupibus aequor.
 cedit in inmensum cassus labor: omnia pontus
 haurit saxa vorax montesque inmiscet harenis:
 ut maris Aeolii²⁰¹ medias si celsus in undas
 depellatur Eryx, nullae tamen aequore rupes
 emineant, vel si convolso vertice Gaurus
 decidat in fundum penitus stagnantis Averni. (2.658-68)

...though [Caesar] holds all of Italy,
 because Magnus remains encamped on the furthest shore,
 still it grieves him that the land is shared, nor does he
 want his enemies to wander over the open sea, but blocks the waves
 and wide sea with massive structures and with torn down cliffs.
 Fruitless toil vanishes into the deep: the voracious sea
 drinks in every stone and mixes the mountains into its sands:
 just as, if lofty Eryx were driven down into the middle of the
 Aeolian sea, still no cliffs would tower over the water,
 or if Gaurus, with summit overturned, fell
 into the deepest depths of stagnant Avernus.

Lucan's Caesar does not like sharing Italy with Pompey, but also does not want him to escape.

He begins to block the mouth of the harbor where they could access the sea (*undas / obstruit*), using huge stones (*deiectis rupibus*) as *moles*. Despite the effort, the harbor is too deep (*pontus...*

²⁰⁰ Cf. 2.227, where Rome is described with the same phrase, as the prize desired by Marius and Sulla.

²⁰¹ Fantham (1992a) 210-11 *ad* 665: the MSS read *Aegaei*, which is also printed in Hosius' Teubner edition of 1913. Housman's 1926 edition corrected to *Aeolii*, as Sicily, the location of Mt. Eryx is nowhere near the Aegean. Other suggested emendations include *Hennaei* (Kortte), *Aegati* (Rossbach), and *Aetnaei* (Oudendorp). Fantham locates Aeolus' mountain of the winds on Stromboli or Lipara for the Romans.

vorax) and its sands too yielding (*montesque inmiscet harenis*) to create a solid blockade. *Moles* is a word drawn from the military histories Lucan used as inspiration,²⁰² but by using the same language to describe the materials of Caesar's *moles* (*rupibus, saxa, montes*) as he did to introduce the landscape of Brundisium (*saxis*, 2.618; *montes... rupis*, 2.619), Lucan fosters the image of Caesar as the conqueror or destroyer of that landscape. He tries to obstruct the waves (*undas / obstruit*) just as his soldiers did when crossing the Rubicon (*in obliquum sonipes opponitur amnem*, 1.220).²⁰³ Moreover, by using these features of the natural world to create his *moles*, Caesar seems to be manufacturing his own pseudo-landscape. This new land (*tellure nova*, 2.680) is subsumed by the sea, part of the landscape built by nature, the primary landscape.

What follows is a simile comparing the stones cast into the water to the mountains Eryx and Gaurus. Eryx, a mountain in the west of Sicily near Drepanum, is figuratively cast into the Aeolian waters north of Sicily. Gaurus, one of the eruptive vents in the Phlegraean Fields near Cumae, is cast into the nearby Lake Avernus. The image of mountains torn from their roots and cast into the sea can also be found in Ovid, where the violent relocation of Athos and Pindus figures into the story of Ceyx and Alcyone.²⁰⁴ Quite naturally, Lucan's mountain destruction, like Ovid's, recalls the gigantomachy where Peleus and Ossa were torn up and used as a makeshift ladder by which the Giants could reach Olympus.²⁰⁵ By comparison, then, Caesar is himself a gigantic figure at Brundisium, tearing up stones to fill in the harbor and change the

²⁰² Cf. Caesar, *BC* 1.25.5, *moles atque aggerem ab utraque parte litoris iaciebat*.

²⁰³ Lucan uses the accusative plural of *unda* exclusively in the sixth foot of the hexameter. While this may reflect the conveniences of meter, the position and the word's constancy in that position makes it emphatic. *Undis* takes the same position, with only two exceptions, both involving Caesar at odds in some way with the waves (5.555, Caesar tries to cross to Italy during a storm; 10.321, Caesar inquires after the notoriously obscure source of the Nile). Vergil and Ovid both prefer the 6th hexametric foot for *undas* and *undis*, but it is by no means exclusive.

²⁰⁴ Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 11.554-55: *nec levius quam si quis Athon Pindumque revulsos / sede sua totos in apertum everterit aequor / praecipitata cadit*.

²⁰⁵ Hardie (1986) 100-1 for gigantomachic mountain-throwing; 108 for gigantomachic aspects of Aeolus and his mountain full of winds.

physical world for his own benefit, like a giant casting mountains into the sea.²⁰⁶ Moreover, when Lucan uses Gaurus as one of the mountains in this simile, he emphasizes the infernal associations of that mountain and of its neighboring lake. Avernus is traditionally associated with the underworld, given its location near Cumae and the Phlegraean Fields.²⁰⁷ Even the language used to describe it, *stagnantis Aaverni*, is characteristic of still water in the underworld.²⁰⁸ Gaurus, with its infernal associations, is quite apt for Caesar's gigantomachic simile, especially in conjunction with the underworld imagery written into Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon and invasion of Ariminum. The timing of these literary underworld incursions into the poem forms a ring-composition introduced by Caesar's entrance into Italy and concluded by Pompey's exit.

The same arrogance implicit in a gigantomachic comparison is reapplied to Caesar when Lucan describes the construction of the harbor blockade. The historical facts, gleaned from Caesar's own narrative, are expanded upon.²⁰⁹ Lucan continues to describe Caesar's manufactured landscape, using language and imagery associated with Stoic cosmology and a simile comparing Caesar's undertaking to Xerxes' crossing of the Hellespont.

ergo ubi nulla vado tenuit sua pondera moles
 tunc placuit caesis innectere vincula silvis
 rororque immensis late religare catenis.
 talis fama canit tumidum super aequora Persen
 construxisse vias, multum cum pontibus ausus
 Europamque Asiae Sestonque admovit Abydo
 incessitque fretum rapidi super Hellesponti

²⁰⁶ Cf. Petronius *BC* 201-8: Caesar crosses the Alps, undaunted by the inclement weather, like Jupiter descending from Olympus to face the Giants.

²⁰⁷ Cf. Vergil, *Aeneid* 6.124-55. The Sibyl, when describing the path to the underworld to Aeneas, even uses Avernus as an alternate name for the underworld.

²⁰⁸ Cf. Vergil, *Aeneid* 6.323: *Cocytus stagna alta vides Stygiamque paludem*. Lucan uses forms of *stagnare* only four times in the *Bellum Civile*: to describe the waters of Avernus (2.668), the lagoons near Venice where the Po reaches the sea (4.134), and the floodwaters of the Nile (2.417) and the Sicoris (4.335). The adjective *stagnum* appears eleven times: 2.71, 2.571, 4.118, 4.128, 5.443, 5.453, 6.346, 7.224, 8.853, 9.305, and 9.352.

²⁰⁹ Masters (1992) 32: of all the historiographical sources that deal with the barricade, Lucan gives it the most prominence.

non eurum zephyrumque timens, cum vela ratesque
in medium deferret Athos. sic ora profundum
artantur casu nemorum; tunc aggere multo
surgit opus, longaeque tremunt super aequora turres. (2.669-79)

Therefore when no structure held its weight in the shallows,
it then pleased him to weave bonds onto the cut wood
and to bind the strong wood with huge chains.
Rumor sings that the arrogant Persian built such roads
over the sea, when he dared to bring together with
his bridges Europe and Asia, Sestos and Abydos,
and marched over the channel of the rapid Hellespont,
not fearing Eurus or Zephyr, when he brought sails and
ships to Athos. Thus the mouth of the sea is
limited by the forests' fall; then the structure rises
in a great heap and the tall towers sway over the sea.

The original *moles* made from stones are not a successful blockade, as they cannot maintain their position or form (*nulla... tenuit sua pondera*).²¹⁰ The alternate plan involves cutting down trees (*caesis... silvis, casu nemorum*) to create rafts that would then be lashed together to form a bridge or blockade across the harbor's mouth (*ora profundum artantur*).²¹¹ The language of military histories is prominent throughout this passage: the *moles* and *agger* Caesar orders to be built reference Caesar's own account.²¹² The *turres* are also part of the blockade constructed as part of the huge *agger* Caesar builds on the floating bridge that blocks the harbor, but recall the *turres* of another city: Rome, as imagined anthropomorphically, wearing a turreted crown (*turrigera*, 1.188).

The language of Stoic cosmology is most clearly evident when describing the construction of the blockade. Not only are trees bound together to make rafts (*caesis innectere vincula silvis*), but these individual rafts are then connected to create a larger structure (*roboraque immensis... religare catenis*). These key terms – *innectere*, *vincula*, *religare*, *catenis*

²¹⁰ Cf. Pompey as oak tree, 1.138-39: *haerens pondere fixa suo est*.

²¹¹ Caesar, *BC* 1.25.6.

²¹² Caesar *BC* 1.25.5. For more on Lucan's use of *agger*, Masters (1992) 29-34 (Brundisium), 34-29 (Massilia). Cf. Lucan 2.447-52.

– are all constructive terms. *Vinculum* (and *catena*) correspond to the Greek δεσμός and tie into Chrysippean theories of an all-pervasive πνεῦμα.²¹³ Words of binding like *innectere* and *religare* relate to δεσμός as well, but also translate συμπλοκή, all of which are used to denote the cohesive unity of the universe and its constituent parts.²¹⁴

Caesar damages or alters rock formations and then cuts down trees in order to construct his siege works. He essentially destroys what exists in the natural world to furnish his own world. The landscape that he builds is bound together and held in balance, just as the Stoic cosmological theory claims the universe itself is coherent. Caesar’s destruction or alternation of the existing landscape to create new features of his own has interesting connotations in terms of the Stoic theory of universal destruction. In the *ekpyrosis*, the cosmos collapses into fire and eventually a new cosmos is created from the ruins of the old one. The landscape of Brundisium does not literally collapse into fire, but does suffer deforestation and devastation to construct Caesar’s earthworks and blockade. Caesar has great power over the landscape: he can tear it apart as if he is himself a Giant fighting against the established cosmic order; he can cut it down and reform it into the form that serves him best, creating new “land” on the sea.²¹⁵ Like Xerxes, Caesar is *tumidus*. It is not the waters of the Hellespont or Brundisium’s harbor that are swollen, but the ambition of the general pitting his power against the power of the sea.²¹⁶ The comparison to Xerxes also makes Caesar’s undertaking seem grander. Though he is not building a bridge

²¹³ *SVF* 2.719: Chrysippus calls πνεῦμα a δεσμός that holds the cosmic parts together. Cf. Cicero, *De natura deorum* 2.115: *maxime autem corpora inter se iuncta permanent cum quasi quodam vinculo circumdato colligantur.*

²¹⁴ Cf. Seneca, *Naturales Quaestiones* 1.1.4, 2.1.7.

²¹⁵ Fantham (1992a) 213 *ad* 678-79, lists a series of Roman sources that mention the *hubris* of building on water: Sallust, *Cat.* 13; Horace, *Odes* 2.18.20-23, 3.1.33-36; Seneca, *Contr.* 5.5.

²¹⁶ Fantham (1992a) 212 *ad* 672-77. Cf. The Rubicon, attempting to prevent Caesar’s crossing, 1.204: *tumidum... amnem.*

between continents, the repercussions of a successful blockade would have been vast.²¹⁷ As usual, though, Lucan chooses his model and refashions it: where Xerxes built his monumental bridge to allow his army to move, Caesar builds to prevent Pompey from doing so.

The symbolic nature of Caesar's blockade is clear as viewed through Pompey's eyes. Rather than a harbor blocked by a man-made object, it is new land that Pompey sees.

Pompeius tellure nova compressa profundi
ora videns curis animum mordacibus angit,
ut reseret pelagus spargatque per aequora bellum. (2.680-82)

Pompey, seeing the mouth of the sea compressed
by new land, is anguished by biting cares,
how to reopen the sea and spread war across its surface.

The blockade makes the mouth of the harbor narrower, an image emphasized by Lucan's chiasmic repetition of *ora profundi* (677) three lines later as *profundi / ora*. Not only does the poet repeat the same image from Caesar's and Pompey's respective points of view, but does so in a way that seems to show the same view from both directions and to mirror the gradual narrowing of the harbor mouth itself. This "transformation of nature," as Fantham calls it,²¹⁸ creates the *tellus nova* standing in Pompey's way. This particular phrase appears one other time in the *Bellum Civile*, at the end of book one as the Roman matron finishes her potent speech, as an object of sight preferred to Philippi.²¹⁹ The matron's new land is unspecified and, while it may not be directed purely at Caesar's manufactured landscape in Brundisium, could potentially include newly created land as well as different lands newly seen.

²¹⁷ Cf. 1.72-80; Rome as cosmos.

²¹⁸ Fantham (1992a) 214 *ad* 680-81.

²¹⁹ 1.693-94: *nova da mihi cernere litora ponti / telluremque novam: vidi iam, Phoebus, Philippos* (Allow me to see new sea shores and a new land: I have already seen Philippi, Phoebus.) For *tellus nova*, cf. Lucretius 5.790, 800, 907 (on the creation of the earth, plants, and other life) and Horace *Odes* 1.7.29 (on a potential new Salamis after Teucer flees the original).

Pompey does manage to engineer an escape and the bulk of the action happens under cover of darkness.²²⁰ The noise of the water against the hulls of the ships gives them away, however, and Caesar's allies, referred to as Brundisium's and Pompey's enemy (*hostes*, 2.704) rush to the harbor. The escape, as Lucan narrates it, is close enough to be comparable to the Argo sailing between the Clashing Rocks.

heu pudor! exigua est fugiens victoria Magnus.
angustus puppes mittebat in aequora limes
artior Euboica, quae Chalcida verberat, unda.
hic haesere rates geminae classique paratas
excepere manus, tractoque in littora bello
hic primum rubuit civili sanguine Nereus.
cetera classis abit summis spoliata carinis:
ut, Pagasaea ratis peteret cum Phasidos undas,
cyaneas tellus emisit in aequora cautes,
rapta puppe minor subducta est montibus Argo,
vanaque percussit pontum Symplegas inanem
et statura redit. (2.708-19)

For shame! Magnus' flight is a small victory.
A narrow passage sent the ships onto the sea, a passage
narrower than the Euboean wave which strikes Chalcis.
Here two ships stopped and caught the bands prepared
for the fleet, and as war was dragged into shore
here Nereus first became red with citizen blood.
The rest of the fleet departs, robbed of its last ships:
just as, when the Pagasen ship was seeking the waters of Phasis,
the earth sent forth onto the sea the Cyanean rocks,
and the Argo was drawn away from the mountains, stern torn away,
and the Symplegades struck the empty sea in vain
and came together, to stand forever.

Caesar's manufactured land is not sufficient to keep Pompey from escaping via ship – the harbor, though modified, serves its intended purpose. The *angustus... limes* is not a geographical

²²⁰ Barrenechea (2004) analyzes the dubious accuracy of the star positions at Brundisium during this time of year.

boundary here, as it is in the case of the Rubicon (1.216), but rather a path to the open sea. It is, however, liminal in its relation to both land and sea and to the transition between them.²²¹

The simile of the Argo passing through the Cyanean rocks, or Symplegades, recalls the trajectory of the Argo in earlier narratives and the geography through which it sailed. In Apollonius of Rhodes' *Argonautica*, Jason sends a dove through the clashing rocks and it loses its tail feathers; he and his crew then sail the Argo through the same passage, losing only a bit of the stern to the rocks. As also later told by Lucan, the rocks, after failing to destroy the Argo, are frozen in place and remain as part of the geography of the Bosphorus.²²² In Apollonius' epic, the prevalence of moving geographical features like the Symplegades can suggest "a return to primordial disorganization,"²²³ the result of a Hellenistic poet writing about the early generations of Greek mythology and the still uncertain world in which its stories take place. The Symplegades, with their geological instability, are symptomatic of the remnant of Chaos still in the world of the *Argonautica*. It is only through exploration and observation that the world and its landscapes become better understood and more fixed in their observers' minds and in the wider physical world.²²⁴ Likewise, when mapping the world, observation is vital to creating a fixed of its geography.

So when Lucan compares Pompey's narrow escape (*exigua, angustus, artior*) from Brundisium to the Argo's near miss at the Symplegades, he does more than illustrate the fine line between failure and success. By setting up Caesar's blockade, manufactured from the landscape into another pseudo-landscape (*tellure nova*), as an obstacle as dangerous as the Clashing Rocks, Lucan reinforces the narrative of world-building in this episode and lends it the associated

²²¹ Thalmann (2011) 167.

²²² Apollonius of Rhodes *Argonautica* 2.317-40, 549-92.

²²³ Nishimura-Jensen (2000) 287-88. This may also be a return to the theme of the first simile (1.72-80): *ekpyrosis* destroys the cosmos and brings back a state of *anticum... chaos* (1.74).

²²⁴ Thalmann (2011) 166.

mythic gravitas. Moreover, the simile finds a tenuous geographical connection to Lucan's earlier comparison of Caesar's barricade to Xerxes' "bridge" across the Hellespont (2.672-77). Given the location of the Symplegades, Lucan writes into Caesar's *moles* both Bosphorus and Hellespont, emphasizing its pseudo-geography and its significance as a sea-passage.

The siege at Brundisium at the end of book two and Pompey's departure from Italy at the beginning of book three mark a poetic *limes*. The narrative of the *Bellum Civile* only expands outwards from this point: Caesar and Pompey take their conflict beyond the borders of Italy and the locations of the major events in books three through ten take place throughout the Mediterranean, from Spain in the west to Troy in the east, and from Thessaly in the north of Greece to Libya and Alexandria in the south. The relationship between human action and landscape that Lucan introduces in books one and two as well as the structural underpinning of Stoic cosmological theory and end of the world rhetoric are equally relevant in later books. The simultaneous images of metaphorical *ekpyrosis* and manufactured landscape find another space for expression in book three at Massilia.

Chapter 2: The West: Massilia and Ilerda

In the third and fourth books of the *Bellum Civile*, the sphere of action moves west from Italy to Gaul and Spain. Lucan explores the natural surroundings of Massilia and Ilerda in detailed ephrasis that illustrate the forests, hills, rivers, and mountains of the landscape. At Massilia, a depiction of the felling of a sacred yet menacing grove uses the language and imagery of the *locus horridus* and shows the grove's transformation into a material resource for Caesar's siege machinery. The eventual destruction and conflagration of these siege works, as well as the destruction of portions of the fleet in the subsequent naval battle, renew Lucan's programmatic simile from the beginning of book one, the cosmic *ekpyrosis*, and contribute to the pattern of "manufactured" land introduced at Brundisium in book two. The overwhelming deluge that covers the land around the river Sicoris in book four is catastrophic in its own right, but due to philosophical language and poetic allusion, it also conjures the sense of a greater cosmic cataclysm. Both Caesarians and Pompeians suffer because of the flood, but the subsequent battle gives another victory to Caesar. Though the civil war continues, the true struggle is between people and their landscape which is, at Ilerda, a watery place governed by excess and deprivation.

At Massilia and Ilerda Lucan writes a series of endings; both episodes are vehicles for apocalyptic imagery, conveyed primarily in the landscape through poetic allusion and the distortion of historical facts. The related tropes of these episodes – land and water, changeable borders, fall and conflagration, excess and lack – can be read in the characters' morals and actions, and are even more concretely depicted by land and nature. What emerges from the landscape of Massilia and Ilerda is a sense of the sublime in all its grandeur and terror and

Lucan's continuing portrayal of Caesar not merely as a force of nature, but as a sublime object in his own right.

I. *Maiorque iacens apparuit agger*: The End of the World at Massilia

Massilia, a long-established city originally founded on the Mediterranean coast in the 6th century BCE by Greek colonists from Phocaea, sided with Pompey during the civil wars, but retained its independence after Caesar's siege and the subsequent naval battles.¹ In Lucan's account of this siege, the forested land on the hills around Massilia is the most important feature of the landscape. The narrative of the battle between the Caesarian forces and the Pompeian sympathizers from Massilia is preceded by Lucan's description of an ancient grove near the city and its desecration and destruction by Caesar in the interests of the construction of his siege works. This grove has been the subject of much scholarly interest. Phillips and Dyson both examine other pieces of ancient literature for potential sources. Phillips found convincing evidence for intertext with the grove destroyed by Erysichthon in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, itself an allusion to Callimachus' *Hymn to Demeter*.² Dyson found historical parallels in Suetonius Paullinus' assault on the island of Mona in 60 CE and Q. Servilius Caepio's attack on the Volci Tectosages near Toulouse and his sacking of a tribal sanctuary.³ Subsequent analyses focus on the philosophical implications of deforestation. Saylor's study of imagery of opening and closing at Massilia makes the grove the key to the entire episode, where an assault on the trees is "like a cut in the cosmos extending through the worlds of man, nature and the gods."⁴ Leigh sees the

¹ DeWitt (1940) 606. Cf. Strabo 4.1.5; Caesar, *BCiv* 2.22.6.

² Phillips (1968) 297-98. Cf. Ovid, *Met.* 8.738-884.

³ Dyson (1970) 37-38. For Paullinus see Tacitus, *Annales* 14.30. For Caepio see Cicero, *De Natura Deorum* 3.30.74, *De oratore* 2.28.124; Strabo 4.1.13.

⁴ Saylor (2003) 382. See also Thomas (1988b) 263, on trees more generally in the Greek and Roman worlds, where "the cutting of trees is a hazardous act, stigmatized by society and divinity alike."

felling of the grove's trees in conjunction with increased illumination, something he associates with philosophical enlightenment.⁵ The grove's darkness and obscure qualities, on which scholars like Saylor and Leigh focus, are some of the same qualities that make a natural features of the landscape sublime.

Day's extensive study of the sublime in Lucan traces these and other aspects of the natural world to demonstrate how they can represent sublimity,⁶ an aesthetic experience,⁷ partly influenced by overwhelming stimuli that can produce feelings of terror or pleasure.⁸ The construction of the sublime as an idea originated in the ancient world and most scholars trace its origins to Longinus' text, *Peri Hypsous*. Longinus, writing about the rhetorical effects and forms of the sublime, defines it by its ecstasy (1.4), its resonance and greatness of mind (9.2), and its connection to things made lofty (12.1). He also compares its rhetorical effect to the illuminating and dazzling power of lightning (1.4). Day traces the greatest cultural popularity of the sublime to the eighteenth century, when it was associated with forces of nature and grand landscapes; later, in the twentieth century, war and civil strife added an element of the traumatic to the sublime.⁹ These two aspects of the sublime in its modern incarnation – landscape and war – are present in Lucan in such a convincingly similar way that Day reads the *Bellum Civile* as a major text in the history of the sublime. Not only does Lucan's text serve as a source of inspiration for later sublime texts,¹⁰ but it presents places, characters, and situations that represent the sublime

⁵ Leigh (2010) 209. He also views Caesar, the agent of deforestation, as an Epicurean-style hero, bringing light/reason into dark places.

⁶ Day (2013) 4 cites as objects of the sublime storms, earthquakes, volcanoes, waterfalls, and mountains.

⁷ Kirwan (2005) 161-65.

⁸ Burke (1958) 39-40.

⁹ Day (2013) 4, 8.

¹⁰ Day (2013) 13 names Marlowe's and Milton's texts as sources for the sublime that were also influenced by Lucan.

as a “vital and complex means of engaging with questions of power and its representation.”¹¹

From his first comparison to the lightning bolt in book one, Lucan’s Caesar is a useful case study for the representation of power in the state, the natural world, and even in the poem itself. His actions in the grove, especially in light of its own power, make both grove and Caesar sublime objects in *Bellum Civile* 3.

In describing the grove, Lucan draws on the tradition of the *locus amoenus* but, in keeping with his overall narrative of darkness and corruption, represents it unequivocally as a *locus horridus*.¹²

lucus erat longo numquam violatus ab aevo
obscurum cingens conexis aera ramis
et gelidas alte summotis solibus umbras. (3.399-401)

There was a grove, never violated since ancient times,
enclosing the stuffy air and chilly shade with interwoven
branches, while the sunlight was removed above.

From the beginning (*lucus erat*) Lucan echoes language used by Ovid to denote a *locus amoenus*.¹³ This phrase clearly marks the beginning of the ecphrasis and what follows must therefore be read in the context of the tradition of the *locus amoenus* on which Lucan elaborates. Moreover, it can be read in relation to the descriptions of Italy’s landscape in books one and two, which, as demonstrated in Chapter One, contrast the disrepair and destruction of Italy during the civil war with the idyllic and idealized landscapes of the Golden Age.¹⁴ The grove near Massilia, however, is representative of raw and primeval nature, cut off from the rest of the world. In its natural setting, the grove maintains the character of a lost world, in tune with ancient power and

¹¹ Day (2013) 11.

¹² Masters (1992) 25; Augoustakis (2006) 635.

¹³ Hinds (2002) 36-42 on *locus est* as words that can introduce a *locus amoenus* and the connection between *topos*, *locus*, and *lucus*. Hunink (1992) 170 *ad* 399 compares Ovid, *Fast.* 2.436, 3.295, and 6.503 and Vergil, *Aen.* 1.441. Cf. Leigh (2010) 219.

¹⁴ Fantham (1996) 151-52.

the sublime terror that accompany it.¹⁵ In these first three lines of the grove ecphrasis, Lucan establishes his transition from *locus amoenus* to *locus horridus*.¹⁶ One of the primary features of the grove is its darkness.¹⁷ It is *obscurum*,¹⁸ isolated from the outside world and from sunlight (*alte summotis solibus*) and, moreover, is self-perpetuating in its separation (*cingens conexis aera ramis*). The shade produced is not the traditional cool and pleasant shade of the *locus amoenus*, but instead is chilly or cold (*gelidas... umbras*). Though both pleasant and sinister varieties of shade are indicated by variations on *gelidus* and *umbra*, Lucan draws on the Ovidian pattern of pastoral landscapes with the possibility of violence to create his own threatening grove.¹⁹ While the *gelidae umbrae* are not necessarily sinister on their own, they are part of the larger *locus horridus*. This particular phrase also occurs in Lucan's descriptions of landscapes devastated (or about to be devastated) by war and those that bear literary similarity to the underworld.²⁰

¹⁵ Day (2013) 138 calls the grove “a strikingly sublime object” because of its age, strangeness, and darkness. Masters (1992) 26 describes what is essentially the sublime without naming it: “the eerie, the grotesque, the darkly supernatural coming from the black wellsprings of inspiration.” Schiesaro (2006) 445-46 explores the connection between the sublime and *loca horrida* in Seneca, using Longinus’ inclusion of extreme landscapes as part of the sublime (*On the Sublime* 35.4).

¹⁶ Hunink (1992) 168 defines a *locus horridus* as a place where “there is nothing pleasant to the eye, the ear or any of the other senses; many of the usual elements (soft breezes; rivers, creeks and sources; animals; divine powers and other things associated with spring and gardens) are either explicitly said to be absent or changed into their opposites.” He cites as models for Lucan’s grove the cave of Sleep (Ovid, *Met.* 11.592-615) and the groves found in Senecan tragedy (*Thyestes* 651-82, *Oedipus* 530-47, *Hercules Oetatus* 1618-41). Day (2013) 136 compares the *locus horridus* to typical descriptions of wooded landscape in Latin that emphasize shade and gloom and cites extensive examples (n. 78). Cf. also Schiesaro (2006) 431-32: “*est... lucus*” occurs at Seneca, *Oedipus* 530, introducing a grove ecphrasis that dwells on unpleasant shade.

¹⁷ On the etymology of groves, the Romans thought *lucus a non lucendo*, an argument κατὰ ἀντίφρασιν. See the detailed and engaging exploration of this particular etymology in Shelton (2011) 157-61.

¹⁸ Burke (1958) 58-59 cites obscurity as another source of the sublime.

¹⁹ Segal (1969) 78-79 compares Vergil, where shade in a pastoral landscape is a symbol of peace and leisure, as well as being “welcome and restorative,” with Ovid’s more insidious natural settings. For the pleasant qualities of shade, see also Wilson (1968) 293 on Horace.

²⁰ A variation of the phrase appears three times during the episode of Caesar’s crossing of the Rubicon and the occupation of Ariminum: *gelidas... Alpes* (1.183), *gelidas umbras* (1.261: dawn in Ariminum), and *gelidas Anienis ad undas* (1.582).

The physical elements of the grove's natural setting, their effect on living creatures, and their relation to traditional Roman religion make up the subsequent ecphrasis of the landscape. The grove tends to represent the aspects of landscape that are more threatening and less idyllic. The grove ecphrasis escalates quickly into an exploration of all aspects of the grove's horror, beginning with its relation to religion and cult practice.

hunc non ruricolae Panes nemorumque potentes
 Silvani Nymphaeque tenent, sed barbara ritu
 sacra deum; structae diris altaribus arae
 omnisque humanis lustrata cruoribus arbor. (3.402-405)

Rustic Pans and Silvani, the gods of groves, and
 Nymphs do not occupy this place, but the gods' rites,
 barbaric in nature; altars are heaped up with dire sacrifices
 and every tree is purified with human blood.

The grove's obscurity also applies to its deities: the traditional sylvan gods and nymphs of the *locus amoenus* are notable in their absence while the deities who *are* worshipped here are notable in their own vagueness.²¹ Since people are afraid to enter the grove, there is, by correlation, little knowledge of what goes on inside it. From a literary perspective the ambiguity and vagueness of the grove's deities and their rites (*sacra, altaribus arae*) is another aspect of the grove's darkness. This lack of specificity and corresponding lack of knowledge creates a persistent atmosphere of fear.²² Perhaps the most striking aspect of the grove's cult practice is the purification by human blood (*omnisque humanis lustrata cruoribus arbor*), or more generally, human sacrifice.²³

²¹ Augoustakis (2006) 635. Fantham (1996) 150 emphasizes that the Massilians, "civilized" for centuries under both Greek and Roman influence, had sacred groves with known deities.

²² Hunink (1992) 172 *ad* 404 has identified a series of words denoting fear in the grove episode: *metuunt* (407), *horror* (411), *attonitos* (415), *metuunt* and *terroribus* (416), *timeant* (417), *pavet* (424), *timet* (425), *tremuere* and *verenda* (429), *torpore* (432), *pavore* (438). Cf. Leigh (2010) 206.

²³ For the Gallic practice of human sacrifice, see Cicero, *Pro Font.* 31; Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum* 6.16, Pliny, *N.H.* 30.13, Strabo 4.4.5. Cf. Lucan 1.444-51.

The combination of the grove's natural setting and growth patterns with unfamiliar and alarming cult practices comes together in a place that is a manifestation of the natural world and its capacity for the fearsome and the fearful. The *horror* produced in the human mind by the landscape of the grove is one aspect of the sublime as experienced in nature and as found in literature and art depicting that nature.

siqua fidem meruit superos mirata vetustas,
illis et volucres metuunt insistere ramis
et lustris recubare ferae; nec ventus in illas
incubuit silvas excussa que nubibus atris
fulgura: non ulli frondem praebentibus aurae
arboribus suus horror inest. tum plurima nigris
fontibus unda cadit, simulacra que maeta deorum
arte carent caesisque extant informia truncis. (3.406-13)

If some ancient time, having marveled at the gods, merits belief,
birds are afraid to perch on those branches and
beasts to rest in their dens; wind does not occupy
those woods nor does lightning strike from black clouds;
the trees, not offering a leaf to any breeze, have
their own shuddering. There much water falls from dark
fountains, and the gloomy images of gods lack art
and stand, malformed, from the cut trunks.

Lucan invokes a sense of the sublime by emphasizing the antiquity of the grove, as well as its gloominess and manifold differences from the traditional depiction of a *locus amoenus*. These gloomy and forbidding features lend the grove an infernal aspect, playing with the landscape and the emotions it evokes in humans.²⁴ These features are part of the grove's own tradition, as proven by its long existence (*vetustas*, echoing *longo... ab aevo*, 3.399). This long history, combined with the imminent destruction brought by Caesar, puts the grove in a position parallel to that of Pompey and the Republic. All represent (or are) something old and venerable about to end at Caesar's hands. When Caesar orders his soldiers to start cutting down the grove's trees,

²⁴ Day (2013) 48-52; Fantham (1996) 145. Schiesaro (2006) describes a similar phenomenon in Seneca's writing.

the men balk at the order, fearing the *maiestas loci* (3.430).²⁵ Lucan uses *maiestas* only five times in course of the *Bellum Civile*, but only here does *maiestas* describe a place. Elsewhere it applies to Pompey and his general Afranius.²⁶ The fundamental similarity between place and person is the weight of history and tradition, something that Caesar will destroy. At every level – personal, political, environmental – the old world is coming to an end.

The grove's dark, enclosed, gloomy atmosphere continues to be its defining characteristic. Unlike the scene of a typical *locus amoenus*, the grove is not hospitable. Birds and animals avoid it (*volucres metuunt insistere ramis / et lustris recubare ferae*) and rather than having pleasant breezes rustling in the leaves of the trees, some phenomenon causes the trees to rustle with no external stimulus (*nec ventus in illas / incubuit silvas... non ulli frondem praebentibus aerae / arboribus suus horror inest*).²⁷ *Horror* is literal here, indicating the autonomous motion of the trees. From a literary perspective *horror* is Lucan's motive in writing the grove ecphrasis. All the elements traditionally associated with the *locus amoenus* are missing or transformed; they take on elements more appropriate to a *locus horridus* and become suggestive of a landscape more likely to be found in the underworld. Lake Avernus, one purported entrance to the Underworld, is similarly birdless (even linguistically, deriving its name

²⁵ Caesar uses *maiestas* once in each of his *commentarii* focused on Gaul and the civil wars, both times referring to Rome's people or sovereignty (*BG* 7.17.3, *BC* 3.106.4). Hunink (1992) 180 *ad* 430 compares Lucan's *verenda / maiestate loci* to Ovid's *maiestatemque verendam* (*Met.* 4.540) and Livy's *loci maiestate* (1.53.3). Ovid's story of Athamas and Ino shows *maiestas* in relation to divinity, focusing more on its power than positivity (cf. Anderson (1997) 472 on lines 539-42). The comparison to Livy holds more weight, as it comes from the description of the construction of the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitoline; unlike the Jovian temple, however, the *maiestas* of Lucan's grove is purely self-originating and self-sustaining.

²⁶ Elsewhere in the poem, *maiestas* applies to describe the bearing of Pompey (before Pharsalus, 7.378; after Pharsalus, 7.681; at his funeral, 8.760) and his general Afranius (after admitting defeat at Ilerda, 4.341).

²⁷ Hunink (1992) 175 *ad* 411 explores this unusual phenomenon briefly, comparing it to *B.C.* 6.469-71, where the sea is agitated without wind or, alternately, calm in the middle of a storm due to the power of the Thessalian witches.

from the Greek *aornos*).²⁸ Vergil's Avernus is a paradigm for Lucan's Massilia. During the construction of the *Portus Julius* in 37-36 BCE, Agrippa cut down an old forest thick with trees as part of his plan to connect Lake Avernus with other nearby bodies of water,²⁹ providing a precedent in the late Republic for deforestation near a place associated with the underworld. The dark waters of Lucan's grove (*plurima nigris / fontibus unda cadit*) find a similar infernal link with the *Aeneid*, echoing Vergil's description of the landscape of the underworld and, specifically, its dark waters surrounded by woods.³⁰

The presence of a cave gives the grove yet another chthonic element, drawing on the work of Vergil, among others. The cave and its infernal connections also foreshadow the witch Erichtho's cave and necromantic activities in book six.

iam fama ferebat
saepe cavas motu terrae mugire cavernas,
et procumbentis iterum consurgere taxos,
et non ardentis fulgere incendia silvae,
roboraque amplexos circum fluxisse dracones. (3.417-21)

Now rumor often held
that the hollow caverns resounded with the movements of the earth,
and that yew trees, having fallen, rose up again,
and the woods blazed with fire without burning,
and serpents twisted back and forth around the trees.

Lucan packs these verses densely with intertextual connections, firmly establishing his Massilian grove as a literary nexus of prophetic, infernal, and horror-laced allusions to his own poem, to

²⁸ Vergil, *Aeneid* 6.237-42. Linguistically, Avernus' name also means birdless (*aornos*). Cf. Leigh (2010) 220.

²⁹ Leigh (2010) 228; Rowland (1969) 204. Cf. Clark (1991) 64 on the geography of Cumae; cf. Vergil's *Georgics* 2.161-64 and Strabo 5.4.5.

³⁰ Vergil, *Aeneid* 6.131-32: *tenent media omnia silvae, / Cocytusque sinu labens circumvenit atro*. Hunink (1992) 175 *ad* 411 cites two Homeric models for the dark waters of the grove: κρήνη μελάνυδρος (*Il.* 9.14, 16.3, 21.257; *Od.* 20.158) and μέλαν ὕδωρ (*Od.* 4.359, 13.409). These models seem to be more linguistic than image-based, however. The connection to Vergil's underworld river Cocytus is a more direct model for the atmosphere of Lucan's *ecphrasis*. Cf. Seneca *Thyestes* 665-67. Panoussi (2003) 229 calls Lucan's grove "an infernal landscape, a hell on earth."

Seneca's *Thyestes*,³¹ and to the *Aeneid*. In the grove, the *cavernae* are hollow (*cavas*) and during earthquakes (*motu terrae*) this amplifies the grinding of the earth. Elsewhere in the *Bellum Civile*, the two most notable references to caves come in books five and six. In Greece, Apollo settles in the blind caverns at Delphi (*caecas... cavernas*, 5.87) to establish his oracle; in Thessaly, Erichtho's necromancy threatens to tear open the blind caverns of the underworld (*caecis... cavernis*, 6.642; *ruptis... cavernis*, 6.743). Lucan's language also echoes Seneca's description of a grove in the palace of Pelops in *Thyestes* (641-90).³² The grove at Massilia has spontaneous fire that burns without flame (*non ardentis fulgere incendia silvae*)³³ and hollow caverns that resound (*cavas... mugire cavernas*); likewise, Seneca's Pelopian grove exhibits spontaneous fire and resounds with a similar sound (*quin tecta solet / micare silva flamma, et excelsae trabes / ardent sine igne. saepe latratu nemus / trino remugit*, *Thy.* 673-76). This three-fold barking (*latratu... trino*) belongs to the infernal guard dog Cerberus and, when taken in context of the grove's spring (*fons stat sub umbra tristis et nigra piger / haeret palude*, *Thy.* 665-66), becomes a clear indication that what happens under the earth affects the condition of the grove itself. The mythological caverns of the underworld correspond to the subterranean watercourses that create the spring. Seneca's grove, therefore, has the same physical construction as Lucan's Massilian grove. Moreover, the Pelopian grove shares the characteristic darkness of Lucan's grove (*nox propria luco est et superstitio inferum / in luce media regnat*, *Thy.* 678-79), a darkness which evokes fear of the underworld. The parallels go even further: Lucan's grove is dark, gloomy, and numinous thanks in part to its age and lack of pruning (3.399-401); Seneca's also shows great age and lack of human maintenance (*vetustum... nemus*, 651; *nulla qua laetos*

³¹ Fantham (1996) 149.

³² Similar underworld language is applied to the landscape of Ariminum, *BC* 1.244-61.

³³ Pliny writes about several substances that burn in unusual ways, at times even with the addition of water (*NH* 2.235). He also addresses subterranean fire, both as seen near volcanoes, and in other less mountainous areas (*NH* 2.236-38). Cf. Connors (Forthcoming).

solet / praebere ramos arbor aut ferro coli, 652-53). Even the trees in the groves are the same: yew (*BC* 3.419; *Thy.* 654), cypress (*BC* 3.442; *Thy.* 654), and ilex (*BC* 3.440; *Thy.* 654). Further comparison with the literary model provided by Vergil's *Aeneid* illuminates Lucan's greater motive: the continued proliferation of and literalization³⁴ in the landscape of the Stoic end-of-the-world image established in the first simile of the poem (1.72-80). Lucan's *cavae cavernae* are notable for the sound they make: they bellow like a bull. This is the only instance of this sound effect or of the word *mugire* in the *Bellum Civile*. Seneca's Pelopian grove produces a similar sound (*Thy.* 676), but a key model for Lucan is the varied use of *mugire* in the *Aeneid*. Vergil uses *mugire* in the context of Apollo's tripod (*Aen.* 3.92) and of the Sibyl's prophecy (*Aen.* 6.256); Dido uses the word to describe some of the powers of witches (*Aen.* 4.490). Laocoön, the Trojan priest of Neptune, also bellows like a bull as he is devoured by snakes while trying to convince the Trojans to destroy the wooden horse (*Aen.* 2.223). Moreover, the horse itself has a hollow interior described as *cavae... cavernae* (2.53) and, like the trees in the Massilian grove, is defended by *dracones* (*BC* 3.421, *Aen.* 2.225). Lucan draws inspiration from his predecessors and contemporaries and builds connections within his own work to illustrate the programmatic images of his poem. The grove is connected poetically to Pompey, the ideal of the old Republic, the city of Troy and, simultaneously, the Romans' adopted foundation myth, all of which fall into ruin.

Against the tableau of this grove Caesar makes his move against Massilia. When he needs material resources to build his siege works, Caesar turns to the obvious source: the nearby forest, including the ancient, untouched trees in the grove. When Caesar's soldiers hesitate to cut

³⁴ Bramble (1974) 1 introduces a study of Persius' first satire with the pattern of "concrete embodiment" of metaphor, especially as relates to philosophical enlightenment.

down the trees, fearing the vengeance of the grove's presiding deities, Caesar takes an axe to the trees himself and becomes part of a larger literary tradition of deforestation and desecration.

implicitas magno Caesar torpore cohortes
ut vidit, primus raptam librare bipennem
ausus et aeriam ferro proscindere quercum
effatur merso violata in robora ferro
'iam nequis vestrum dubitet subvertere silvam
credite me fecisse nefas.' (3.432-37)

When Caesar saw his cohorts confounded by a great numbness, he was first who dared to seize and swing an axe and to cleave the lofty oak with iron, and with iron buried in the violated trunk he spoke: "Now none of you should hesitate to destroy the grove. Leave it to me to commit the worst transgression."

The clear literary model here is Erysichthon, who violated the grove of Ceres by cutting it down, a slight to the gods.³⁵ Like Erysichthon's slaves, Caesar's soldiers hesitate to destroy the grove and Caesar, like Erysichthon himself, takes up the axe. In the Ovidian account of the story, Erysichthon and his woodsmen fell a sacred oak (*ingens... quercus*, *Met.* 8.743); Caesar also moves first against an oak (*aeriam... quercum*), a tree associated in the *Bellum Civile* with Pompey (*quercus sublimis*, 1.136). Caesar's actions take on a different tone, however, since the gods to whom the Massilian grove is sacred are not members of a Greco-Roman pantheon and are themselves mysterious and terrifying. Since the *numina* of the grove are not the known force of Ceres, the punishment for transgressing against them is, by implication, different than Erysichthon's already horrifying punishment, insatiable hunger and eventual autocannibalism. As the Massilia episode unfolds, Caesar suffers no recourse, a result with doubled implications. In light of the poetic tradition of which Erysichthon is a part, Caesar, the character in Lucan's

³⁵ Cf. Ovid, *Met.* 8.738-884. Leigh (2010) 212 cites Callimachus' *Hymn to Demeter* as a major influence on Ovid's Erysichthon; on this point see also Phillips (1968) 297-98, Thomas (1988b) 264. Ahl (1976) 156-57 n. 18 uses the felling of the grove as proof that Lucan was familiar with the religious significance of sacred trees. Masters (1992) 25 discusses the metapoetic ramifications of the destruction of the Massilian grove in relation to the *Met.* as a desecration "of Ovid's grove in general."

epic comparable to a force of nature, appears here greater and more powerful than the *numina* of the grove. This interpretation does not address the philosophical structure of Lucan's poetic world, however, which, built on Stoic principles, has no gods. If the *numina* of the grove are pure superstition, Caesar's actions could have no divine punishment. If the grove's gods are identifiable with a certain divine nature,³⁶ Caesar attacks them directly and comes out victorious.

In keeping with the infernal aspects of the grove, Lucan's description of its destruction can also be linked to Aeneas' experience in the forest near Cumae as he built a funeral pyre for Misenus and searched for the golden bough.³⁷ Caesar, like Aeneas before him, is *primus* as he moves to cut down the trees. Unlike his model, though, he takes action himself instead of working in a more supervisory capacity. Caesar's more active role combines Erysichthon's impious action with Aeneas' *imperium*. Caesar knows his actions are impious (*credite me fecisse nefas*),³⁸ but sees the grove and the larger landscape as a means to build tools of war and achieve victory.

The specific words that describe Caesar's first strike against the grove are themselves notable. Among the various types of trees in the grove, Caesar fells an oak first (*ausus et aeriam ferro proscindere quercum*). *Proscindere* is an unusual word in this context, as it is more commonly used of ploughing a field, "cutting" through the surface of the water, or making a cut in the surface of something.³⁹ Caesar's axe-stroke, however, goes deeper than the bark of the tree (*merso violata in robora ferro*), making the more basic form of the verb, *scindere*, more

³⁶ Cf. Seneca, *NQ* 2.45.1-2.

³⁷ Vergil, *Aen.* 6.183 (*Aeneas... primus*). Cf. Lucretius 1.66-67: *primum Graius nomo mortalis tollere contra / est oculos ausus primusque obsistere contra*. Day (2013) 140 and Leigh (2010) 174 see similarity between the felling of the Massilian grove and the image of Epicurus as a bringer of light/reason.

³⁸ Cf. *BC* 7.315, *non credit fecisse nefas*, spoken by Caesar to his soldiers before the battle of Pharsalus.

³⁹ *OLD proscindere* 1-1b. Cf. Statius, *Theb.* 3.332; Apuleius, *Apol.* 40.

appropriate to the violent cutting action and the context.⁴⁰ Looking back to the literary model of felled trees in *Aeneid* 6, *scinditur* is Vergil’s choice.⁴¹ The tree Caesar targets first is the “Pompeian” oak.⁴² Though the other trees in the grove are felled by Caesar’s soldiers, the oak tree, like Pompey, is Caesar’s target.⁴³ The destruction of the grove is a move against the established landscape, and it is another way to represent the destructive power of civil conflict and the respective position of each faction. This scene of deforestation has been examined from a variety of angles,⁴⁴ more specifically, the grove and the oak are a literalization of previous metaphor.⁴⁵ Because Caesar is the lightning to Pompey’s oak tree and because Caesar manages to do what real lightning cannot – i.e., destroy the grove (3.408-10) – Caesar is more powerful and sublime than his metaphorical correlative in nature.⁴⁶

Following this first strike against the oak tree (*aeriam... quercum*), the other trees in the grove are enumerated as they are cut down. The actual destruction of the grove also echoes earlier poetic descriptions of groves.

procumbunt orni, nodosa inpellitur ilex,
 silvaque Dodones et fluctibus aptior alnus
 et non plebeios luctus testata cupressus
 tum primum posuere comas et fronde carentes
 admisere diem, propulsaque robore denso
 sustinuit se silva cadens. (3.440-45)

⁴⁰ OLD *scindere* 1b.

⁴¹ Vergil, *Aen.* 6.181-82: *fraxineaeque trabes cuneis et fissile robur / scinditur.*

⁴² Cf. 1.136-43 (Pompey) and 1.151-57 (Caesar). See also Rosner-Siegel (2010).

⁴³ Hunink (1992) 180 *ad* 434 explains the oak’s significance in epic as trees “generally regarded in a positive way as venerable because of [their] age and height.”

⁴⁴ Leigh (2010) 223 equates the deforestation of the grove with the destruction of the *locus horridus*; Panoussi (2003) 227 states the positive (the dark and scary grove is gone!) and negative (the sacred grove has been destroyed) aspects of deforestation; Saylor (2003) 382 examines patterns of opening and closing in the entire Massilia episode, finding the grove acting as a link between macrocosm and microcosm; Masters (1992) 27 identifies the grove’s deforestation as a metaphor for “the plundering of poetic material.”

⁴⁵ Masters (1992) 27; Rowland (1969) 206-7.

⁴⁶ Day (2013) 138; Ahl (1976) 199. For Caesar as a force of nature: Marti (1945) 363; Ahl (1976) 198; Johnson (1987) 75; Masters (1992) 39-40; Bartsch (1997) 62.

Ash trees crash down, the knotty ilex is felled,
and the wood of Dodona and the alder, more fit for the waves,
and the cypress, witness to no plebeian grief,
then sent down their hair for the first time and lacking leaves
let in the day, and the grove, falling, held itself up,
supported by the dense trunks.

Lucan catalogues the trees as they fall, preserving and focusing the moment of destruction and evoking previous epic tree moments.⁴⁷ Earlier literary lists of living, standing trees⁴⁸ contrast with scenes of tree cutting.⁴⁹ Unlike his predecessors, Lucan's trees attain their knowable status at the moment they are destroyed as if they are epic heroes, named as they die in battle.⁵⁰ To extend the metaphor, this is an *aristeia*, where Caesar takes down a retinue of trees, individual parts of the landscape that fall before him, rather than a series of human opponents.⁵¹ Moreover, the trees cut from the grove are not used to make pyres, unlike the trees felled in *Iliad* 23 or *Aeneid* 6 and 11, but are intended for "strategic aims," the siege works constructed outside Massilia.⁵² The final scene of falling and fallen trees depends on Lucan's verb of choice for portraying the grove's destruction: *procumbere*.⁵³ Because the motive for the grove's destruction and destruction – the construction of war machines – is laid out as an introduction to the ecphrasis (*tunc omnia late/procumbunt nemora*, 394-95),⁵⁴ the repeated use of *procumbere*

⁴⁷ Hunink (1992) 182 (on line 440).

⁴⁸ *Culex* 135-44; Ovid, *Met.* 10.90-105; Seneca, *Oedipus* 532-44, *Hercules Oetatus* 1618-41.

⁴⁹ Homer, *Iliad* 23.114-22; Ennius, *Annales* 175-79; Vergil, *Aeneid* 6.179-82, 11.135-38; Lucan, *BC* 1.306, 4.137-40, 9.429. Masters (1992) 26 examines Lucan in light of the funerary connotations of Vergil and Homer, who often use cut trees for funeral pyres; the rampart made from this wood does eventually burn. Thomas (1988b) 263 finds evidence of the dangers of cutting trees in *CIL* 1².366, an inscription from Spoleto forbidding the violation of a sacred grove that specifically mentions cutting down trees.

⁵⁰ Rood (2008) 20 explores the comparison of warriors to plants and flowers in Homeric epic; cf. mortals as leaves on a tree (*Iliad* 21.463-66). Cf. Catullus 11.21-24; Vergil, *Aen.* 9.433-37.

⁵¹ On *aristeia* and the identification of the hero in the *BC*, see Gorman (2001).

⁵² Hunink (1992) 180 *ad* 440.

⁵³ 3.395 (*procumbunt nemora*), 3.419 (*procumbentis... taxos*), 3.426 (*silvam procumbere*). Cf. Caesar, *BG* 6.43.3; Vergil, *Georgics* 1.111; Statius, *Achilleid* 2.61. Panoussi (2003) 224 compares *Aeneid* 6.180-82.

⁵⁴ *BC* 3.394-98.

reinforces this pseudo-industrial impulse even in the midst of the stark natural context of the grove.⁵⁵

The ephrasis of the grove and its destruction at Caesar's hands ends with the reaction of the local Gallic people, who fear the grove and hope that Caesar's involvement in its destruction will bring down divine vengeance on him. The immediate effect of the grove's destruction and of the siege of Massilia, however, is the environmental and agricultural devastation of the region.

utque satis caesi nemoris, quaesita per agros
plaustra ferunt, curvoque soli cessantis aratro
agricolae raptis annum flevere iuvenis. (3.450-52)

When enough of the grove had been cut, wagons procured
from the fields carried it, and farmers, with oxen stolen,
wept for the harvest of their soil left fallow by the curved plough.

The agricultural language of these lines, combined with the general rarity of agricultural language in the *Bellum Civile*, ties them to Lucan's Italy as it appears in the first book of the poem. Both in Italy and near Massilia, Caesar invades and introduces some measure of civil conflict that coincides with the agricultural and natural devastation of the land. This is the first instance of *aratrum* in the poem, though it alludes to the Italian fields of the proem which were *horrida... dumis multoque inarata per annos* (1.28). Italy's farmers were missing (*desuntque manus poscentibus arvis*, 1.29),⁵⁶ leaving the land unworked and thus agriculturally unproductive. Massilia on the other hand is interrupted. The redirection of resources like oxen (*raptis... iuvenis*) and wagons (*plaustra*)⁵⁷ normally used in agriculture causes the loss of the harvest and leads to a similar state of agricultural limbo. In both cases, human impact on the

⁵⁵ Saylor (2003) 382.

⁵⁶ Since the farmers were missing in Italy, it makes sense that Lucan would not name them *agricolae*. The only two uses of this noun in the *BC* occur in relation to Massilia at 3.452 and during the revelation of portents to Rome at 1.583 (*agricolae fracto Marium fugere sepulchro*).

⁵⁷ Cf. Caesar, *BC* 2.1.4; Vergil, *Aeneid* 11.138 (also in the context of hauling timber).

environment comes from either agriculture or war and, over the course of time, the marks left on the landscape from each kind of human action can be observed by and can affect the other.

The *Georgics* provide a literary model for the place of farmers and agriculture in society, especially in the context of civil war, against which Lucan's new interpretation can be read.⁵⁸ The Vergilian farmer leads an ideal life, enjoys the "beneficence of nature," and can be connected to the Saturnian golden age.⁵⁹ Lucanian farmers, especially those in Italy or near Massilia, cannot work the fields; moreover, as is the case in the Italian countryside, the fields themselves are overgrown through neglect. In short, Lucan's farmers cannot fulfill the duties of their occupation because of the disruptive force of war, causing the human impact on the landscape to come from violence rather than agriculture. Hunink, in his commentary on book three, addresses the universal impact of Caesar's wartime strategy, something that "disrupts not only the legal and sacral order (cf. 112-68 and 339-449) but also the social and economic order, that is, all foundations of human society."⁶⁰ War leaves no tools for farming and, in more severe cases, no farmers. Land is not used to provide for society or to sustain it, but rather as the scene of battle and the source of the material resources for constructing war machines and earthworks.⁶¹ The destruction of the grove provides Caesar and his allies with the material resources necessary to besiege Massilia. The siege itself does not receive as much attention in the text as the subsequent naval battle between the Massilians and the Caesarians, led by Brutus, but does consistently demonstrate a combined concern with the natural setting of the siege and its metaphysical (Stoic) implications.

⁵⁸ Vergil, *Georgics* 1.493-97, 2.513-15. For further discussion of *G.* 1.493-97, see the end of Chapter 3.

⁵⁹ Thomas (188a) 258 *ad* 513-40.

⁶⁰ Hunink (1992) 186 *ad* 451.

⁶¹ Cf. The siege of Brundisium and Caesar's attempt to block the harbor (2.650-736). See also my discussion of *BC* 7.847-72 in Chapter 3.

The ecphrasis is generally regarded as an interpolation into the larger battle narrative.⁶² Though Lucan precedes and follows the grove's ecphrasis with similar descriptions of the felling of trees and their transformation into war machines, this is not precisely an example of ring composition as the sacred grove remains distinct from the normal trees near Massilia.⁶³ What does emerge from these repetitions of destruction is what could potentially be described as a primitive military-industrial complex. The siege works themselves consist of timber cut from the sacred grove.⁶⁴ As they did with the siege works in the bay at Brundisium in book two, Caesar's forces manufacture the *agger* from nature and Lucan describes the rampart and towers as if they are part of the landscape.

stellatis axibus agger
erigitur geminasque aequantis moenia turris
accipit; hae nullo fixerunt robore terram
sed per iter longum causa repserunt latenti.
cum tantum nutaret onus, telluris inanis
concussisse sinus quaerentem erumpere ventum
credidit et muros mirata est stare iuventus. (3.455-61)

With the planks arranged lattice-wise the fortification is built and the receives twin towers equal in height to the walls; these are not attached to the ground by wood but they creep along a long path with a hidden mechanism. When such a weight sways, the youths believed it to be wind seeking to burst out that shook the hollow chambers of the earth and they marveled that the walls stayed standing.

Lucan transitions from the language of nature to the language of warfare (*agger, moenia, turris, causa, muros*). The grove has become the siege works and has been completely transformed; but

⁶² Masters (1992) 23; Leigh (2010) 207; Phillips (1968) 296; Johnson (1987) 110.

⁶³ Cf. 3.394-98.

⁶⁴ BC 3.419: *et procumbentis iterum consurgere taxos*. Masters (1992) 28 sees the grove and *agger* as models for the civil war in the sense that "what falls rises again." Long (1985) 13 explains the place of similar pattern of recurrence in the Stoic world cycles, where *ekpyrosis* marks both beginning and end of each cycle.

it continues to be described in terms consistent with natural phenomena.⁶⁵ Rollers hidden within the structure (*causa repsere latenti*) control the towers' movement, but the motions are reminiscent of an earthquake, causing the tower to sway back and forth (*telluris inanis / concussisse sinus*). The motion is not a natural phenomenon, but part of the machine's purpose. Lucan chooses to compare it (if only in the minds of his characters) to an earthquake, something only theoretically understood in the ancient world.⁶⁶ Seneca summarizes a variety of ancient earthquake theories *Naturales Quaestiones* 6: Archelaus thought earthquakes came from hollow caverns filled with air; Aristotle and Theophrastus added evaporation of moist air and the presence of subterranean obstacles; Strato (who Seneca calls *rerum naturae inquisitor*, 6.13.2) credits the conflict between hot and cold air as well as the presence of caverns with earthquakes; medical or biological theories compare the movement of water and air in the earth to blood and air in the body; Posidonius (and his pupil Asclepiodotus) discuss different kinds of earthquakes (*successiones* and *inclinationes*) and the force of air (*spiritus*).⁶⁷ Seneca himself cites air as the cause of earthquakes, noting that in a vacant space with no obstacles, air is harmless, but when it must struggle to move or escape a place, it becomes violent. Air (*spiritus*) is pervasive and powerful:

ita eius non potest vis tanta cohiberi nec ventum tenet ulla compages. solvit enim quodcumque vinculum et onus omne fert secum infususque per minima laxamentum sibi parat... (6.18.3)

⁶⁵ Rood (2008). The use of nature similes (including plants, weather, etc.) is not uncommon in epic and in early poetry was a way for the potentially less familiar images of large-scale warfare to be accessible to the average farmer. Cf. Lonsdale (1990) provides a comprehensive study of animal and hunting similes in the *Iliad*.

⁶⁶ Wind escaping from or moving through open spaces in the ground was credited as the source of earthquakes, as in Seneca, *Nat.* 6.12-25; Pliny, *NH* 2.192; cf. Lucretius 6.557-60. Servius quotes Lucan's *erumpere ventum* in relation to earthquakes in Vergil's work as well: *Georgics* 2.479, *Aeneid* 3.73 (Aeolus). See also Connors and Clendenon (In Progress) for earthquakes and other natural phenomena as "manifestations of the earth's hollowness," and for the connection between earthquakes and elemental movement (of air/wind and of water/rivers) beneath the surface of the earth.

⁶⁷ Seneca, *NQ* 6.12-21.

Thus such a great force of air cannot be contained, nor does any material structure hold the wind. For it loosens every bond and bears every weight with itself, and, pouring through the smallest places, makes a wide space for itself...

The earthquake, in Senecan terms, affects the physical world at its most basic levels; the language here is identical to that in Lucan's first simile (*compages, solvere*). Air can also move every weight (*onus*), a term also used for the swaying of the siege towers (*cum tantum nutaret onus*, 3.459). When Lucan associates earthquakes with the siege works, then, he is creating parallels between the macrocosm (the shaking earth) and the microcosm (the swaying towers). Not only does this brief earthquake interlude hearken back to the unexplained phenomena in the grove (*saepe cavas motu terrae mugire cavernae*, 3.418), but it associates the power and scope of man-made structures with nature itself.

Comparisons to the natural world continue during the siege, with a new take on the traditional epic weather simile.

at saxum quotiens ingenti verberis actu
excutitur, qualis rupes quam vertice montis
abscidit impulsu ventorum adiuta vetustas,
frangit cuncta ruens, nec tantum corpora pressa
exanimat, totos cum sanguine dissipat artus. (3.469-73)

And as often as a stone is hurled by the impulse of a strong cord, like a rock that age, assisted by the force of the winds, breaks off from the top of a mountain, rushing down, breaks everything, and not only kills the bodies it crushes, but destroys every limb along with the blood.

Like many of Lucan's borrowings from earlier epic, the model is altered. Whereas in Homer the comparison to weather or nature is meant to illustrate the strength of a human character,⁶⁸ Lucan's simile simply compares a stone to a larger stone. He does not remove the human element entirely, showing how thoroughly the violence of nature can annihilate a body, but

⁶⁸ Cf. Homer, *Iliad* 13.137-42; Vergil, *Aeneid* 12.685-89.

focuses on the source of destructive power (the stone, with a human victim). This depiction of grotesque human suffering in the face of natural power follows in close succession to the devastation of the grove at the hands of human beings. Moreover, the stone, though used as a weapon, has no specific origin. It is launched by soldiers at other soldiers, but because the stone is the subject of a passive verb (*saxum... excutitur*) and no outside agency is provided for its movement, and because the victims of the stone's force are also not identified, power and agency remain with the stone and with nature itself, despite the ongoing battle between Caesarians and Massilians.

The siege concludes with the destruction of the towers and walls constructed around the city in a conflagration. Given the Stoic philosophical language and imagery prevalent in the *Bellum Civile*, the conflagration is yet another representation of the programmatic idea of a fiery global apocalypse. The conflagration simultaneously plays with the pattern of Caesarian world-building or manufactured landscape.

nunc aries suspenso fortior ictu
 incussus densi conpagem solvere muri
 temptat et inpositis unum subducere saxis.
 sed super et flammis et magnae fragmine molis
 et sudibus crebris et adusti roboris ictu
 percussae cedunt crates, frustra que labore
 exhausto fessus repetit tentoria miles. (3.490-96)

Now the ram, stronger with suspended blows,
 having struck, attempts to destroy the structure of the
 thick wall and to remove one stone from the stones set on it.
 But from above the joints, under fire, give way to flames and
 pieces broken from the great mass and numerous stakes and
 blows from blazing wood, and the soldiers, wearied in vain
 by exhausting work, go back to their tents.

The grove and the siege share the same Stoic terminology and imagery, and this later provides a neat segue into the subsequent naval battle. Lucan uses *conpages* twice: to describe the walls of

Massilia (*conpagem solvere*)⁶⁹ and, previously, the siege machinery itself (*structa... conpage*, 3.397). Both uses of *conpages* must be understood and interpreted in terms of Lucan's earlier use of the word in the simile comparing the fall of the Roman republic to the end of the universe and the dissolution of its structure (*conpage soluta*, 1.72). After *ekpyrosis*, however, comes a new beginning. The grove falls, but becomes the siege works; the *agger* burns and ends the land battle, but the combatants move to the sea.⁷⁰ By phrasing his description in the same terms as Stoic theories of cosmic cohesion and dissolution,⁷¹ Lucan unites the separate aspects of the Massilian episode (grove, siege, naval battle) and in doing so, aligns them with the programmatic first simile of the *Bellum Civile*. The parallel use of *moles* to the same effect strengthens the connection between grove, siege works, and naval battle. It first applies to the siege works about to be built from the grove (3.396), also labels part of the Massilian rampart (3.493), and is later transferred to the ships themselves when the battle moves to the sea (3.536).⁷² Masters analyzes the dense gigantomachic imagery in the Massilia episode, finding clear connections between Lucan's characters and the Olympians and Gigantes of the myth. The pervasive message of cosmic disorder in the *Bellum Civile* even overwhelms the traditional roles of the gigantomachy,

⁶⁹ The walls of Massilia are under attack and the Romans seem to be attempting to disassemble them piece by piece (*incussus densi conpagem solvere muri / temptat*). Beyond using the buzzwords for Stoic *ekpyrosis*, Lucan uses this image to recall the grove, also dismantled by the Roman soldiers. Hunink (1992) 195 *ad* 491 comments that *densi* is an "unusual epithet for a wall," with "no parallel." While walls may not often be by *densa* in Roman literature, the grove was (*robore denso*, 3.444). Perhaps this epithet is transferred from the grove to the wall, occurring just as the Romans attempt to destroy each object.

⁷⁰ Masters (1992) 20-23 summarizes and compares the accounts of the land and sea battles at Massilia as told by Caesar and Lucan. Caesar's "equally distorted" account, backed up by other sources (Cassius Dio 41.19, 41.25; Florus 2.13.23; Appian *BCiv* 2.47; Plutarch *Caes.* 16) seems to be more factual, while Lucan condenses the events of the historical narrative to suit his poetic plan. In Caesar, two sets of siege works are built, two land battles occur, and two sea battles are fought; Lucan writes one of each, simplifying events into the more linear progression from grove to siege on land to naval battle.

⁷¹ Lapidge (2010) for a length examination of Stoic vocabulary in Latin. See also: Lapidge (1980) 818 succinctly summarizes Stoic cosmology and the origin and use of the binding metaphor.

⁷² Hunink (1992) 195 *ad* 493 notes that the Massilians behave "very much like the crews of the ships in 670-4" as they attempt to drive off the Romans. Cf. The material used by Caesar in his attempt to block the harbor at Brundisium (boulders, etc.) is also a *moles* (2.661, 669).

itself an archetypal story of forces struggling at the cosmic level for order and disorder: Caesar is both Jovian in his power and association with lightning (3.315-20) and is the architect behind the *aggeres* topped with towers which have “obvious connotations of piling Pelion on Ossa to reach the heights of Olympus.”⁷³ Close examination of the gigantomachic metaphor only increases its fallibility, since the role of the Olympians is simultaneously filled by both Caesar and by the Massilians, who must fend off the gigantic Caesarian siege machinery. Civil conflict is written into the text, the subtext, and even the structure of Lucan’s literary devices themselves.

The introduction of fire to the siege predicts the land battle’s end and serves as another microcosmic representation of the Stoic world-ending conflagration. Ultimately, the Roman siege is unsuccessful and their machinery is consumed by fire. The various elements of the Massilian montage continue to interact before the passage concludes with a word programmatic in the Massilian episode: *agger*.

summa fuit Graiis, starent ut moenia, voti:
 ultro acies inferre parant, armisque coruscas
 nocturni texere faces, audaxque iuventus
 erupit. non hasta viris, non letifer arcus,
 telum flamma fuit, rapiensque incendia ventus
 per Romana tulit celeri munimina cursu.
 nec, quamvis viridi luctetur robore, lentas
 ignis agit vires, taeda sed raptus ab omni
 consequitur nigri spatiosa volumina fumi,
 nec solum silvas sed saxa ingentia solvit,
 et crudae putri fluxerunt pulvere cautes.
 procubuit maiorque iacens apparuit agger. (3.497-508)

For the Greeks the highest hope of prayer was for their walls to stand:
 they even prepare battle lines to attack, and by night they cover
 flashing torches with their arms, and bold youth rush forth.
 These men had no spears nor death-bearing bows,
 flame was their weapon, and the wind, seizing the blaze,
 bore it through the Roman siege works in a swift course.
 Although it struggles with green wood, the fire does not

⁷³ Masters (1992) 39-41. See also Chapter 3, section 1 on the use of “Jupiter” in the context of Stoic physics; cf. Seneca, *NQ* 2.45.1-2.

slowly put forth its strength, but taken from every torch
it follows ample billows of black smoke,
it devours not only wood but huge stones,
and the rough boulders disintegrated into crumbling dust.
The earth works fell into ruin and appeared larger as they lay there.

The Roman soldiers had been affected by fire (among other things) when attempting to take down the walls of Massilia with their battering ram (3.490-96).⁷⁴ The Massilians' counterattack, sending men out with torches (*coruscas... faces, taeda... ab omni*), makes the danger of a conflagration a reality for the Romans. Though fairly straightforward from a military standpoint,⁷⁵ literarily the fire is far more complex. Fire can be paradoxical, as it is both the element that destroys the siege works and representative of Caesar, embodying the self-slaughter of the state in civil war.⁷⁶ It also focuses the reader's eye on the color green (*viridi... robore*), a rarity in such a bloody poem, but a reminder of the recently destroyed grove. Above all, the Roman siege works are dissolved in conflagration (*consequitur*⁷⁷... *solvit*), with the programmatic imagery of *ekpyrosis*. Moreover, the ruined siege works correspond to a larger destruction of nature and its resources (*nec solum silvas sed saxa ingentia solvit / et crudae putri fluxerunt pulvere cautes*). Hunink emphasizes the usual context of *silvas*, *saxa*, and *cautes* in nature, although they are part of the *agger*.⁷⁸ Even as the *agger* falls, the natural origins of its components are prominent. Human industry may have given the grove and the land a new order, but in the conflagration, it burns just the same.

⁷⁴ Masters (1992) 39-41 compares the projectiles thrown from the walls to the weapons used by the Olympians against the Giants.

⁷⁵ Hunink (1992) 196 *ad* 498 compares Caesar's account at *BC* 2.12-16. Caesar records fighting during the day, over the course of multiple days, rather than a single nocturnal sortie.

⁷⁶ Masters (1992) 40-41: "From this mass of undirected animosity we can deduce at least one thing: the Romans are destroying themselves: both sides are represented on both sides."

⁷⁷ Hunink (1992) 197 *ad* 505 notes that *consequitur* portrays fire "as an active, dynamic force."

⁷⁸ Hunink (1992) 198 *ad* 506. Masters (1992) 35.

The final lines of the siege episode include three specific instances of intertext with earlier parts of the Massilia narrative that are worthy of attention. The first concerns the stability of walls, Roman and Massilian, and the density of similar vocabulary warrants a side-by-side comparison.

<p>telluris inanis concussisse sinus quaerentem erumpere ventum credidit et muros mirata est stare iuventus. (3.459-61)</p>	<p>summa fuit Grais, starent ut moenia, voti: ... audaxque iuventus erupit. (3.497, 499-500)</p>
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...the youths believed that the wind that sought to burst out shook the hollow chambers of the earth and they marveled that the walls stayed standing.

For the Greeks the highest hope was for their walls to stand. ...and bold youth rushed forth.

The structure of the Roman siege towers and the mechanism that allows for their movement causes the Roman youth to marvel that their walls remain standing. The movement of the towers is comparable to an earthquake, explained as air erupting through hollows in the earth. The Greek Massilians, besieged by these towers, ensure that their own walls remain standing by sending out their youth. The second noteworthy intertext is also military, centering on the word *agger*, which occurs three times in this episode: to show what will become of the grove (3.398), as part of the construction of the siege works (3.455), and as the final word in the description of the siege works' destruction immediately preceding the naval battle (3.508). By repeating *agger* throughout this episode, Lucan builds up the image and importance of the structure⁷⁹ and maintains a focus on the military context of his narrative. The *agger* is at its most impressive after being destroyed (*maiorque iacens apparuit agger*), a striking piece of commentary on construction and destruction that directs attention to other ruins in the poem.⁸⁰ The verb

⁷⁹ For an analysis of the repeated and consistent representation of weight, size, and density in the Massilia episode, see Masters (1992) 25.

⁸⁰ Cf. *BC* 9.961-79 for the ruins of Troy, which, by comparison, appear larger only in history and memory. In reality they are so diminished that Caesar cannot identify them without help from a local.

procumbere is repeated throughout the felling of the grove and the siege of Massilia. Meaning “fall to ruin,” *procumbere* pervades the ecphrasis of the grove and emphasizes the scope of destruction when it is cut down (3.395, 419, 426, 440). It is fitting, then, that it also marks the end of the siege, signifying the ruination of both the *agger* (constructed from trees cut in the already ruined grove) and the narrative of the siege (*procubuit*, 3.508).

Caesar’s siege of Brundisium and the unsuccessful blockade of the harbor continue to be useful comparanda for the siege and subsequent sea battle at Massilia.⁸¹ Caesar and his soldiers were (in a sense) world building at Brundisium when they attempt to fill in and close off the harbor (2.657-79). The resulting confusion and conflation of land and water is a trope that will appear again at Massilia as well as in later episodes of the *Bellum Civile*. Though the Massilians and the Caesarians take to the sea by ship, their fleet is portrayed as land-like, though man-made. The deliberate confusion between land and water and the border between them is a central feature of the sea battle.

spes victis telluris abit, placuitque profundo
 fortunam temptare maris. non robore picto
 ornatas decuit fulgens tutela carinas,
 sed rudis et qualis procumbit montibus arbor
 conseritur, stabilis navalibus area bellis.
 et iam turrigeram Bruti comitata carinam
 venerat in fluctus Rhodani cum gurgite classis
 Stoechados arva tenens. (3.509-16)

Hope of a land-victory left the conquered, and it seemed good
 to try their fortune on the sea. A flashing figurehead was not proper
 for their ships, not even decorated with painted wood,
 but each was bound together from rough wood, just like a tree
 having fallen in the mountains, a stable place for a naval battle.
 And now the fleet, accompanying Brutus’ turreted ship,
 came to the whirling course of the Rhone,
 holding the fields of Stoechas.

⁸¹ Masters (1992) 11 cites Lucan as the earliest extant account of a full-length sea battle in epic poetry, though fragmentary texts (e.g., Naevius’ *Punica* or Ennius’ *Annales*) may have provided inspiration. Cf. Panoussi (2003) 231-32, who lists the battle of Actium (*Aeneid* 8) as the source for other epic sea battles.

Robore,⁸² *procumbit*,⁸³ *arbor*,⁸⁴ and *turrigeram*⁸⁵ recall the felling of the grove and the siege works built from it. A larger pattern is present however, in the repeated presentation of substitute land in contrast with the natural landscape.⁸⁶ In the case of the naval battle, “waterscape” may be a more accurate term, but the presence and construction of the ships provides something like land. In fact, Brutus’ huge ship is comparable to a floating mountain. This, combined with its identification as *libernae* (3.534), alludes to the ships at Actium in the *Aeneid* moving like floating islands.⁸⁷ The repetition of this image at Massilia is an attempt on Lucan’s part to “literalize Vergil’s exaggerated imagery.”⁸⁸ Much as the trees of the grove were made into the *agger*, more trees become the war ships (*rudis et qualis procumbit montibus arbor conseritur*, 3.512-13) which are portrayed as stable and spacious like the ground (*stabilis navalibus area bellis*).⁸⁹ The repetition of *stabilis* and its cognate verb *stare* solidify this image. Ships at anchor stand still despite the moving waters around them (*stabat in undis*, 519; *movit ab omni / ... statione*, 524-25).⁹⁰ Even when in the midst of battle, the ships provide a fighting ground comparable to dry land:

at Romana ratis stabilem praebere carinam
certior et terrae similem bellantibus usum. (3.556-57)

But the steadier Roman ship offered a stable keel
and a use similar to land for fighting.

⁸² *Robur*: 3.414, 421, 430, 435, 444 (grove); 3.395, 457, 494, 503 (siege works). Masters (1992) 41.

⁸³ *Procumbere*: 3.419, 426, 440 (grove); 3.395, 508 (siege works).

⁸⁴ *Arbor*: 3.405, 411 (grove).

⁸⁵ Cf. *turris*: 3.398, 456 (siege works); *turrigerus*: 1.188 (*imago Romae*’s crown at the Rubicon), and 4.226 (also of ships, during Ilerda episode).

⁸⁶ Masters (1992) 36 connects the fleet (*surgens extracti*, 3.530) and Brutus’ ship (*molem*, 3.536) to the earthworks.

⁸⁷ Vergil, *Aen.* 8.691-93. Masters (1992) 39 ties the image of clashing landforms (at sea), not only to Vergil’s mountainous ships at Actium, but to gigantomachy and to the Symplegades. Cf. *BC* 2.714-19.

⁸⁸ Masters (1992) 37.

⁸⁹ For *area* in this context, *OLD* 7. The majority of definitions for *area* are land-based, if only implicitly; 7, “a site, position,” is more generalized.

⁹⁰ Bartsch (1997) 59 has an analysis of the Greek word and principle, *stasis*.

The ships are not only built well enough to be stable in the water, but are comparable to the ground. This is especially striking in comparison to the land-based Roman fortifications and siege works that Lucan described as noticeably and terrifyingly unsteady (cf. 3.455-61).

The connection and confusion between land and water during the sea battle relies on more than the repetition of *stare* and *stabilis* to describe the ships. The geographical placement of the fleet near the Stoechades (*Stoechados arva tenens*) connects Lucan's version of the event to Caesar's account, which includes two naval battles.⁹¹ The single, condensed battle in the *Bellum Civile* allows the reader's attention to focus on the changeable border between land and sea. Hunink explores Lucan's use of *arva tenens* in the context of ships rather than of an army on land, relating it to his earlier toposthetic approach to the geography of Sicily and its violently changeable coastline.⁹² The conflict between land and sea is "exemplary of the civil war" and demonstrates the power of nature. The elemental power of the water in its inundation and periodic overtaking of the land is in line with the cataclysmic imagery so pervasive in the rest of the poem.⁹³

Language typical of Stoic physical and cosmological theory continues to be pervasive. If the fleet can be conceived as a "world" in and of itself, albeit one built by man expressly for his own purposes, it, like the natural world, can be described in terms of its cohesive physics and

⁹¹ Hunink (1992) 205 *ad* 516: Caesar (*BC* 1.56.4) locates the Stoechades near Massilia as well (*quae est contra Massiliam*). Ancient sources identify the Stoechades as the Iles d'Hyères, just off the coast southeast of Marseille (Apollonius 4.554, Strabo 4.1.10). The name reflects the shape of the island group: from *στοιχάς*, "in a row;" also linguistically related is the term *στοιχεία* used in physics for elemental material (*SVF* 2.299-300).

⁹² Hunink (1992) 205 *ad* 516; cf. pages 61-62 *ad* 60. For the separation of Sicily from Italy and the force of nature, see Vergil, *Aen.* 3.414-19; Seneca, *Nat.* 6.30.1. Cf. Ovid, *Met.* 15.262-69 for Pythagoras and the transformation of the earth (land into sea, etc.)

⁹³ Hunink (1992) 62 *ad* 60; cf. Lapidge (2010) 312, citing Cornutus 17. Bartsch (1997) 60 uses the sea battle to equate the body with the universe which, at all levels, shows the "dissolution of normative limits."

cosmological trajectory. Both the forms of the ships themselves and their strategic positions in the larger fleet are described in Stoic physical terms.

tum quaecumque ratis temptavit robora Bruti
ictu victa suo percussae capta cohaesit;
ast alias manicaeque ligant teretesque catenae,
seque tenent remis: tecto stetit aequore bellum. (3.563-66)

Then every ship that tested Brutus' strength was conquered
by its own strike and was stuck, captive, to the ship it struck;
But grappling irons and twisted chains bound others together,
and they hold fast with entangled oars: a land war stood on the covered sea.

At a literal level, Lucan describes Brutus' ship as it is rammed by Massilian vessels which are then caught and cannot withdraw. Poetically, he reinforces the idea that the ships create a substitute for land on the sea (*tecto stetit aequore bellum*) and provides a microcosmic representation of the *ekpyrotic* world-cycle pattern.⁹⁴ At Massilia the grove falls but becomes the *agger*; the *agger* is consumed by fire and the battle moves to the sea; finally, the ships at sea are also destroyed by fire. Key to the Stoic imagery of the entangled ships is the dense language of binding and cohesion.⁹⁵ Five words in two lines – *cohaesit*, *manicae*, *ligant*, *teretes*, and *catenae* – describe the connections between the ships. Three of these appear only once in the *Bellum Civile*: *cohaesit*, to adhere or stick together;⁹⁶ *manicae*, literally referring to manicles or sleeves but only here in Latin literature in a nautical context;⁹⁷ and *teretes*, with the rare inflection

⁹⁴ Long (1985) 13, 20.

⁹⁵ Lapidge (1980) 819. In Latin, the original use of the metaphor of binding appears in Cicero's *De Natura Deorum* 2.115: *Nec vero haec solum admirabilia, sed nihil maius quam quod ita stabilis est mundus atque ita cohaeret, ad permanendum, ut nihil ne excogitari quidem possit aptius. omnes enim partes eius undique medium locum capessentes nituntur aequaliter. maxime autem corpora inter se iuncta permanent, cum quasi quodam vinculo circumdato colligantur; quod facit ea natura, quae per omnem mundum omnia mente et ratione conficiens funditur et ad medium rapit et convertit extrema.*

⁹⁶ Without the connecting prefix *co-*, *haereo* is more common, used 45 times throughout the poem.

⁹⁷ Hunink (1992) 220 ad 565 provides the definition "grappling-iron" and compares the meaning to *harpago* (Caesar, *BC* 1.58.4) or *manus ferrea* (3.635). *TLL* VIII.301.83f. provides no parallels to Lucan's use of *manicae*.

“tightly woven,” another link to the language of weaving and binding often used in Stoic physics.⁹⁸

If the series of events at Massilia – grove, siege, sea battle – can be read as parallel to the idea of the endings and beginnings of *ekpyrosis* and the life cycle of the Stoic cosmos, destruction by fire is a fitting end. The mode of ruin is paradoxical in the case of the sea battle, as fire proves to be the ultimate danger, despite the fact that water completely surrounds the burning ships.

nulla tamen plures hoc edidit aequore clades
quam pelago diversa lues. nam pinguibus ignis
adfixus taedis et tecto sulphure vivax
spargitur; at faciles praebere alimenta carinae
nunc pice, nunc liquida rapuere incendia cera.
nec flammam superant undae, sparsisque per aequor
iam ratibus fragmenta ferus sibi vindicat ignis.
hic recipit fluctus, extinguat ut aequore flammam,
hi, ne mergantur, tabulis ardentibus haerent. (3.680-88)

Nevertheless nothing caused more destruction on that water than a calamity separate from the sea. For the fire is spread about, fixed to greasy torches and covered in sulfur; and the ships provided easy fuel as the blaze caught now in the pitch, now in the melting wax. Nor did waves overcome the flames, but the wild fire conquered for itself the fragments from scattered ships across the sea. Here a ship takes in waves to put out the flames with the sea, these men, lest they sink, cling to burning planks.

As we have seen, Lucan adapts the historical accounts of the naval battle at Massilia to suit his poetic purpose: two battles are condensed into one and the destructive fire seems to be a new addition to the story.⁹⁹ The parallels to the destruction of the *agger* (3.493-508) are made clear

⁹⁸ Hunink (1992) 220 *ad* 565 credits this definition to Lewis and Short, but finds no Latin parallel for its use in conjunction with *catenae*.

⁹⁹ Hunink (1992) 246 *ad* 680 compares Lucan’s narrative to Caesar’s account and adds that the addition of fire, as natural force, “implies truly cosmic dimensions” in the conflict. Oliver 327 outlines the two naval operations Lucan condenses into one: an attempt to destroy the Caesarian fleet after the arrival of Domitius and another attempt after the arrival of “the inept Pompeian commander” Nasidius.

by the similar words used in each description. Words for fire or flame play a central role (*ignis, flamma, incendia*)¹⁰⁰ as well as words for torches (*taeda*)¹⁰¹ and words that reflect the destruction of the *agger* or the ships (*fluctus/fluxerunt, fragmenta/fragmine*).¹⁰² Lucan uses very few specific verbs for burning,¹⁰³ but the fire's active force¹⁰⁴ and extent¹⁰⁵ are made clear by the verbs it governs. By land or sea, the fire is rapacious (*rapiensque incendia, 3.501; rapuere incendia, 3.684*), but its power seems increased aboard the ships. Where the fresh, green wood of the *agger* causes the fire some trouble and produces a fair amount of smoke (*viridi luctetur robore, 3.503*), the ships, coated in pitch and wax, provide easy fuel for flames (*faciles praeberere alimenta carinae, 3.683*). Between these two parallel passages, moreover, the fire's source and victims shift from personal to general.¹⁰⁶ The Massilians set fire to the Roman siege works, but the shipboard fire has no directly stated origin and burns Roman and Massilian ships without distinction. As per the civil aspect of the larger conflict, both sides are victims and suffer equally.¹⁰⁷ Here, nature and its elemental forces represent that violence as the human participants in the war are caught up in a larger elemental struggle.

¹⁰⁰ *Ignis*: 3.504, 681, 686; *flamma*: 3.493, 501, 685, 687; *incendia*: 3.501, 684.

¹⁰¹ *Taeda*: 3.504, 82; cf. *fax*: 3.499. Oliver (1972) 330 concludes that these weapons were probably *falaricae*, cf. Livy 21.8.10.

¹⁰² *Fluxerunt*: 3.507 (of scorched boulders crumbling); *fluctus*: 3.687. *Fragmine*: 3.493; *fragmenta*: 3.686. Lucan prefers *fragmentum* (3.686, 6.193, 6.536, 8.755, 9.33) to *fragmen* (only used once at 3.493). The phrase *magnae fragmine molis* may be a modified quotation from Vergil who twice uses *ingenti fragmine montis* to finish lines (*Aeneid* 9.569 and 10.698, of Ilioneus and Mezentius using huge stones to crush their opponents).

¹⁰³ 3.688: *ardentibus*.

¹⁰⁴ *Agit* (3.504), *solvit* (3.506); *rapuere* (3.684), *vindicat* (3.686). Cf. *nec flammis superant undae* (3.685).

¹⁰⁵ *Consequitur* (3.505); *spargitur* (3.683).

¹⁰⁶ Hunink (1992) 246 ad 680 credits the conflagration aboard the ships with greater *pathos* due to the lives lost to it and the "impression of anonymous, massive destruction."

¹⁰⁷ Bartsch (1997) 54 describes the difficulty of distinguishing Romans and Massilians in the naval battle because of the unstable perspective of the narrator.

The sea battle ends after much bloody death and dismemberment and the families of the soldiers are left trying to identify their own, but mourn indiscriminately.¹⁰⁸ This image marks the end of Lucan's third book with the confusion of identity and automatic mourning that come with civil conflict. Although Lucan simplified the historical narrative, compressing two sets of wood chopping, siege machine building, and fighting at sea, he uses this more linear series of events to amplify his programmatic image. The felling of the grove, the burning of the siege works, and later the conflagration and destruction aboard the ships are all endings. Use of language associated with Stoic physics and images concurrent with the theory of *ekpyrosis* make these separate endings into a series of microcosmic apocalypses.

II. Hazardous Land: Flood, Chaos, and Thirst

The sphere of action in the west expands in book 4 to include the city of Ilerda in Spain.¹⁰⁹ Lucan introduces the new location in a way typical to his poetic style with a description of its geography and the characteristics of the surrounding landscape. One of the major factors that shapes the battle in and around Ilerda is the flood, which fundamentally changes the landscape and geography of the region, if only temporarily. It redirects the focus from the city itself to the nearby river, the Sicoris, and from the struggle between political factions to the experience of humans dealing with a natural disaster. Water and its place in the landscape (and its role in the survival and success of humanity) is central to this episode, shaping a narrative of excess. In the same way that landscape is nature viewed through human perception, the excesses related to the flood are also dependent on human interpretation. Inclement weather causes the

¹⁰⁸ Bartsch (1997) 17.

¹⁰⁹ Masters (1992) 46 lists historical sources for the campaign at Ilerda apart from Caesar's (*BC* 1.37-55, 59-87): Plutarch (*Caes.* 36), Florus (2.13.26-28), Suetonius (*Jul.* 34.2, 75.2), Orosius (6.15.6), Appian (*BCiv* 2.42-43), and Cassius Dio (41.20-23). He also notes (49) that Lucan's points of agreement with his sources are not remarkable, but his differences have some "transcendent purpose."

flood; the landscape becomes inhospitable because of an excess of water. The flood recedes, but Caesar prevents access to fresh water; the excessive deprivation that results makes Ilerda unlivable. There is no moderation while the conflict persists, only excess. Through the power of nature and later by the influence of Caesar, the presence or absence of water defines the landscape of Ilerda and the outcome of its battle.

Lucan establishes the basic geography of Ilerda and the surrounding countryside in a brief *ecphrasis*.¹¹⁰ He focuses on dominant landscape features such as hills and rivers, the traditional cartographic and geologic shapers of the land,¹¹¹ and the settlement of Ilerda in their midst.

colle tumet modico lenique excrevit in altum
pingue solum tumulo; super hunc fundata vetusta
surgit Ilerda manu; placidis praelabatur undis
Hesperios inter Sicoris non ultimus amnis,
saxeus ingenti quem pons amplectitur arcu
hibernas passurus aquas. at proxima rupes
signa tenet Magni, nec Caesar colle minore
castra levat; medius dirimit tentoria gurges,
explicat hinc tellus campos effusa patentis
vix oculo prendente modum, camposque coerces,
Cinga rapax, vetitus fluctus et litora cursu
Oceani pepulisse tuo; nam gurgite mixto
qui praestat terris aufert tibi nomen Hiberus. (4.11-23)

The rich soil swells into a modest hill and grows up high with a gradual rise; on top of this Ilerda rises, founded by an ancient hand; Sicoris flows past with calm waters, not the farthest among Western rivers, and a rocky bridge embraces it with a huge arch, enduring wintry waters. But the nearest cliff holds Pompey's standards, nor does Caesar raise his camp on a smaller hill; in the middle a stream divides the tents. From here the earth spreads out wide-open plains, scarcely comprehensible to the eye, and you enclose the camps,

¹¹⁰ Masters (1992) 46 notes that Lucan's *ecphrasis* on Ilerda has more topographical detail than any other ancient source.

¹¹¹ Mendell (1942) 6 focuses on the centrality of rivers to ancient (and modern) geographical writing. Cf. Strabo 2.1.30, where rivers, mountains, and seas are listed as the best natural boundaries.

greedy Cinga, forbidden to touch the Ocean's waves
and shores in your course; for Hiberus who dominates the
lands takes your name with mixed stream.

As Lucan describes Ilerda and its surroundings, he illustrates the gentle slope of the land on which the town is built (*colle tumet modico lenique excrevit in altum / ... tumulo*). The scene is pleasant and almost idyllic, as the land rises (*tumet*) into a hill (*tumulo*). Ilerda, long established on top of the hill (*fundata vetusta... Ilerda*),¹¹² is the only part of this initial *topothesia* that stands out above the rest of the region (*super hunc... surgit*). The river Sicoris winds through the landscape, though like the hills, it has been contained and mastered by the bridge (*saxeus ingenti quem pons amplectitur arcu*). Even the increased flow caused by winter weather and snowmelt (*hibernas... aquas*) ought not threaten the bridge. The scene is peaceful and nearly picturesque. It is only when focus shifts to the opposing camps of Pompey's allies and Caesar that the language of the landscape changes. What were gentle hills (*colle... modico; lenique... tumulo*) begin to appear as more rugged cliffs (*rupes*); the relatively limited scene encompassing town, hills, and river opens up to vast fields (*campos... patentis*)¹¹³ and the interconnected system of powerful and potentially violent rivers (*Cinga rapax; praestat... aufert... Hiberus*).¹¹⁴ The landscape only increases in scope and power when viewed in context of the war, a shift from pleasant to insidious landscape that promotes a sense of foreboding about the coming battle and its consequences. Moreover, the extension of Lucan's hydrography from the Sicoris to the entire river-system including the Cinga, the Hiberus, and their ultimate outpouring into the sea demonstrates a more universal opposition in this battle than the one between Caesarians and

¹¹² Thompson and Bruère (1970) 152 compare the description of Caere (*saxo incolitur fundata vetusto / urbis Agyllinae sedes*) at *Aen.* 8.478-79.

¹¹³ Holmes (1991) 273 evaluates the textual veracity of the repetition of *campos* in 4.19 and 20.

¹¹⁴ Masters (1992) 46. None of the ancient geographers mention the Cinga; it appears only in Lucan and Caesar.

Pompeians.¹¹⁵ Humans are not incidental to the conflict, but Lucan's attention to the weather and the flood shows a larger struggle between man and nature.¹¹⁶

During the first day of fighting, bloody violence is absent (*prima dies belli cessavit Marte cruento*, 4.24). Instead, Caesar sends soldiers to take control of the town. They march through the hills which, as if in active opposition to the soldiers, appear more like mountains. The only struggle recorded consists of the hardships and challenges the landscape offers to the soldiers.¹¹⁷

his virtus ferrumque locum promittit, at illis
ipse locus. miles rupes oneratus in altas
nititur, adversoque acies in monte supina
haeret et in tergum casura umbone sequentis
erigitur. nulli telum vibrare vacavit,
dum labat et fixo firmat vestigia pilo,
dum scopulos stirpesque tenent atque hoste relicto
caedunt ense viam. vidit lapsura ruina
agmina dux equitemque iubet succedere bello
munitumque latus laevo praeducere gyro. (4.36-45)

Valor and weapons promise the place to this side, but that side have the place itself. Burdened soldiers struggle against high cliffs; the line clings, looking up, to the mountain in front and if about to fall, is held up on its back by the shields of those following. No one's spear is free to move, while he slips and steadies his steps with a fixed javelin, and they hold onto rocks and shrubs and cut a path with swords, enemy forgotten. The leader sees his line about to fall with a crash and orders the cavalry to advance to battle and to bring the protected side forward with a leftward circle.

The narrow perspective in the hills around Ilerda is noticeably different from the first presentation of the place. The *colles* and *tumuli* are nowhere in evidence; instead, the soldiers struggle to climb high crags (*rupes... in altas*) on a mountain (*adversoque... monte*). They risk

¹¹⁵ The rivers can be symbolic of civil conflict, as well. Masters (1992) 52-53 sees the fast Cinga as Caesarian and the slower Sicoris as Pompeian, though the addition of the third river (the Hiberus) changes the course of the "conflict" between Cinga and Sicoris. See also 171 for Masters' analysis of the rivers of Thessaly in *BC* 6, where the key word *mixtus* can also evoke civil war and its results.

¹¹⁶ Asso (2010) 103.

¹¹⁷ Cf. 3.680-88. The fire onboard the ships fighting near Massilia was also a greater force against which both the Romans and the Massilians had to fight.

catastrophic falls (*lapsura ruina / agmina*); they cling (*haeret*) to every part of the mountain and its vegetation they can (*scopulos stirpesque tenent*); they even turn their weapons not against the Pompeian soldiers (*hoste relicto*) but against the danger of slipping (*fixo firmat vestigia pilo*) and against the path they attempt to walk (*caedunt ense viam*).¹¹⁸ Combined with the lack of bloodshed in the first day of battle, the struggle between humans and landscape is more immediate and dangerous than that between the two sides of the civil war, at least for the time being.

Lucan uses doubled or paired landforms to emphasize the scope of the civil war in context of the immediate conflict between humans and nature. The landscape itself is not only the setting of the battle, but a vehicle for expressing that the conflict is fraternal strife. Even after the floodwaters of the Sicoris damage Caesar's camps, the hills and valleys allow the visualization of both physical and literary landscapes.¹¹⁹ The Caesarians pursue the Pompeians who had fled from Ilerda and the two sides find natural echoes of their division in the valley of Octogesa.¹²⁰

attollunt campo geminae iuga saxea rupes
 valle cava media; tellus hinc ardua celsos
 continuat colles, tutae quos inter opaco
 anfractu latuere viae; (4.157-60)

Twin cliffs raise rocky ridges on the plain
 with a hollow valley in the middle; from here the harsh land
 joins the lofty hills, among which safe paths are hidden
 in shadowed circuitous routes;

¹¹⁸ Masters (1992) 56-58. Despite the “cosmic image” of soldiers using spears against stone, this is “not so much a battle as a mountaineering expedition.”

¹¹⁹ Asso (2010) 146 *ad* 157-62. Cf. Vergil, *Aeneid* 11.522-29. Turnus' ambush, like the ambush set up by Caesar, is described using the key word *anfractus*. Masters (1992) 70-71. Cf. Horsfall (1985) 200.

¹²⁰ Holmes (1915) describes the topography of the land south of Ilerda (modern Lerida) on the way to the Hiberus (modern Ebro). Only Caesar mentions Octogesa by name.

Immediately obvious is the rocky harshness of the land. As it was in the case of the soldiers attempting to scale the mountains (4.36-45), the land is notable for its rocky composition (*iuga saxea*) and changing elevation (*geminae... rupes / valle cava media; celsos / continuat colles*). The open plains of earlier description (*explicat hinc tellus campos effusa patentis*, 4.19) are replaced by tall hills (*tellus hinc ardua celsos / continuat colles*) and winding passes (*opaco / anfractu*). These hills also demonstrate Lucan's propensity for doubled imagery, here represented by the cliffs (*geminae... rupes*).¹²¹ Twin cliffs are the representation in the landscape of the two Roman factions fighting each other. Even further, the paradox inherent in the landscape – being both a refuge and a trap, depending on the perspective – is another kind of doubling and another way of representing civil war.¹²²

A central focus of the Ilerda episode, however, is the river Sicoris and flood that results from a storm. What precedes the flood is a superstorm, another kind of warfare the soldiers at Ilerda must face; it replaces “the *motus* of war with the *motus* of winds.”¹²³ Winds from every cardinal point – Aquilo and Boreas from the north (4.50, 61), Notus from the south (4.71), Corus from the west (4.67), and Eurus from the east (4.61) – are driven across the known world and push rain and clouds together over Spain. The “worldwide dimensions” of this storm make it another example of the cataclysmic imagery in the poem.¹²⁴ Lucan's focus on the east wind (*Euro*, 4.61) in particular and on eastern influence on the gathering clouds¹²⁵ can also associate

¹²¹ Masters (1992) 49-50.

¹²² Asso (2010) 146 *ad* 158-59.

¹²³ Masters (1992) 60-61.

¹²⁴ Lapidge (2010) 315.

¹²⁵ Asso (2010) 121 *ad* 4.63-64: Lucan's inclusion of the Nabataeans, Arabs, and Indians associate the winds' origins with the east.

them with Pompey.¹²⁶ When the clouds converge in the west, Lucan conflates Calpe, which is near Gibraltar, with Ilerda, though Ilerda is located farther east in Spain and further into the hinterland (*in solam Calpen fluit umidus aer*, 4.71).¹²⁷ The storm that results from this accumulation of clouds is written as a vast natural release of built-up pressure, when the sky can no longer contain the accumulation of black air (*congestumque aeris atri / vix recipit spatium quod separat aethere terram*, 4.74-75).¹²⁸

Narrowing his focus from the cosmic scope and global processes of the storm, Lucan gives two immediate causes of the flood: excessive rain and snowmelt flowing down from the Pyrenees.¹²⁹ The force of nature is more powerful than any of the human characters in the *Bellum Civile* and the rain, deluge, and flood emphasize this point repeatedly. First, the rain is compressed from the clouds.

iamque polo pressae largos densantur in imbres
 spissataque fluunt; nec servant fulmina flammās
 quamvis crebra micent: extingunt fulgura nimbi. (4.76-78)

And now, compressed, they are crowded together into great storms in the sky and condensed, they flow down; nor do thunderbolts preserve their flames although they flash frequently: the clouds extinguish the lightning.

Two aspects of this rainstorm stand out: the force and concentration of the water and the resulting effect on thunder and lightning. This is not a simple rain shower (*pluvia*), but a more

¹²⁶ Masters (1992) 62 states that Pompey's eastern triumphs associate him with the east more generally, so that the winds (especially Eurus) rush into the west "under the impulse of a Pompey-like wind to put a stop to the strife of arms."

¹²⁷ Morford (1967a) 45 cites *BC* 7.1-3 as the place where Ocean and sky meet and the clouds finally loose their moisture. Asso (2010) 129 *ad* 4.71 notes that Calpe is merely a metonymy for the west. Cf. 4.1-2: *At procul extremis terrarum Caesar in oris / Martem saevus agit*.

¹²⁸ Lapidge (2010) 315 compares the "palpable" meteorological tension to "pressure on boundaries whose collapse is imminent."

¹²⁹ Cf. Caesar *BC* 1.48.1-2.

violent storm (*imbres*).¹³⁰ The rain does not merely sprinkle the ground, but becomes thicker and more concentrated (*densantur, spissata*) and flows like a stream or body of water (*fluunt*). In fact, the rain is so heavy that the normal thunder and lightning are hindered and quenched by the rain. The many thunderbolts (*crebra micent*) cannot produce any flame (*nec servant fulmina flammis*) and instead are extinguished (*extinguunt fulgura nimbi*).¹³¹ The comparison of Caesar to a portentous bolt of lightning in the introduction to the poem establishes him as powerful.¹³² The lightning at Ilerda, on the other hand, is unable to maintain any power during the storm. By reading Caesar as lightning in context of the storm's lightning, then, the natural lightning's lack of force – or, rather, the fact that it can be extinguished by the clouds and rain – parallels Caesar's helplessness and the suffering of his soldiers against the storm and resulting floods.

The other cause of the flooding is the deluge caused by melting snow and ice in the nearby Pyrenees mountains, something which appears to be less a repetition of known meteorological or geographical knowledge and more a literary invention by Lucan.¹³³

iamque Pyrenaeae, quas numquam solvere Titan
 evaluit, fluxere nives, fractoque madescunt
 saxa gelu. (4.83-85)

And now the Pyrenaean snows, which the sun could never
 melt, flowed, and rocks grew damp with fractured ice.

Like the rains (*densantur in imbres / spissataeque fluunt*), the snow also flows down into the valley (*fluxere nives*). While snow could “flow” during an avalanche, the snows in the Pyrenees

¹³⁰ As per the general mood of excess and proliferation of hyperbole in the *BC*, Lucan prefers *imber* (15 occurrences) to *pluvia* (1 use, at 4.51).

¹³¹ Thompson and Bruère (1970) 153.

¹³² Cf. 1.143-57. This lightning is, like the rain at Ilerda, driven from the clouds (*expressum... per nubila fulmen*), but when it flashes (*emicuit*), produces terrifying flames (*populosque paventes / terruit obliqua praestringens lumina flamma*). Rosner-Siegel (2010) 185-87.

¹³³ Asso (2010) 132 *ad* 83-84 singles Lucan out as the only writer to mention snow on the side of the Pyrenees closer to Iberia. Mela (3.21.1) describes flooding in the Garonna river due to snowmelt on the Gallic side of the Pyrenees in his geographical works, however, which may have influenced Lucan.

and any ice present melt enough to become liquid rather than solid (*fractoque madescunt / saxa gelu*),¹³⁴ defying previous expectation and experience (*numquam solvere Titan / evaluit*).¹³⁵

Since this contributes to the flooded Sicoris, the phase shift from solid ice to liquid water can be read as a microcosmic representation of boundary transgression. Rivers often functioned as boundaries,¹³⁶ so the elimination of the boundary between ice and water flows conveniently into the elimination of the Sicoris' boundaries (i.e., its riverbanks) and any man-made roads or borders in the flood zone.

tum quae solitis e fontibus exit
non habet unda vias, tam largas alveus omnis
a ripis accepit aquas. iam naufraga campo
Caesaris arma natant, impulsaque gurgite multo
castra labant; alto restangnant flumina vallo. (4.85-89)

Then the stream which emerges from its usual springs
does not hold his course, and every riverbed took in
so much water from its banks, now Caesar's army swims,
a shipwreck on the field, and the camp collapses, struck
by a great stream; rivers overflow in the deep valley.

Any ways in which the river shaped and defined the land are simultaneously (and paradoxically) amplified and nullified by the flood. The Ilerda ecphrasis (4.11-23) showed a region shaped by and named for rivers, the Sicoris, the Cinga, and the Hiberus; when the river becomes the locus of the flood it completely dominates the land and creates another kind of "waterscape." Lucan draws on the archetypal flood, as represented in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which also swallows up the land and gives the appearance of a sea with no shores.¹³⁷ As usual, however, he finds a way

¹³⁴ Asso (2010) 132 *ad* 84.

¹³⁵ This is yet another use of *solvere*, comparable to the melting snow that feeds the Rubicon (1.219). For melting/dissolution language, cf. Lapidge (2010) 306, who cites Manilius, *Astronomica* 2.804-7 for the Latinization of ἀναλύω to *resolvo*.

¹³⁶ Cf. 1.213-19. The Rubicon's waters also increase due to snowmelt from the mountains, creating a stronger boundary (1.220-22), almost another less dire flood, that Caesar crosses on his way into Italy.

¹³⁷ Ovid, *Met.* 1.291-92: *iamque mare et tellus nullum discrimen habebant: / omnia pontus erat, deerant quoque litora ponto*. Lucan borrows imagery and vocabulary from Ovid's description of the deluge. Cf.

to invert expectations. Instead of the river breaking its banks and rising up, the excess water flows down from the sky and mountains and into the river.¹³⁸ The scope of the flood, which eliminates borders of all kinds (from the river's banks to the roads and divisions of the camps), nullifies the liminal nature of the river. The river inundates the valley (*alto restagnant flumina vallo*) and erases other landforms. It also allows for the image of Caesar's flooded camp as an inland shipwreck (*naufraga campo / Caesaris arma natant*).¹³⁹ During the flood, Caesar's power and resources are vastly diminished. Like the lightning bolts during the storm (4.77-78), he cannot maintain authority; nature is winning the battle.¹⁴⁰

The appearance and scope of the flood itself rely on comparisons to Ovid's primeval flood and on seemingly hyperbolic descriptions of the floodwaters' effect on the landscape.

iam tumuli collesque latent, iam flumina cuncta
condidit una palus vastaque voragine mersit,
absorpsit penitus rupes ac tecta ferarum
detulit atque ipsas hausit, subitisque frementis
verticibus contorsit aquas et reppulit aestus
fortior Oceani. nec Phoebum surgere sentit
nox subtexta polo: rerum discrimina miscet
deformis caeli facies iunctaeque tenebrae. (4.98-105)

Now earthen mounds and hills are hidden, now a single pool
concealed every river and submerged them in a vast abyss,
the depths absorb cliffs and sweep away the lairs of beasts
and swallow the beasts themselves, and with sudden roaring
whirlpools it churns its waters and repels the tides,
being stronger than Ocean. Nor does night, covering the sky,
know that the sun rises: the sky's formless face and
continuous darkness mix up the world's distinctions.

Met. 1.343-44, *alveus amnes*, likely where Lucan finds his phrase *alveus amnis* at 4.86. Masters (1992) 59; Thompson and Bruère (1970) 153; Morford (1967a) 44.

¹³⁸ Asso (2010) 132 *ad* 85-87.

¹³⁹ Cf. Lucretius 5.488 (*camposque natantis*), 6.267, 405, 1142; Manilius 5.542 (*naufraga terra*). Leigh (1997) 46 notes that the unequal destruction visited on the Caesarian and Pompeian camps by the flood, despite their noted equality, signifies the true way to end the civil war: by defeating Caesar. Cf. also the simile comparing Rome, evacuated at Caesar's approach, as a shipwreck (1.498-504).

¹⁴⁰ Ahl (1976) 192 credits Caesar's "inconsistent" portrayal in the wake of Ilerda to his *clementia*, which for the moment overrides his "ferocity and fiery impatience."

The flood covers and hides the landscape. The hill on which Ilerda stands (*colle tumet modico lenique excrevit in altum / ...tumulo*, 4.11-12) protects the city from the flood, but similar landforms (*tumuli collesque latent*) are hidden under the water. Even the more harsh features of the landscape – cliffs, wild animals and their dens – are covered or swept away (*absorpsit penitus rupes ac tecta ferarum / detulit atque ipsas hausit*). The water, paradoxically, absorbs the land (*absorpsit penitus*).¹⁴¹ The water is paradoxical in other ways, as well, presenting warring images of stillness and mobility. The flood is still like a pool or bog (*palus*; cf. *restagnant*, 4.89),¹⁴² but consumes the various features of the landscape like a whirlpool or vortex (*vastaque voragine mersit*).¹⁴³ In Seneca, *vorago* is an “essential component of the horror-effect” that taps into the fear associated with the sublime,¹⁴⁴ and also is part of the process of *ekpyrosis*, as a vast

¹⁴¹ *BC* 3.261 is the only other instance of *absorbeo*; here, the Tigris river disappears beneath the earth and reappears in another place. Dewar (1991) 270 quotes a fragment written by Nero also on the disappearing Tigris, as well as the scientific background to this particular river phenomenon (Strabo 11.14.8, 16.1.21; Pliny, *NH* 6.128). Seneca also mentions the disappearing and reappearing Tigris, defining it by its subterranean course in *Medea* 723 (*altum gurgitem Tigris premens*), *Ep.* 104.15 (*ut Tigris eripitur ex oculis et acto per occulta cursu integrae magnitudinis redditur*), and in *Naturales Quaestiones* 3.26.4 (*idem et in oriente Tigris facit; absorbetur et desideratus diu tandem longe remoto loco, non tamen dubius an idem sit, emergit*). In the *NQ*, Seneca’s language for discussing the Tigris’ subterranean channel is identical to the language Lucan uses in *BC* 3.261. It stands to reason, then, that *absorbere* was a word particularly suited to subterranean rivers and the geology that enables their courses. It is also worth noting that Seneca, in *NQ* 3.26.5, immediately following his description of the Tigris, compares two other underground/disappearing rivers: the Arethusa and the Alpheus. Cf. the Baphyrus (Pausanias 9.30.8)

¹⁴² Vergil uses *palus* and *stagnis* of the underworld rivers in *Aeneid* 6, and of the Tiber (with still stream) in *Aeneid* 8. (6.323, 8.88). *Palus* is also a word used to translated the Greek term, λιμνή, which Connors and Clendenon (In Progress) discuss in the context of karstic terrain and lakes which appear and disappear; the Greek term δινή, represented in Latin by *vorago*, is also characteristic of observational descriptions of karstic terrain.

¹⁴³ Despite other opportunities to describe violent water (the sea battle at Massilia, the storm during Caesar’s attempted crossing, the Syrtes in North Africa), this is the only use of *vorago* in the *Bellum Civile*. Comparable are the two uses of the cognate adjective *vorax* at 1.181 (*usura vorax* in the years leading up to the civil wars) and at 2.663-64 (*omnia pontus / haurit saxa vorax montesque inmiscit harenis*, of the sea during Caesar’s attempt to block the harbor at Brundisium). Thompson and Bruère (1970) 153-54 compare Lucan’s *vasta voragine* to Vergil’s identical phrase at *Aen.* 6.296-97.

¹⁴⁴ Schiesaro (2006) 428, citing Seneca, *Hercules Furens* 664-67, of an entrance to the underworld: *hic ora solvit Ditis invisi domus / hiatque rupes alta et immenso specu / ingens vorago faucibus vastis patet / latumque pandit omnibus populis iter*.

abyss swallows the stars and their light.¹⁴⁵ Seneca also connects the cataclysm that ends each the world-cycle to *ekpyrosis* in his *Naturalis Quaestiones*, citing a great deluge as one possible, cathartic end.

sed monet me locus, ut quaeram, cum fatalis dies diluvii venerit, quemadmodum magna pars terrarum undis obruatur... (Seneca, *NQ* 3.27.1)

But this topic reminds me, as I inquire, when the fated day of the deluge comes, how a great part of the lands will be overwhelmed by water...

In his descriptions of the great flood, Seneca quotes Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, comparing the scope of his deluge to the waters that cover the earth and swallow its landscapes in order to extinguish the fire caused by Phaethon's incendiary chariot accident.¹⁴⁶ Williams sees an added moralizing tone to Seneca's account of the flood with the addition of the Ovidian narrative, which evokes "Jupiter's 'just' punishment of mankind."¹⁴⁷ Since Seneca's prefaces the third book of the *Naturales Quaestiones* with a comparison of "the cataclysm and the conflagration" to the excess and power exercised by Philip and Alexander,¹⁴⁸ the cathartic force of the deluge in *NQ* 3.27-30 and, by correlation, the punishment it confers, is against similar excesses and misused power.

Moreover, Lucan's Spanish flood covers such a vast area that it affects the interaction between the local river system and the sea. Whereas the Sicoris and Cinga do not reach the sea under normal circumstances (*vetitus fluctus et litora cursu / Oceani pepulisse tuo*, 4.21-22), augmented by floodwaters, they drive back the sea's tides (*subitisque frementis / verticibus contorsit aquas et reppulit aestus / fortior Oceani*). Lucan is doing something very unusual in these verses: using the term *Oceanus* to indicate what is likely part of the Mediterranean. Most

¹⁴⁵ Lapidge (2010) 316, citing Seneca, *De beneficiis* 6.22.1 (*profunda vorago tot deos sorbeat*). Cf. Morford (1967a) 44-49.

¹⁴⁶ Ovid, *Met.* 2.264 = Seneca, *NQ* 3.21.13: *montes et sparsas Cycladas augent*.

¹⁴⁷ Williams (2012) 130.

¹⁴⁸ Williams (2012) 34, cf. Seneca, *NQ* 3 pref. 5.

uses of *Oceanus* in the *Bellum Civile* conform to the traditional use of the term for the body of water outside the Mediterranean with global extent.¹⁴⁹ The reason for transferring the label to the sea off the southern coast of Spain (4.22, 4.103) can perhaps be discovered in a third instance of mislabeling: in book nine, Lucan suggests that the geological separation of Europe from Libya made room for *Oceanus* (*unde Europa fugit Libyen et litora flexu / Oceano fecere locum*, 9.415-16). Pliny recounts a corresponding myth, describing the rocky pillars at Gibraltar and their separation, which caused *Oceanus* to pour into the Mediterranean basin.¹⁵⁰ By calling this part of the Mediterranean, just off the Spanish coast and therefore nearer to Gibraltar than most of the sea, Lucan revisits the trauma of Ocean bursting through the pillars and creating a new body of water. The lasting impact of this ancient cataclysm is signaled by the name; by comparison, a similar impact of the cataclysm of civil war saw the emperors called *princeps* rather than *rex* or *imperator*. The message implied in the conflation of Oceanus with the Mediterranean is that the normal order of things in nature has been reversed. The scope of the flood's effects muddies even the most basic divisions of darkness and light (*rerum discrimina miscet / deformis caeli facies iunctaeque tenebrae*), alluding back to a kind of primordial chaos.¹⁵¹ The conflation of this most Stoic image and the un-Stoic Ovidian model is striking.¹⁵² Nevertheless, using the Ovidian flood, which like many creation stories focuses on the definition of boundaries and the establishment of a knowable world, provides Lucan the opportunity to deconstruct the archetypal

¹⁴⁹ See *BC* 1.370, 411, 416; 2.571; 3.77, 279; 4.81, 135, 675; 5.182, 598; 7.1; 8.294, 798; 9.625; 10.36, 216, 255. For the use of the term *Oceanus* in other sources, see Strabo 1.1, who provides a summary of the knowledge of Ocean from Homer onward (1.1.3-9).

¹⁵⁰ Pliny, *NH* 3.4-5. Especially: *Oceanus a quo dictum est spatium Atlanticum mare infundens et avido meatu terras, quaecumque venientem expavere, demergens resistentes quoque flexuoso litorum anfractu lambit...*

¹⁵¹ Asso (2010) 134 *ad* 104-105.

¹⁵² Masters (1992) 63.

creation myth.¹⁵³ He also, as Seneca does, associates flood with cataclysm and imbues the entire narrative with a moralizing indictment of the people in power who are “punished” by the flood, in this case, Caesar.

The obliteration of the normal landscape and its replacement – the extensive flood – is explored in a simile that draws on ancient knowledge of the world and its categorization into zones. Ilerda and its surroundings have been transformed from something habitable and pleasant into a place as inhospitable and barren as the polar regions.

sic mundi pars ima iacet, quam zona nivalis
perpetuaeque premunt hiemes: non sidera caelo
ulla videt, sterili non quicquam frigore gignit
sed glacie medios signorum temperat ignes. (4.106-9)

So lies the lowest part of the world, which the snowy zone
and perpetual winter oppress: it sees no stars in the sky,
nor does it produce anything in its barren chill,
but it tempers the fire of the tropical constellations with its ice.

Modern commentators agree that the frigid zone in question is the Antarctic polar zone, one of the five climes delineated by ancient Greek geographers.¹⁵⁴ Not only is the flood zone unliveable and a locus of destruction, it has these qualities in the same measure as the most distant (*mundi*

¹⁵³ Martindale (1993) 52-53. Cf. Romm (1992) 10-31 on the creation of boundaries as part of the process of world definition and the role of the Ocean as something vague and relatively unknowable. Romm associates a lack of boundaries with a sense of cognitive discomfort (the sublime) and cites Plato's *Timaeus* (152e) for the association of the Heraclitean idea of universal flux with Ocean. Schiesaro (2006) 428 also studies the emotional impact of unbounded or undefined space and the terror it can produce, cf. Seneca, *Ep.* 41.

¹⁵⁴ Asso (2010) 135 *ad* 106: *mundi pars ima* must indicate one of the two frigid zones. Housman cites of Burmann's 1740 text, which identifies this frigid zone as the Antarctic one, but Asso notes Housman's uncertainty regarding Lucan's preference of the south to the north pole. Beyond this textual history, it is not entirely clear why Lucan must mean the south rather than north pole. Thompson and Bruère (1970) 154 clarify this comparison, citing *Georgics* 1.240-48 as the clear Antarctic model for Lucan's zone.

See Dueck (2012) 84-86 for a summary of the development of climatic zone theory from Parmenides, though Eratosthenes, Posidonius, and Polybius, to Strabo. All favor the idea of five latitudinal zones (a torrid zone sandwiched between two temperate zones, capped by the polar frigid zones), except Polybius, who divided the torrid zone into two, separated by the equator. Strabo 2.3.1 cites Posidonius in his account of the five zones which are divided by differences in air temperature (north to south); the temperate zones are also bounded at east and west by the sea.

pars ima) and chilly (*perpetuaeque premunt hiemes*) parts of the earth, where nature exists without human intervention because humans cannot live there.¹⁵⁵ The lack of visible stars (*non sidera caelo / ulla videt*) mirrors the image of the darkened flooded world at Ilerda (*caeli facies iunctaeque tenebrae*, 4.105). The cessation in the land's viability as the waters cover it (*non pabula mersi / ulla ferunt sulci*, 4.90-91) completes the comparison to the *zona nivalis*, which is perpetually barren (*sterili non quicquam frigore gignit*).¹⁵⁶ This is yet another representation of the anxiety about agricultural production during wartime. The frigid zone, like inundated Ilerda, like the resourceless farmers of Massilia, and like the abandoned fields of Italy cannot produce crops to help sustain society. The civil war, unlike foreign wars of conquest that could give the Romans access to more fertile lands and their produce, destroys the land's productive potential from the heart of the empire outward. The flood is a natural disaster, but as part of this procession of fruitless land, it also shows the effect of war on the fields and landscape.

When the flood begins to recede, the balance of power changes. The water drains due to improved weather conditions:¹⁵⁷ the air clears and elements (especially water) are redistributed into their proper places.¹⁵⁸ The features of the landscape that had been absorbed by the water begin to reemerge above its surface.

tollere silva comas, stagnis emergere colles
 incipiunt visoque die durescere valles.
 utque habuit ripas Sicoris camposque reliquit (4.128-30)

The woods begin to raise their leaves, hills emerge
 from pools and with daylight spotted valleys harden.

¹⁵⁵ I.e., outside the *oikoumēnē*. Cf. Lucan's other references to the climatic zones: the torrid zone in Libya at 4.675, 9.314, 9.852, 10.275; and the frigid zone again, as the province of Saturn as told by the priest Acoreus at 10.205. Cf. Pogorzelski (2011) 157-58 on inhabitable zones and the *orbis terrarum*.

¹⁵⁶ Lucan also uses *sterilis* in connection to prophecy (1.590, Arruns the haruspex; 5.110, the Delphic oracle; 9.576, the shrine of Jupiter Ammon), Libya (9.378, 382, 576, 696, 822; 10.38), Troy's ruins (9.966), and Egypt (8.829, 10.308).

¹⁵⁷ Hutchinson (1993) 252 addresses the apostrophe to Jupiter and Neptune (4.110-20).

¹⁵⁸ A more concise resolution to the flood is at 4.123-27, cf. original storm at 4.48-75.

As soon as the Sicoris held its banks and left the fields...

The forests, hills, and valleys had been subjected to the flood's the flood's destructive qualities previously (4.98-101), but now have their own agency, indicated by series of active verbs (*tollere... emergere... incipiunt... durescere*). The water that had settled into the region (*restagnant*, 4.89) remains only as pools (*stagnis*). The expected perspective on this process is reversed; the water does drain away, but instead of describing sinking water levels, Lucan makes the land itself seem to rise up out of the water.¹⁵⁹ The overflowing river, powerful enough to battle the tides (4.101-103) retreats (*camposque reliquit*) and is confined again to its course (*habuit ripas Sicoris*). The themes of excess and immobility that have permeated the flood episode must also recede or change. As the water level falls, travel and communication can begin to be re-established and people can once again exert control over nature. People can control the river in two ways: by directing its flow and by rebuilding infrastructure around it.

his ratibus traiecta manus festinat utrimque
succisum curvare nemus, fluviique ferocis
incrementa timens non primis robora ripis
inposuit medios pontem distendit in agros.
ac, nequid Sicoris repetitis audeat undis,
spargitur in sulcos et scisso gurgite rivis
dat poenas maioris aquae. (4.137-43)

Troops, carried in these boats, hastened to bend
the cut wood on both sides, and fearing the increase
of the fierce river do not place the wood right on the banks
but stretch the bridge into the middle of the fields.
And, lest Sicoris venture out with renewed waves,
he is divided into furrows and with his split stream
the river pays the penalty for his great flood.

In the conflict between humans and nature, Caesar's troops hold the upper hand. Not only can they once more travel (by boat), but they cut down a grove of trees (*succisum... nemus*), recalling

¹⁵⁹ Cf. 4.85-89. Another reversal of expectations: instead of the river breaking its banks and flooding, the Sicoris is filled from above like a pool.

deforestation as a source of materials for construction at two earlier points in the epic. Caesar and his soldiers cut trees near Brundisium to build a barrier across the mouth of the harbor and later, use timber from the grove near Massilia to construct siege works.¹⁶⁰ Here, the wood from the grove is used to build a new bridge across the river. They take precautions, due to the recently witnessed destructive capabilities of the river and increase the span of the bridge beyond the banks of the river and into the fields.¹⁶¹ They also alter the course of the river by dividing its flow into smaller channels, thus decreasing its strength and making the landscape again suit their purposes.¹⁶² As he did when restricting the harbor at Brundisium, Caesar transforms and remakes the landscape to fit his needs, that is, to detain Pompey and his allies.

The earlier suffering of Caesar and his soldiers during the flood finds its mirror in the suffering that Caesar inflicts upon the Pompeians in the flood's aftermath. Caesar besieges the Pompeians (yet again) by cutting off their water supply, a strategy that makes their own thirst a factor in their eventual defeat. The scarcity of water creates the sense of a man-made drought in the middle of this flooded region, a hardship that not only reverses the suffering from the Caesarians onto the Pompeians and engages with the intersection of water and earth, but emphasizes Caesar's renewed power over the landscape. In the two parallel examples of suffering, the flood and the "drought," nature and Caesar have similar *auctoritas*. The Pompeians' desperate search for water demonstrates this.

iamque inopes undae primum tellure refossa
occultos latices abstrusaque flumina quaerunt;
nec solum rastris durisque ligonibus arva

¹⁶⁰ Cf. 2.677-79, 3.399-508.

¹⁶¹ Masters (1992) 62. The bridge reflects fear of the landscape and the possibility of future floods determines its design. The enemy is the landscape.

¹⁶² Asso (2010) 143 *ad* 141-43 notes that "Caesar's precaution is presented as punishment, and suggests the leader's sacrilegious hubris against Nature." Cf. Caesar, *BC* 1.61-2. Masters (1992) 68 calls Caesar's division of the river a "Xerxes-like imposition of human will on natural elements." Cf. 2.672-77. See also Saylor (1978) 247.

sed gladiis fodere suis, puteusque cavati
montis ad inrigui premitur fastigia campi.
non se tam penitus, tam longe luce relicta
meriserit Astyrici scrutator pallidus auri. (4.292-98)

And now, those destitute of water first seek hidden waters
and concealed streams by digging up the earth;
not only do they dig the ground with hoes and hardy mattocks
but with their own swords, and a pit is excavated in the hollow
mountain to the elevation of the watered plain.
Not so deep, nor with sunlight left so far behind,
would a pale miner of Asturian gold bury himself.

Those searching for water and those restricting it are described in similar terms. When Caesar excavates the trenches around the Pompeians, the water-seekers are the subject: *tunc inopes undae praerupta cingere fossa* (4.264),¹⁶³ a line echoed here by *iamque inopes undae primum tellure refossa*.¹⁶⁴ The Pompeians dig like the Caesarians do (*fossa/refossa*) and do so because Caesar has them trapped. The results of these trenches, however, vary. The Caesarians successfully modify and control the environment: the Pompeians are unsuccessful: they do not find water.¹⁶⁵ Because the trenches direct where water can and cannot flow, this is proof of Caesar's control over both land and the people in it. The *inopes undae* imitate the Caesarian soldiers in another way as well, when they use their swords not against enemies, but against the earth. Just as Caesar's soldiers "fought" the earth with spears and javelins to keep from falling (4.40-43), Pompey's supporters move from rakes and mattocks (*rastris durisque ligonibus*) to swords (*gladiis*).¹⁶⁶ The landscape is the enemy early in Lucan's fourth book, but by this point, Caesar begins to retake the role of aggressor and, moreover, does so in a way that puts him in a

¹⁶³ Cf. Caesar, *BC* 1.81.6.

¹⁶⁴ *Iamque* at 4.292 echoes three previous uses of the word that build up the storm at 4.76 (rain), 83 (snowmelt), and 93 (famine). Considering the recent repetition of *iamque* in an ascending tricolon of suffering gives equal force to the suffering of the Pompeians at 292ff.

¹⁶⁵ Lucan lists four potential underground water sources, none of which are found: rivers (*tectis... cursibus amnes*, 4.299), springs (*micuere novi percusso pumice fontes*, 4.300), dripping precipitation in caves (*antra... exiguo... sudantia rore*, 4.301), or an aquifer (*inpulsa levi turbatur glarea vena*, 4.302).

¹⁶⁶ Thompson and Bruère (1970) 159. Cf. *Georgics* 3.534.

position parallel to the hostile landscape. In the juxtaposition of Caesar’s flood-stricken camps and the Pompeians’ forced “drought,” the concern with water and earth remains relevant. As the soldiers dig, searching for water, they are more driven and delve more deeply than a hypothetical gold miner (*Astyrici scrutator pallidus auri*).¹⁶⁷ The emphasis on depth (*penitus*) and the diggers’ position beneath ground-level (*merserit*) are similar to the deep flood waters that swallow the landscape (*una palus... mersit, / absorpsit penitus rupes*, 4.100). They submerge themselves in earth as if it were water; ironically, it is the lack of water that defines their situation.

Despite the depth of their digging, the Pompeians are still in need of water, even following the recent aquatic excesses of the storm and flood. Finding no underground water source, they resort to ghastly and disgusting alternatives that ultimately serve to emphasize their desperation and even to dehumanize them.

si mollius arvum
 prodidit umorem, pinguis manus utraque glaebas
 exprimit ora super; nigro si turbida limo
 conluvies inmota iacet, cadit omnis in haustus
 certatim obscaenos miles moriensque recepit
 quas nollet victurus aquas; rituque ferarum
 distentas siccant pecudes, et lacte negato
 sordidus exhausto sorbetur ab ubere sanguis.
 tunc herbas frondesque terunt, et rore madentis
 destringunt ramos et siquos palmite crudo
 arboris aut tenera sucos pressere medulla. (4.308-18)

If softer earth produced moisture, both hands squeeze out
 rich clods over their mouths; if muddy filth lies unmoving
 in black slime, every soldier at once fell to the obscene drink and
 dying, took in waters he would not if destined to live; like animals
 they suck dry the swollen herds, and with milk denied them
 the dirty blood is sucked from the empty udder.
 Then they grind grasses and leaves, and strip off branches

¹⁶⁷ Asso (2010) 173 *ad* 298 cites Spain as the source for a great deal of Roman gold. The abundance of the precious metal is in stark contrast to the devastating lack of water. Cf. Strabo 3.2.8-10 for the presence of gold and other precious metals (silver, copper, electrum, etc.) in Spain; the metals occur in such great quantities that they can be mined (for ore deposits), but also exist as particulates in the rivers, ready to be sifted out.

wet with dew and press any sap from a tree's green branches
or soft marrows.

Among the alternative sources and substitutes for water are moisture in the soil (*mollius arvum / prodidit umorem*), muddy filth (*turbida... conluvies*) that is lying in slime (*limo*), cow's milk (*pecudes... lacte negato*), cow's blood (*sordidus exhausto... ab ubere sanguis*), and any kind of moisture or sap that can be squeezed from the vegetation (*herbas frondesque; rore madentis... ramos; sucos pressere*). Though Lucan's attention to detail in these verses conveys the comprehensiveness of the search, it is the turn to slimy filth and later to blood that is most repellent and dehumanizing. The filth is exceptional in its repugnance, but stands out for another reason as well, as *limus* and *conluvies* appear only here in the poem, heightening the pathos of scene by their combination.¹⁶⁸ Drinking blood as a way to quench one's thirst is also deliberately shocking; it has a parallel later in the *Bellum Civile*, when one of the remaining Pompeian soldiers led by Cato through the Libyan desert resorts to drinking his own blood to quench the thirst induced by a snakebite.¹⁶⁹

The suffering of the trapped and thirsty Pompeians reaches even greater heights that even if Caesar had ordered the water of the river to be poisoned, the Pompeian soldiers, labeled

¹⁶⁸ OLD 1 cites this passage and two others (Seneca, *NQ* 4b.10; Columella *De re rustica* 1.5.6) as examples. The Columella, which describes the disease-causing aspect of marshes and the creatures living therein, is particularly relevant: *tum etiam nantium serpentiumque pestes hiberna destitutas uligine, caeno et fermentata colluvie venentatas emittit, ex quibus saepe contrahuntur caeci morbi*. Cf. in *BC* the cognate adjective *limosum* (2.70, in connection to Marius in exile) and verb *limare* (var. 9.678, the beheading of Medusa). Asso 175 *ad* 311 calls *conluvies* a prosaic word, used only 8 times in extant Latin. The other poetic usage occurs in Valerius Flaccus, *Argonautica* 4.497 (of the harpies).

¹⁶⁹ *BC* 9.755-60: Aulus and the *dipsas* (thirst-inducing) snake. Asso (2010) 176 *ad* 315 does not cite *BC* 9, but offers parallels from elsewhere in Latin literature: Plautus, *Bacchides* 372; Cicero (metaphorically) *In Vatinius* 6, *Philippics* 2.71, *De Oratore* 1.225.

Romana iuventus to emphasize that Caesar's actions¹⁷⁰ are committed against his own people, would still be thirsty enough to disregard the poison and drink.

hos licet in fluvios saniem tabemque ferarum
pallida Dictaeis, Caesar, nascentia saxis
infundas aconita palam, Romana iuventus
non decepta bibet. (4.321-24)

Caesar, although you would openly pour into these streams
corrupted blood and the decay of animals and pale aconite
growing on Dictaeian stones, the Roman youth will drink
undeceived.

The hypothetical poisoning methods are multifaceted: Caesar could pollute the waters with the corrupted blood and decaying bodies of animals (*saniem tabemque ferarum*)¹⁷¹ as well as with aconite, a plant-based poison (*nascentia saxis... aconita*).¹⁷² The diction of the passage is characteristic of poison, as *infundere* is often used in this context. Pliny even uses *infundere* specifically of snake venom, using it to indicate the manner in which ophidian teeth help inject venom when a snake bites.¹⁷³ *Infundere* is a perfect verb for the use of poison as an attack; while Lucan does not apply it to the snake in his ninth book, he does use it to shape Caesar's character.¹⁷⁴ The effects of the poison at issue in the Sicoris – namely, burning and unquenchable

¹⁷⁰ More familiar in the context of foreign enemies. *BC* 4.319-20: *o fortunati, fugiens quos barbarus hostis / fontibus inmixto stravit per rura veneno*. Asso (2010) 177 *ad* 319-20 lists several examples of poisoned springs: Ethiopians and Numidians during the war with Juba (cited in the *Adn.* and *Comm. Bern.*, though nowhere else); Clisthenes of Sicyon poisoned the Chrisaeans' water with hellebore (Frontinus, *Strategemata* 3.7.6; Polyaeus, *Strat.* 6.13). Cf. Thucydides 2.49.5.

¹⁷¹ Cf. 4.100-101: the flood washes away the dens and bodies of animals living in the vicinity of the Sicoris.

¹⁷² Kaufman (1932) 162. Aconite was a commonly used poison in Rome that was known for being faster to work than other poisons. Cf. Juvenal 1.158, 8.219; Pliny, *NH* 27.4-10.

¹⁷³ Asso (2010) 178 *ad* 323 references Pliny, *NH* 11.163 for the association of *infundere* with scorpion stings and snakebites.

¹⁷⁴ *Infundere* occurs 9 times in the *BC*, of which 7 are negative, portentous, or associated with nature in a threatening way, and 2 are oddly benign and pleasant. The negative: the prophet Figulus predicts poisoned water as part of the impending apocalypse (1.648); Caesar hypothetically poisons the Sicoris (4.323); blood from the suicidal soldier under Vulteius' command infects the sea (4.568); Tellus restores strength to Antaeus via the Libyan sand (4.616); Erichtho pours *murmura* into the corpse's lips (6.568); drugs (*venenum*) are used to mummify Pompey's head (8.691); Cornelia pours tears over the wounds on

thirst – are described using the same imagery and terminology that Lucan later uses for the symptoms of the *dipsas* snake’s poison. Since the *dipsas* snakebite eventually leads its victim to drink blood, the two scenes are worthy of closer comparison. A side-by-side examination of the details of their suffering demonstrates the linguistic and thematic similarity.

Romana iuventus
 non decepta bibet. torrentur viscera flamma
 oraque sicca rigent squamosis aspera linguis;
 iam marcent venae, nulloque umore rigatus
 aeris alternos angustat pulmo meatus,
 rescissoque nocent suspiria dura palato;
 pandunt ora tamen nociturumque aera captant.
 (4.323-29)

The Roman youth will drink, undeceived.
 Their guts are parched by flame and dry
 mouths are stiff and harsh with scaly tongues;
 now veins are withered, and the lung, dried out
 without moisture chokes the air’s comings and
 goings, and harsh inhalations are harmful to
 the cracked palate; nevertheless, they open
 their mouths and gulp the air that will harm
 them.

ecce subit virus tacitum, carpitque *medullas*
 ignis edax calidaque incendit viscera *tabe*.
 ebibit umorem circum vitalia fusum
 pestis et in sicco linguam torrere palato
 coepit; defessos iret qui sudor in artus,
 non fuit, atque oculos lacrimarum vena refugit.
 (9.741-46)

Look, the silent poison steals in, consuming
 fire gnaws at his marrow and burns his guts
 with hot decay. The plague drinks the moisture
 poured around his vitals and begins to parch
 the tongue on his dry palate; what sweat could
 come upon his tired limbs did not exist, and the
 stream of tears fled back to his eyes.

Basic similarities include the victim’s uncontrollable urge to drink (*bibet/ebibit*). The use of similar words that evoke revulsion (*tabem*, 4.321/*tabe*) as well as words that evoke directed at the inner workings of living things (*medulla*, 4.318/*medullas*) heighten the link between these passages and the pseudo-medical descriptions of poison or venom and its effects. The symptoms are remarkably similar: the entrails burn (*torrentur viscera flamma/calidaque incendit viscera*); dryness and parched mouths are repeatedly emphasized (*torrentur/torrere; ora... sicca, rescisso... palato/in sicco...palato; squamosis...linguis/linguam*). In fact, the thirst suffered by the Pompeians at Ilerda seems to deliberately evoke, though in a predicative way, the later Libyan episode. The drinkers’ tongues are “scaly” (*squamosis*), a word often used of snakes and

Pompey’s body (9.59). And the positive: a luxurious banquet is served (10.155); and Caesar and Cleopatra pour cinnamon over themselves (10.166).

other reptiles. Moreover, the irony of the Pompeians' thirst comes from the juxtaposition of their physical location and the expected location of such symptoms: they are in Spain in the middle of a vast river system that has, moreover, just been inundated with excess water, but they suffer as if they are in the Libyan desert.¹⁷⁵ Ultimately, thirst is thirst, regardless of location, but separate causes (natural sources and animals or human devices) can produce similar results. Pompey's allies at Ilerda may be dehumanized by Caesar's actions, but Caesar himself, as the engineer of the river's course and as potential poisoner, is also dehumanized and made out to be, like the snakes, monstrous and deadly to the Roman soldiers fighting in the pro-Republican faction. He has the power to change the landscape to suit his purposes, making the inundated rivers and valleys of Ilerda seem more like the deserts of Libya. Caesar is more than human in Lucan's portrait of him at Ilerda: he is a cosmic force.

Though the campaign at Ilerda contains fighting between the Caesarians and Pompeians and an eventual surrender to Caesar by the Pompeian commanders, the most vivid part of the episode is the struggle presented to both factions by the landscape and weather. In this "battle" between humans and nature, the latter has more wide-reaching power. As the narrative plays out, however, Caesar himself is portrayed as almost equivalent to a force of nature in his influence and the suffering of those opposed to him. Such a comparison with natural forces and animal dangers dehumanizes him, through excessive elevation or demotion, making him again a sublime object. The landscape is again the vehicle for Lucan's apocalyptic program; the flood literalizes the consuming vortex and boundless chaos of an unformed cosmos. Before the flood descends and after it recedes, however, paired landforms help intensify the conflation of Caesarian and Pompeian factions. This political confusion does not negate Lucan's philosophical message: Caesar is powerful, like the land and water, and can inflict suffering and defeat.

¹⁷⁵ *BC* 4.332-36; cf. *Garamantes* 4.679, 9.460, 512.

Book four does not end at Ilerda. Lucan dwells on the suicide-pact death raft captained by Vulteius near Illyria before concluding the book with Curio's misfortune in Libya. In this episode, which also contains the story of Hercules and Antaeus, as well as the later more lengthy treatment of Libya in book nine, Lucan focuses on the unique topography of Libya and the issues presented by its borders (or lack thereof). Dangers from the landscape, its animals, and the presence or absence of water play a major role in Lucan's Libya. Moreover, the issue of boundless space and lack of borders, already at play during the flood at Ilerda, creates a place where there is a fluid and permeable boundary between reality and myth as well.

Chapter 3: Greece: Delphi, Thessaly, Pharsalus

The episodes in the *Bellum Civile* that take place in Greece, namely in Delphi and Thessaly, the region where Pharsalus is located, occupy the central portion of the poem in books five through seven. Delphi and Thessaly in particular among Greek places have rich literary, mythological, and historical backgrounds. Lucan takes advantage of this feature and augments his own civil war theme with every poetic tool at his disposal. Masters has addressed the complexity of Lucan's poetry in the context of Delphi:

Lucanian language inhabits a paranoiac world. A pseudo-Stoic cosmos in which everything connects; a poetic, symbolic nexus in which every element – history, myth as aetiology, natural phenomena, and, above all, the word – *conspires*. It is the vision of a total system, in which nothing is unresounding, unportentious. Everything signifies. If we respond to this paranoia we will produce a spectrum of uneases whose range extends from obvious functional connections which constitute the surface argument of the poem, to shadows so vague that even to state them is to overstate them.¹

This interpretation of Lucan's work, as something so full of intertext, allusion, and detail that nothing is unremarkable, is, I think, applicable to his treatment not only of Delphi, but of Pharsalus and Thessaly as well. Masters' identification of a "pseudo-Stoic cosmos" allows for an exploration of the various literary and geographic pieces to the poetic puzzle, but leaves room for further analysis of Lucan's use of Stoic elements in the construction of his poetic world.

Williams' detailed interpretation of Seneca's *Naturales Quaestiones*² provides invaluable comparanda for Stoic approaches to the natural world in for the time and literary milieu in which Lucan wrote. Seneca explores the world of nature in order to better understand the universe and its workings and, in attaining comprehension, to better fulfill the Stoic goal of living in accordance with nature. The world depicted in the *Bellum Civile*, by contrast, is not designed as a

¹ Masters (1992) 106.

² Williams (2012).

place for contemplation or enlightenment; Lucan chooses the most useful elements of Stoic physics – cosmic sympathy, world cycles and conflagration, the identification of god with nature – to build a world suited to apocalyptic narrative and cosmic consequences.

Bexley has shown that Delphi and Pharsalus, by means of their geographic and political centrality, dislocate the power and importance of Rome (i.e., the Republic) in the *Bellum Civile*.³ I argue that Lucan's Greece, as interpreted through both Delphi and Thessaly, is a place where issues of centrality and dislocation are active on literary and philosophical levels as well. Not only does the poem's attention turn to Greece and, moreover, to places seen as central for centuries in the Hellenic world, but the Roman state itself, embodied by the senate, is uprooted from the forum in Rome and relocated overseas. Lucan addresses a whole host of geographical and philosophical issues in these books. The theme of gigantomachy, present in the *Bellum Civile* since the very beginning (*bella per Emathios... campos*, 1.1), is renewed with force. The landscape and its form appear malleable; the history of heaped up mountains and Herculean river valleys provide a suitable background for deliberate geographical inconsistency in catalogues and a landscape that reacts violently to the upcoming battle. Delphi and Thessaly even seem to act as distorted mirrors of each other: where Delphi is a pleasant, but defunct, location, Thessaly is insidiously suited to warfare, a historical and contemporary *locus horridus*. The Stoicism of Lucan's poetic universe is inextricable from the physical places in these central books of the poem. Delphi and Thessaly must be understood in terms of Stoic theories about the structure of the cosmos, the πνεῦμα that permeates it, and the balance it must maintain. Caesar's actions, superhuman to the point of being gigantomachic, upset this balance and lead to the climactic point in the poem: the battle of Pharsalus, when the metaphor of cosmic collapse is fulfilled. The

³ Bexley (2009).

apocalyptic dread associated with civil war in the first six books becomes reality in the aftermath of the battle.

The ephraseis of Delphi and Thessaly explore their deep history. The grand scope of time, from geologic creation of the mountains, valleys and rivers to the establishment of the human society and the oracle, gives weight to the current events in Lucan's Hellenic world. Through his portrayal of the land and his manipulation of poetic time, Lucan balances Pharsalus against everything that came before it and uses it to metaphorically usher in a new world and new order under Caesar.

I. The Cosmic Singularity at Delphi

Though Greece has been mentioned in the *Bellum Civile* prior to book five, the first extended treatment of a specific place in Greece occurs when Appius⁴ takes his leave from the senators assembled at Epirus and goes to Delphi to consult the oracle. In this episode, Lucan's literary exploration of Delphi and its mythic and cultural significance establishes the region as a geographical and narratological center point in the epic, something that recalls the mythical status of Delphi as the center of the Hellenic world.⁵ Moreover, the confluence of geography, mythology, Stoic philosophical language, and Lucan's presentation of the oracular process creates "a dense knot of allusions, symbols, [and] analogies" that elevates this episode's significance beyond its relatively short treatment in the epic's fifth book.⁶

⁴ Barratt (1979) 25 *ad* 5.67-68: Appius Claudius Pulcher, the Roman governor of Greece during the civil war. Ahl (1976) 124 also gives a brief biography of Appius.

⁵ Masters (1992) 93 cites the centrality of Delphi, according to the myth wherein Zeus releases two eagles, whose flight paths cross over the exact middle of the earth, located over Delphi. Romm (1992) 62-63 notes Delphi's centrality and its importance, especially to the Archaic Greeks; for its position in the Greek world, he cites Agathemus 1.1.2; Plutarch, *Mor.* 409e; Varro, *Ling. Lat.* 7.17; and Strabo 9.3.6.

⁶ Masters (1992) 106 comments on the intense interconnectedness of Lucan's created world, a place where "nothing is unresounding" and "everything signifies," and locates Delphi at the center of this world.

The Delphi episode follows Appius' departure from a meeting of the senate at Epirus, from which he goes to consult the oracle, and sets the pattern for the prevalence of Stoic language in later verses. The senate's dispersal (*iam turba soluto / arma petit coetu*, 5.64-65) employs two separate, yet crucial, examples of this terminology. The end of the meeting (*soluto... coetu*) echoes a phrase in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*,⁷ but also provides another example of *solvere* and the motif of dissolution in the poem. Recalling the first simile, wherein the bonds of the world dissolve (1.72-80), the use of *solvere* leading into the Delphi episode predicts the cosmic themes present therein.⁸ Lucan's description of the senate as *turba* also has some deeper implications beyond the common use of the word during the first century.⁹ In his *Epistulae Morales*, Seneca warns against the dangers of the *turba* and its influence (7.1-5). Lucan's use of *turba* consistently hints at a similar mindset and his application of the term to the exiled senate in Epirus gives the crowd of senators a questionable moral position. This, in addition to their displacement: when the senate, one of the fundamental parts of the Republican Roman government, convenes somewhere off-center in the Romanocentric world of the Caesars (i.e., not in Rome), it reinforces Lucan's shift of the geographical points of importance further east to Epirus, Delphi, and eventually Pharsalus.

Appius' intent in visiting the oracle at Delphi is to determine the outcome of the war (*finemque expromere rerum*, 5.68). Previous episodes of the *Bellum Civile* have focused on campaigns outside Italy and the more geographically central regions of the Roman world.

Appius' quest for knowledge and the subsequent battle of Pharsalus are both in mythically and

⁷ Ovid, *Met.* 13.898-99: *coetuque soluto / discedunt*; a group of Nereids parts ways.

⁸ Compare the use of *solvere* and its cognates for melting snow in the Rubicon ephrasis (*resolutae... Alpes*, 1.219) and during the storm near Ilerda (*Pyrenaeae, quas numquam solvere Titan / evaluit, fluxere nives*, 4.83-84).

⁹ Nutting (1932) 245 notes that Lucan conforms to the linguistic habits of his day in using *turba* to refer to a group, but not in a derogatory way.

historically central places. The *finis* he wishes to explore are here temporal, rather than spatial.¹⁰ Or perhaps Appius attempts to transgress these temporal *finis*: by this period, the Delphic oracle was somewhat defunct.¹¹ It has been neglected for long years (*obducta... Delphica*, 5.69-70)¹² and the recesses of the shrine must be unbarred (*reserat penetralia Phoebi*, 5.70). For Lucan, *resero* indicates either some level of military or civic disturbance or the potential for prophecy. His Delphi – and the knowledge contained therein – is accessible in the same way as a besieged city (Corfinium) or temple (that of Saturn in Rome), as a blockaded escape route (Brundisium), or as the seats of the underworld.¹³

The landscape surrounding Delphi is introduced in an ecphrasis which encompasses the sanctuary itself as well as the mountain where it is located, Parnassus, with which it is identified.¹⁴ The attention to Parnassus taps into the mythological tradition surrounding the mountain and overlays its historical depth onto Appius' visit to the shrine and its intra-epic temporal immediacy.

Hesperio tantum quantum summotus Eoo
 cardine Parnasos gemino petit aethera colle,
 mons Phoebos Bromioque sacer, cui numine mixto
 Delphica Thebanae referunt trieterica Bacchae. (5.71-74)

As far removed from western point as from eastern

¹⁰ Cf. *BC* 1.67: *fert animus causas tantarum expromere rerum*, itself an allusion to Ovid's *Met.* 1 and the temporal extent of Ovid's epic program, from the origin of existence to his own day.

¹¹ The oracle's defunct nature was anthropogenic, not due to the mechanism of prophecy in Delphi. At *BC* 5.112-14, Lucan tells us that kings feared the future and forbid the gods to speak. The oracle, therefore, was closed, not made non-functional. For the oracle's obsolescence, see Dick (1965) 460.

¹² Barratt (1979) 26 *ad* 5.68-70 compares Lucan's *obducta* to Vergil's at *Georg.* 2.411: *bis segetem densis obducunt sentibus herbae*, where it has the meaning "overgrown." Cf. elsewhere in Lucan: 3.573 (at the battle of Massilia, water choked with blood), 3.735 (darkness covering eyes), 4.31 (troops screening a camp), and 9.648 (Medusa turning the world to stone).

¹³ *BC* 2.507: *reseratis... portis*, of the gates of Corfinium during Caesar's siege; 2.682: *ut reseret pelagus*, of Pompey's escape from the barricaded harbor at Brundisium; 3.117: *ante fores nondum reseratae*, of the gates of the temple of Saturn in Rome; 6.600: *Elysias resera sedes*, Sextus Pompey's command to the Thessalian witch Erichtho.

¹⁴ Masters (1992) 107 calls the identification of Delphi and Parnassus a "geographical distortion," but credits the origin of the poetic practice to Ovid, *Met.* 4.643.

point, Parnassus seeks the aether with twin peaks,
a mountain sacred to Phoebus and Bromius, for whom, divinities
mixed, Theban Bacchants carry out the Delphic triennial.

The geographical placement of Parnassus – hence, Delphi – is of primary importance. Though Lucan does not explicitly describe the mythological determination of Delphi’s location, established when Zeus released two eagles from opposite sides of the earth and the place where their paths crossed became the center of the world, he does compare the equal distance from west and east to Parnassus. The arrangement of this line, *Hesperio tantum quantum summotus Eoo*, even represents the geographical positions it describes, with *Hesperio* and *Eoo* at each end of the line, equidistant from the center.¹⁵ Lucan’s Delphi is central because of geography, not myth.

What follows in the text, a description of the split peak of Parnassus, allows for two levels of analysis: one metapoetic, focusing on the significance of Parnassus within the *Bellum Civile* itself; the other geo-political, examining the potential problems with including the mythologically (and, for the Greeks, politically) central Delphi in Lucan’s Romanocentric universe. Masters has explored both avenues of analysis at some length, using Parnassus’ split peak (*Parnasos gemino... colle*) and its centrality as evidence.¹⁶ For Masters, Parnassus is “the civil war” mountain, since even its nature as a single point in the center of the world – marked by the *omphalos* stone – is doubled or split. Parnassus itself rises to the sky with two peaks, a physical shape echoed in religious practice by the worship of two separate gods (*mons Phoebus Bromioque sacer*).¹⁷ Moreover, according to Masters, the combined ideas of cosmic centrality and internal division incarnate in Lucan’s Delphi and Parnassus, make this particular place an

¹⁵ Barratt (1979) 28 *ad* 5.72 recommends Manilius 2.788-807 on the cardinal points as a supplement to *Hesperio... Eoo / cardine*. See also Bexley (2009) 461.

¹⁶ Strabo 9.3.3 does not mention Parnassus’ peak except to note that the oracle is near the summit (κατὰ κορυφήν).

¹⁷ Masters (1992) 107-111.

ideal demonstration of the “decentralization of the Roman world.”¹⁸ Bexley also notes the decentralization and destabilization of Rome in regard to Lucan’s treatment of Delphi and Parnassus.¹⁹ In what follows, I examine how Lucan’s use of elements of Stoic philosophy, and the corresponding terminology used to describe them, both bolster the pattern of geo-political decentralization for Rome and renew the organizing simile of cosmic destruction that anticipates the battle at Pharsalus. Delphi, its ecphrasis, and its spatio-temporal place in Lucan’s poem, are stepping-stones on the path to the climactic and cataclysmic battle in book seven.

Ultimately, the Delphic ecphrasis’ focus on centrality in a Roman poem about the changing powers in the Roman state has wider implications than a geo-political paradigm shift. Masters and Bexley both cite Lucan’s encomium to Nero in the poem’s introduction as relevant to the larger narrative of threats to Roman power.²⁰ Not only does Lucan credit Nero with his poetic inspiration (1.66), and use Nero as a positive balance against the damage wrought during the civil war (1.33-38), but even predicts Nero’s apotheosis (1.45-59). When choosing his divine seat, however, Nero must be cautious.

sed neque in arctoo sedem tibi legeris orbe,
nec polus aversi calidus qua vergitur austri,
unde tuam videas obliquo sidere Romam.
aetheris immensi partem si presseris unam,
sentiet axis onus. Librati pondera caeli
orbe tene medio; (1.53-58)

But you must not choose your seat in the arctic region,
nor where the hot pole of hostile Auster is inclined,
whence you would see your Rome with oblique star.
If you press one part of the immense aether,
the sky will feel the weight. Hold your weight in the middle
region of the balanced sky;

¹⁸ Masters (1992) 98-99.

¹⁹ Bexley (2009) 461-63.

²⁰ Masters (1992) 98; Bexley (2009) 460-61.

The cosmic center is situated in such a way that from it, one would have a clear view of Rome. Since great distance to either north (*in arctoo... orbe*) or south (*polus aversi calidus qua vergitur austri*) would cause Nero's view to be obscured (*tuam videas obliquo sidere Romam*), it seems that Lucan imagines the center of the heavens along the same latitude as Rome itself. Moreover, if the newly deified Caesar settles in a place away from the center of the heavens, he will cause the whole system to become unbalanced thanks to his *pondus*.²¹ In what is clearly more than a comment on the size of Nero's person, the deified emperor must align his divine weight with Rome or risk upsetting the balance of the universe. Bexley compares Nero's balance of the sky on a north-south axis to Delphi's location along an east-west axis, and notes that "a metaphorical balance of power has become literal,"²² quite apropos in a poem where narrative of destruction and collapse is a literalization of the first simile. Bexley also connects the focus on cardinal points, both in Nero's apotheosis and in Delphi's ephrasis, to the Stoic influence on the physical world imagined by Lucan, but focuses more on the religious aspect of the oracle.²³ I would go further: in Lucan's non-traditional epic world the traditional divine apparatus is replaced by what may be conceived of as Stoic philosophy's answer to divinity: divine fire (*πῦρ τεχνικόν*) and breath (*πνεῦμα*), reason (*λογός*), and the delicate balance (*τόνος*) of the various parts of existence.²⁴ As a result, a deified Julio-Claudian emperor would simply not fit in; even Nero's divine existence – in the company of other non-Stoic gods – is enough to throw the world off balance. An emperor whose own rule was not known for qualities comparable to *λογός* cannot compete with the ruling principles of the world of the *Bellum Civile*. At every level, then,

²¹ Dinter (2012) 13 ties the encomium to Nero to Lucan's gigantomachic program, calling the emperor "a towering giant of cosmic dimensions, victorious... in civil war."

²² Bexley (2009) 460-61.

²³ Bexley (2009) 461.

²⁴ On the principle of *τόνος* in Roman Stoicism, see Seneca, *NQ* 3.10.3: *et natura partes suas velut in ponderibus constitutas examinat, ne portionum aequitate turbata mundus praeponderet*.

political, geographical, and philosophical, Lucan's Rome is in the process of losing its position. At Delphi, where the local landscape and history presents a tangible threat to Rome's place, the balance shifts.

The ecphrasis continues by delving into deep time, exploring the early natural and geologic history of Parnassus. The split peak is no longer the focus because of its divided nature, but because of its prominence.

hoc solum fluctu terras mergente cacumen
eminuit pontoque fuit discrimen et astris.
tu quoque vix summam, seductus ab aequore, rupem
extuleras, unoque iugo, Parnase, latebas. (5.75-78)

This peak alone projected out of the flood that submerged the lands and was the boundary for sea and stars. You, too, Parnassus, separated by the water, had scarcely raised your highest peak, and you were hiding one ridge.

Following in the poetic footsteps of Ovid, Lucan associates Parnassus with the great deluge that consumed the world in the early years of humanity.²⁵ In the *Metamorphoses*, the sole survivors of the flood, Deucalion and Pyrrha, make landfall on Parnassus because it is tall enough to remain partially above the floodwaters (*mons ibi verticibus petit arduus astra duobus / nomine Parnasus, superantque cacumina nubes*, 1.316-17), a single point of safety – despite its double peak – in a world devastated by the deluge. This history remains in the *Bellum Civile*: Lucan's Parnassus ecphrasis recalls the peak's solitary prominence above the flood waters (*hoc solum fluctu terras mergente cacumen / eminuit*) and its vast height (*pontoque fuit discrimen et astris*); the divisive allusion of the twin peaks resolves, at least in memory, to one mountain (*unoque iugo*) rising above the flood. Moreover, the inclusion of the flood event in Parnassus' history recalls another earlier flood in the *Bellum Civile*, that of the Sicoris river near Ilerda in book

²⁵ Cf. Ovid, *Met.* 1.262-317.

four.²⁶ The flood at Ilerda and Lucan's account of the deluge that Parnassus withstood are part of his larger narrative of grand-scale destruction lifted from Stoic theories about the form, duration, and regeneration of the universe.²⁷

In the following lines, the focus of the ecphrasis shifts away from the macrocosmic view of Parnassus and its history back to the topography of Delphi itself, and, in particular, the physical shape of the Pythia's sanctuary in the temple of Apollo. After a brief aetiological allusion to the story of Python, the serpent living in the vicinity of Delphi that was slain by Apollo,²⁸ Lucan gives his version of the construction and mechanism of prophecy at Delphi.

ut vidit Paeon vastos telluris hiatus
divinam spirare fidem ventosque loquaces
exhalare solum, sacris se condidit antris,
incubuitque adyto vates ibi factus Apollo. (5.82-85)

When Paeon saw that the vast chasms of the earth
breathe divine faith and that the earth exhales
vocal winds, he established himself in the sacred caves,
and Apollo, made a prophet there, rested in the adyton.

The form of the Delphic sanctuary and the process that enables its oracles is here attributed to a chasm in the earth (*vastos telluris hiatus*), the exhalation from that chasm of an inspirational force (*divinam spirare fidem... exhalare*), and the location of this chasm – and the sanctuary's *adyton* – in a cave (*sacris se condidit antris*). Scholars working on Delphi and the mechanism of its oracular ability are generally dismissive of Lucan's account: Oppé calls it “too fantastic to be

²⁶ See my discussion in Chapter 2.

²⁷ Cf. Seneca, *N.Q.* 3.27-28, where Seneca describes a world-ending cataclysm taking the form of a massive flood. Barratt (1979) 29 *ad* 75-76 also cites the flood narrative as evidence of Stoic cataclysmic doctrine.

²⁸ *BC* 5.79-81: *ultor ibi expulsae, premeret cum viscera partus, / matris adhuc rudicus Paeon Pythona sagittis / explicuit, cum regna Themis tripodasque teneret*. Lapidge (2010) 302 suggests that the Senecan use of *contextus* (*De Ben.* 6.22.1) is comparable to the Chrysippean συμπλοκή, describing the interconnection of the cosmos. There is also enough linguistic relation between the roots of συμπλοκή and *explicere* (Lucan 5.81), to argue that *-plic-* words in Latin can also indicate the cosmic connections in Stoic philosophy. In Greek, πλοκή derives from the verb πλέκω, which is comparable to Latin *plico*, another verb that shares its root with *explicere* and cognate words.

quoted as evidence;²⁹ Parke and Wormell label it “a fine account of rhetoric and melodrama;”³⁰ and the debt to Vergil’s account of the consultation of the Cumaean Sibyl is readily acknowledged.³¹ Lucan clearly draws his interpretation of Delphi from a range of sources, a brief survey of which will illuminate the larger conceptual issues at stake in this discussion.

Though Delphi, due to its geopolitical centrality in the Hellenic world, is mentioned in many ancient texts, I will be focusing on those authors who address the establishment and mechanism of prophecy, rather than those who record oracles or journeys to Delphi. Early sources for the sanctuary and oracle include the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, wherein Apollo slays Python and establishes both shrine and games associated with the name Pythos or Pythia;³² references to worship of both Apollo and Gaia/Ge at Delphi in the Attic tragedians;³³ and references to natural exhalations and prophetic inspiration in pseudo-Aristotle’s *De Mundo*.³⁴ Cicero’s work on divination also mentions these exhalations, calling them *anhelitus terrae* or *afflatus ex terra*.³⁵ None of these sources mention any kind of chasm or vapors at Delphi; the earliest sources that do describe them are Diodorus Siculus and Strabo, who both attribute their information to others using the verb φασί.³⁶ Diodorus repeatedly uses the word χάσμα and describes the inspiration by vapors emitted by the earth with the verb ἐνθουσιάζω; he is also the

²⁹ Oppé (1904) 219.

³⁰ Parke and Wormell (1956) 408.

³¹ Oppé (1904) 219; Will (1942) 164. Cf. Vergil, *Aen.* 6.9-76.

³² *HH to Apollo* 218-374. Cf. Oppé (1904) 216.

³³ Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 1-8; Euripides, *Iphigenia at Tauris* 1259-69.

³⁴ Oppé (1904) 219; *de Mundo* corresponds to Bekker numbers 391-401.

³⁵ Cicero, *De Divinatione* 2.57. Oppé (1904) 219 suggests that Cicero is drawing on a Stoic source, potentially Chrysippus. Given that Cicero modeled his view of Stoic philosophy on the writings of Panaetius, he may have encountered Chryippus’ writings indirectly, as interpreted by his teacher.

³⁶ Diodorus Siculus 16.26.1-4; Strabo 9.3.5. Oppé (1904) 217 credits the origin of the chasm story to Strabo and Ustinova (2009) 125 cites him as the earliest account of the prophetic process at Delphi; Parke and Wormell (1956) 20, Fontenrose (1978) 200, and Green (2009) 32 all cite Diodorus as the original account. Both Diodorus and Strabo credit another source for their accounts, however, allowing for the possibility of shared source material.

source of the “stoned goat” story,³⁷ where the inspirational powers of the vapors were discovered by a goatherd whose flock had stumbled upon them. Strabo does not write specifically of a χάσμα, but locates the Pythia’s place of prophecy in a cave (ἄντρον κοῖλον κατὰ βάθους); the force that inspires her is πνεῦμα ἐνθουσιαστικόν.³⁸ Longinus, in his work on the sublime, replaces Strabo’s πνεῦμα with ἀτμὸν ἔνθεον.³⁹ Later sources for the mechanism of prophecy, post-dating Lucan’s account, include Plutarch, whose status as a priest at Delphi⁴⁰ gives him some authority on the subject. Plutarch’s account of the source of the Pythia’s inspiration that includes references to πνεύματα, δυνάμεις, ἀναθυμιάσεις, and ἀτμοί, however, comes in his work debunking the oracular process.⁴¹ These varied accounts have led to some debate in modern scholarship over the actual topography of the sanctuary and *adyton*, and on whether or not the geological evidence present on the site of Delphi can support the presence of volcanic vapors that could account for the πνεῦμα and ἀτμὸν mentioned by Strabo and Longinus.⁴² Fontenrose dismisses the vapor and chasm as “wholly fanciful.”⁴³ Ultimately, the existence – or nonexistence – of a chasm and vapors at Delphi does not matter for Lucan’s version of Delphi; the existence of these elements of the Delphic tradition in Strabo and Diodorus as well as the language used to discuss these exhalations – Stoic terminology like πνεῦμα and words indicating breath coming from the earth and natural world – provide the necessary context to include

³⁷ Green (2009) 38.

³⁸ Strabo 9.3.5.

³⁹ Longinus, *De Sublimitate* 13.2. Arieti and Crossett (1985) 82 *ad* 13.2 call the reference to vapor (ἀτμός) a “vulgar error.”

⁴⁰ Plutarch, *Mor.* 792f, 700e. Cf. Fontenrose (1978) 197.

⁴¹ Plutarch, *Mor.* 432c-438d. Cf. Fontenrose (1978) 197-99.

⁴² Green (2009) 39-40 cites the research done by de Boer and Hale from 1996 onward that addresses the possibility 1) that a cross-fault ran NW/SE under the *adyton*, 2) that seismic activity can produce ethylene gas, 3) that a layer of clay in the strata under Delphi could contain fissures through which water and gasses could pass, and 4) that ethylene gas could in fact be equated with the mantic πνεῦμα cited by Strabo. Cf. de Boer and Hale (2000).

⁴³ Fontenrose (1978) 196-97.

Delphic prophecy, its mechanics, and even the Pythia herself within the universe of the *Bellum Civile*, a cosmos built on and controlled by the rules of Stoic physics.

Lucan's choice to furnish his Delphi with a cave-like or cave-adjacent *adyton*, a chasm, and divine vapors activates a range of intertextual and philosophical points of interest. The presence of the cave alludes to the *Aeneid*, where the Sibyl of Cumae's place of prophecy is also in a cavern.⁴⁴ Since the Cumaean cave doubles as an entrance to the underworld, a double role associated with caves since at least the 5th century BCE,⁴⁵ the combination of cavern, prophecy, and the underworld puts Delphi in contrast to the cave in Thessaly in *Bellum Civile* 6 where Erichtho performs a necromancy, combining literary elements of catabasis and prophecy.

Another element of Delphi's wider importance depends on the history of its shrine as well as Lucan's use of the Vergilian model. Before Apolline worship became the central focus of the sanctuary at Delphi, it was also the site of a shrine dedicated to *Gē* and the worship of the earth.⁴⁶ In Lucan's Delphi, the chasm from which the exhalations emerge is *vastos telluris hiatus* (5.82), vast gapings of the earth. Lucan connects the personification of *Gē* or *Tellus* with caves elsewhere: when Hercules fights Antaeus in book four, Antaeus had been born from the earth, conceived in a cave, after his siblings the *Gigantes*.⁴⁷ For Asso, this makes *tellus* a hypostasis of Earth, and creates a direct connection between the creation of the giants (and the conflict they bring on a cosmic scale) and the earth.⁴⁸ Moreover, the Lucanian allusion in the story of Hercules and Antaeus to Vergil's account of the battle between Hercules and Cacus in *Aeneid* 8 provides

⁴⁴ Cf. Vergil, *Aen.* 6.237-42. For Lucan's reference to Vergil, see Oppé (1904) 219, Will (1942) 164, Parke and Wormell (1956) 23, and Ustinova (2009) 76-81.

⁴⁵ Ustinova (2009) 68 for the origin of the term *nekuomanteia*. Cf. Ogden (2001) 17.

⁴⁶ Aeschylus, *Eum.* 1-8; Euripides, *I.T.* 1259-69; Pausanias 10.5.5-13; Plutarch, *Mor.* 433c, 435 d. Cf. Parke and Wormell (1956) 6, Fontenrose (1978) 1, Green (2009) 33.

⁴⁷ *BC* 4.593-94: *nondum post genitos Tellus effeta gigantes, / terribilem Libyeis partum concepit in antris.*

⁴⁸ Asso (2010) 226 *ad* 4.593-94 quotes Voss in Weber *ad* 4.593: "*Gigantes dicuntur quasi Gegentes i.e. terrae gentes; nam sunt filii terrae, γῆ enim Graece, Latine dicitur terra, unde Gigantes.*"

another piece of evidence in the puzzle of how Lucan's caves work. Drawing on Vergilian models such as the cave of the Sibyl or the cavern associated with Cacus, Lucan's caves have a fundamental connection to the earth (*Tellus* or *Gē*) and to the divine knowledge and monstrous creatures that come from it.

Lucan's choice to adapt accounts of the chasm and vapors as seen in Strabo and Diodorus into his own Delphic landscape support the portrayal of the earth, its exhalations, and subterranean activity that is stated in natural philosophical sources. This connection is primarily based on the terminology used for the inspirational force that affected the Pythia, *πνεῦμα*.⁴⁹ While Plato also associated *πνεῦμα* with the divine inspiration of seers,⁵⁰ the continued use of the word into the time of the Stoics allows for the conflation of an earlier idea with the philosophical conceptions of a divine *πνεῦμα* that pervaded and connected the cosmos. The perception of the natural phenomena produced by the earth – such as the *πνεῦμα* at Delphi – as something material enables the connection between the mantic inspirational force affecting the Pythia and the cosmic *πνεῦμα* posited by the Stoics.⁵¹ Where *πνεῦμα* in the Pythia's chamber at Delphi connects earth and god, the larger cosmic *πνεῦμα* is, according to the Stoics, identical to the divine force that pervades the natural world. Lucan's mode of presenting the cavern with its chasm and the *spiritus* (5.132, 165)⁵² that emerges from it conforms to the philosophical explanations of the site

⁴⁹ Cf. Strabo 9.3.5; Plutarch, *Mor.* 435a.

⁵⁰ Plato, *Apology* 22c, *Ion* 533c, *Phaedrus* 244a, *Laws* 719c.

⁵¹ For the materiality of the Delphi *πνεῦμα*, see Ustinova (2009) 126. For natural phenomena originating in the earth, see Aristotle, *Meteor.* 340b27; cf. Ustinova (2009) 130. For the connection of earlier religious traditions to the philosophy of Aristotle and the Stoics, see Will (1942) 173 and Fontenrose (1978) 197; cf. Cicero, *Div.* 1.79: *nam terrae vis Pythiam Delphis incitabat, naturae Sibyllam.*

The physical reality of *πνεῦμα* remains pertinent in Latin literature as well. Rosenmeyer (1989) 64 calls it “the material coefficient of the causal chain” and elaborates at page 74: “In Stoic thinking, ethics, theology, cosmology, biology, and psychology are closely intertwined because of the basic premise that the *pneuma*, the stuff of life of which all vital entities are manifestations, is corporeal.”

⁵² *BC* 5.131-34: *muto Parnasos hiatu / conticuit pressitque deum, seu spiritus istas / destituit fauces mundique in devia versum / duxit iter*; 5.161-65: *tandem conterrita virgo / confugit ad tripodas vastisque*

with which Strabo and Diodorus agree. The term *spiritus*, used in place of the Greek word *πνεῦμα*, is also in evidence in Seneca's *Naturales Quaestiones*, where it narrows the distinction between *aer* and *πνεῦμα* as well as bridging micro- and macrocosm between the human body and the "cosmic body."⁵³ Seneca, like Lucan, connects the movement of air beneath the earth with the presence of hollow caverns:

sunt et illic specus vasti ingentesque recessus ac spatia suspensis hinc et inde montibus
laxa; sunt abrupti in infinitum hiatus, qui saepe illapsas urbes receperunt et ingentem
ruinam in alto condiderunt. haec spiritu plena sunt – nihil enim usquam inane est – et
stagna obsessa tenebris et lacus ampli. (3.16.4-5)

Also in that place there are vast caves and huge recesses and extensive spaces with mountains overhanging here and there; there are gaps that drop into endlessness, which often take in collapsed cities and bury the mighty ruin in the deep. These places are full of air – for nothing anywhere is empty – and marshes covered in darkness and great lakes.

The Stoic understanding of the physical construction of the earth, including hollow places and the movement of air or water, as depicted in Seneca also finds expression in Lucan's Delphic sanctuary, where the Pythia inhales *spiritus* while perched above *vastos telluris hiatus* (5.82).

The role of Delphi, its oracle, and the Pythia herself as an individual, depends on the physical reality of the mechanism of prophecy and the peculiar kind of omniscience Lucan attributes to the place and Pythia. The entire episode hinges on three points: Delphi as a locus of divinity, the interpretation of divinity within the *Bellum Civile* as something non-anthropomorphic yet still of nature, and the spatio-temporal perspective of the oracle. The verses that explore the nature of Delphi's divinity demonstrate these points.

quis latet hic superum? quod numen ab aethere pressum
dignatur caecas inclusum habitare cavernas?

*adducta cavernis / haesit et insueto concepit pectore numen, / quod non exhaustae per tot iam saecula
rupis / spiritus ingessit vati.*

⁵³ See Seneca, *NQ* 2.1-11 for *aer*, *πνεῦμα*, and *spiritus*; 3.15.1 for the earth-body analogy. Cf. Williams (2012) 189-91, and Hine (1981) 123 *ad NQ* 2.1-11 for the "relaxing of the strict doctrine of the early Stoa" in Seneca's writings on this topic.

quis terram caeli patitur deus, omnia cursus
aeterni secreta tenens mundoque futuri
consciis, ac populis sese proferre paratus
contactumque ferens hominis, magnusque potensque,
sive canit fatum seu, quod iubet ille canendo,
fit fatum? forsan, terris inserta regendis
aere libratum vacuo quae sustinet orbem,
totius pars magna Iovis Cirrhaea per antra
exit et aetherio trahitur conexa Tonanti. (5.86-96)

Which of the gods is hidden here? Which god, pressed from
the aether, deigns to live enclosed in blind caverns?
Which god of heaven endures the earth, holding all
secrets of the eternal course and knowing the world's future,
and prepared to offer himself to the people and
bearing the contact of mankind, both great and powerful,
whether he sings fate or, because he commands by singing,
fate comes to be? perhaps a great part of all Jove, inserted
into the earth to govern it, a part which holds up the world,
poised over empty air, goes out through Cirrhaean caves
and is drawn in, connected to the aetherial Thunderer.

In this portion of the Delphi ephrasis, the attention shifts from Delphi's surrounding landscape and ancient history to the fundamental connection between place and divinity, or, as I argue, to the theory held by Stoic philosophers of the immanence of an all-pervasive divine force throughout the cosmos and the earth. Though Delphi is here the locus of a god, Apollo is now omitted completely. Instead, the divine force is housed in Delphi's caverns after being compressed from the air itself (*quod numen ab aethere pressum / dignatur caecas inclusum habitare cavernas*). A more incorporeal deity seems to come into focus in this particular place (*quis terram caeli patitur deus*). Lucan does associate the divine and prophetic force present in Delphi with Jupiter (*totius pars magna Iovis Cirrhaea per antra / exit et aetherio trahitur conexa Tonanti*), linking the *spiritus* emitted from the earth with the most powerful of the traditional pantheon. Seneca's description in his *Naturales Quaestiones*, of the Stoic conception of a cosmic divine force that can be called Jupiter may provide a helpful comparison here.

ne hoc quidem crediderunt Iovem, qualem in Capitolio et in ceteris aedibus colimus, mittere manu sua fulmina, sed eundem quem nos Iovem intellegunt, rectorem custodemque universi, animum ac spiritum mundi, operis huius dominum. et artificem, cui nomen omne convenit. (2.45.1)

They did not even believe that Jupiter, the sort we revere on the Capitol and in other temples, sent lightning by his own hand, but they perceived the same Jupiter which we do, the ruler and guardian of the universe, the mind and soul of the world, the master of this creation. And the artisan for whom every name is suitable.

Seneca writes about the *spiritus mundi*, referring to the metaphorical soul of the corporeal cosmos that corresponds to the soul associated with the human body. The term *spiritus* was the word of choice to indicate *πνεῦμα* in Latin and,⁵⁴ in the *Naturales Quaestiones* in particular, was the “supreme force of cosmic cohesion.”⁵⁵ The combination of the world-body analogy⁵⁶ and body-soul connection in Stoic thought lead logically to the idea of a world soul. This concept, the *anima mundi*, originated in the Old Stoa, whose precepts about the material world incorporated scientific, specifically biological, theories.⁵⁷ The *πνεῦμα* that permeated the universe caused the parts of the cosmos to be connected by “sympathy,” and these sympathetic parts enabled and justified divination.⁵⁸

By substituting a universal divine force, *anima mundi*, for the traditional anthropomorphic Apollo, Lucan seems to “stoicize” the oracle and its process.⁵⁹ This Stoic *numen*, embodied as and equivalent to the *spiritus* or *πνεῦμα* that inspires the Pythia’s prophecy,

⁵⁴ Williams (2012) 190; cf. *NQ* 3.15.1. See also Sambursky (1959), where *spiritus/πνεῦμα* is “the active agent par excellence” in the Stoic cosmos. Reydams-Schils (2005) 41 connects *animus*, *spiritus*, and *anima*. Tarrant (2006) 11 quotes Seneca *De Beneficiis* 2.31.1 (*cum omnia ad animum referamus*) to demonstrate that *animus* could function as “a sort of synecdoche for the whole person.”

⁵⁵ Williams (2012) 247. Hahn (1977) 160 sees the world-soul as “the theory of the human soul extrapolated to the cosmos.”

⁵⁶ Williams (2012) 62.

⁵⁷ Hahn (1977) 157-74. Of the four elements, earth and water were equated with body, fire and air with soul (*SVF* 2.821); *πνεῦμα*, associated with both fire and breath, came to be understood as the soul (*SVF* 2.473).

⁵⁸ Rist (1969) 176.

⁵⁹ Dick (1965) 463.

being all-pervasive, is thus the same force associated with the continuous chain of causation linking the beginning of the universe with the end. This connection is what allows the *numen* knowledge of events occurring at any point in the chain. So when Lucan's *deus* is omniscient as to the entire course of time (*omnia cursus / aeterni secreta tenens mundoque futuri / conscius*, 5.88-90), it is in line with the same theories about the universe, time, and causality that can be found in Seneca. In the *Naturales Quaestiones*, Seneca follows his explanation of the Stoic "Jupiter" with a description of the chain of causation and its meaning for predestination, thus indicating how it can be connected to prophecy.

Vis illum fatum vocare, non errabis; hic est ex quo suspensa sunt omnia, causa causarum. vis illum providentiam dicere, recto dices; est enim cuius consilio huic mundo providetur, ut inoffensus exeat et actus suos explicet. Vis illum naturam vocare, non peccabis; hic est ex quo nata sunt omnia, cuius spiritu vivimus. (2.45.2)

You wish to call him fate? You will not be wrong. He is the one on whom all things depend, the cause of causes. You wish to say he is providence? You will speak correctly. For it is of his plan that everything is provided in this world, so that it, undisturbed, may go out and unfold its own acts. You wish to call this nature? You will not err. He is the one from whom all things are born, by whose breath we live.

For Seneca, *fatum* is inexorably tied to the physical world and its cohesive, omnipresent *spiritus*. As Williams puts it, this is "god as nature."⁶⁰ Divination for the Stoics used signs in nature to infer coming events, a process only theoretically plausible and acceptable because of the deterministic world (*causa causarum*).⁶¹

The Delphic oracle is Stoicized; its process and mechanism in the *Bellum Civile* depend on the presence of a universal divine force present in all places and things, connecting them all from the beginning of the universe to its end. The omniscience of the anthropomorphic Apollo is exchanged for the omnipresence and omniscience of the *anima mundi*, filtered through the Pythia as *spiritus* (5.132, 165) that emerges from the chasm in the cavern adjacent to the shrine (5.82-

⁶⁰ Williams (2012) 4 n.5.

⁶¹ Rosenmeyer (1989) 79.

85).⁶² Lucan is himself acting the *vates*⁶³ when he describes what Phemonoe, inspired by the *spiritus*, can see.

venit aetas omnis in unam
congeriem, miserumque premunt tot saecula pectus,
tanta patet rerum series, atque omne futurum
nititur in lucem, vocemque petentia fata
luctantur; non prima dies, non ultima mundi,
non modus Oceani, numerus non derat harenae. (5.177-82)

All time comes into one mass,
and so many ages press her wretched breast,
such a great series of events lies open, and the entire future
strives into the light, and fates, seeking her voice,
struggle; neither the first day, nor the end of the world,
nor the measure of Ocean, nor the number of the sand is lacking.

In the Pythia's mind, all time is condensed into one vision and, because of this temporal unity, the chain of causation linking universal beginning to universal end is also visible to her (*tanta patet rerum series*). In the same way that the future, like the past and present, is accessible to the *anima mundi*, it is also illuminated to Phemonoe (*omne futurum / nititur in lucem*). Moreover, the extent of the physical world also lies open to the Pythia in all its detail: she can know everything from the grandest scale, the depths and reach of the ocean (*modus Oceani*), to the smallest, enumerating the grains of sand (*numerus... harenae*).⁶⁴ With this description Lucan links his account with the history of the Delphic oracle; his Pythia echoes an earlier Pythia who, when speaking to Croesus' Lydian delegation, claimed to know the number of the sand and the

⁶² Rist (1969) 267 lists some of Seneca's uses of *spiritus* for the soul in the body: *Ep.* 31.11, 41.2, 66.12, 120.14.

⁶³ For Lucan as *vates*, see O'Higgins (1988).

⁶⁴ Barratt (1979) 60-61 *ad* 181-82 cites other uses of countless grains of sand as a way to express the vastness: Seneca, *Med.* 403 (*numerusque harenis derit*); Catullus 7.3 (*quam magnus numerus Libyssae harenae*); Horace, *Car.* 1.28.1-2 (*te maris et terrae numeroque carentis harenae / mensorem cohibent*); Vergil, *Georg.* 2.106 (*quam multae Zephyro turbentur harenae*). Purves (2010) 153 examines the Pythia's vision in Herodotus and from the simultaneous microscopic and macroscopic views recalls "a similar confluence of the miniature and the gigantic" on the shield of Achilles in *Iliad* 18.

measure of the sea (οἶδα δ' ἐγὼ ψάμμου τ' ἀριθμὸν καὶ μέτρα θαλάσσης).⁶⁵ Phemonoe is more than an individual here, she is an institution; she is a fixed point in Delphi's history, sharing the name of the first Pythia⁶⁶ and the knowledge of another early priestess. Nothing in the entire scope of existence – temporal or spatial – lies outside her power of observation. And with everything in existence condensed into one place and time (i.e., the Pythia's mind during Appius' visit to Delphi) the entire space-time continuum appears as a singularity. Purves has observed a similar phenomenon in Homer and Herodotus, where “the reference to an encyclopedic, immortal vantage point that collapses time and spaces is juxtaposed with the model of human travel that traces a path through Delphi.”⁶⁷ These earlier texts, in combination with Lucan's spatio-temporal agenda in books five through seven, make Delphi the most fitting and plausible place for Lucan to explain the Stoic cosmos.

The language describing the extent of the Pythia's vision is characteristic of Cicero's and Seneca's accounts and analyses of Stoic physics, causality, and predetermination.⁶⁸ Lucan uses *rerum series* (5.179) for the causal chain of events, a phrase with rich philosophical value. In his *de Divinatione*, Cicero cites Posidonius on Stoic perceptions of divination, using *ordo seriesque causarum* (1.125) for the Stoic idea of destiny, in the context of the web of connections in the world and the resulting ability to use signs to indicate what is to come.⁶⁹ Seneca uses similar

⁶⁵ Herodotus, *Hist.* 1.47.3. The Lydian king Croesus had sent envoys to a number of oracles around the Hellenic world (Delphi, Abai in Phocis, Dodona, the Amphiarraion, Trophonius, the Branchidai in Miletus) as well as to the Ammonium in Libya; the Delphic oracle is the only one whose response is recorded, as it alone proved its veracity and accuracy to Croesus.

⁶⁶ Strabo 9.3.5.

⁶⁷ Purves (2010) 156.

⁶⁸ Barratt (1979) 60 *ad* 178-79.

⁶⁹ Cicero, *Div.* 1.125: *id est ordinem seriemque causarum, cum causae causa nexa rem ex se gignat. ea est ex omni aeternitate fluens veritas sempiterna. quod cum ita sit, nihil est factum quod non futurum fuerit, eodemque modo nihil est futurum cuius non causas id ipsum efficientes natura contineat.* (=SVF II.921) Cf. SVF II.917-20, for Fate (εἰμαρμένη) in the philosophy of Chrysippus and the connected idea of εἰρημὸς αἰτιῶν (=series causarum). Kidd (1988) 426-28 *ad* fr. 107 notes that “Posidonius gave explicit

wording in his own discussions of fate, predestination, and divination. At *Ep.* 106.3, *series rerum* is used for the same causal relationship between events through time. In his discussion of divination – as practiced by the Etruscans in comparison to the views held by the Stoics – Seneca uses *fatorum series*.⁷⁰ Williams cites this passage as evidence of Seneca’s agreement with the Stoic theory of causal determination.⁷¹ In contrast to the Etruscans, who used specific objects or signs for prophecy, the Stoics approached divination in a more holistic way. Because all things and events were connected (*fatorum series, anima mundi*), signs could be found everywhere.⁷² Masters has articulated a similar perspective on Lucan’s constructed universe where “everything connects,” and the rich combination of poetic techniques creates “a vision of the total system, in which nothing is unresounding, unportentious. Everything signifies.”⁷³ Lucan’s use of *rerum series* is symptomatic of this Stoicizing perspective and is more extensive than simply the Delphi episode; *rerum series* and similar language appears in three other places in the *Bellum Civile* as well. In the proem, *fatorum series* (1.70) leads Rome into civil conflict and leads the poem into its first simile, the fall of the Roman Republic as end of the world (1.72-80). *Series rerum* (3.75) describes the achievements for which Caesar would have been honored at Rome if he had not crossed the Rubicon. Later, during the exegesis on Thessalian magic and divination, *causarum series* (6.612) refers to the Stoic theory of causation and predetermination directly.

The Stoic tone of this passage is also conveyed by the temporal extent of the Pythia’s vision, stretching from the world’s beginning to its end (*prima dies... ultima mundi*, 5.181).⁷⁴

expression to the implications of the relationship between standard Stoic physical philosophy and divination.”

⁷⁰ Seneca, *NQ* 2.32.4.

⁷¹ Williams (2012) 160.

⁷² Williams (2012) 312.

⁷³ Masters (1992) 106.

⁷⁴ Barratt (1979) 60-61 *ad* 181-82 cites this phrase as evidence of Lucan’s “fidelity to Stoic physics.” See also Ahl (1976) 282.

Just as *rerum series* recalls *fatorum series* from the proem, *prima dies... ultima mundi* also echoes the first simile's prediction of the world's end: *saecula tot mundi suprema coegerit hora* (1.73). This focus on causality and finality in the combination of *rerum series* and *ultima mundi* also finds expression elsewhere in the *Bellum Civile*. Lucan uses *ultima mundi* at 4.147; after the flood of the Sicoris near Ilerda, amidst imagery that is already notably apocalyptic, Petreius sees that Caesar will achieve victory and goes to *ultima mundi*. Petreius' defeat – the defeat of a Republican commander – is conveyed in the same language as the end of the world. Then, from a different perspective, Caesar, while surveying the battlefield at Pharsalus, sees the Pompeian side failing and the end of *libertas ultima mundi* (7.580). Here, the *mundus* is embodied by the senators and supporters of the Republican cause; at Pharsalus, the *mundus* that is ending is the world of the Republic. Moreover, it is at Delphi where this language and these images are focused, that the illumination of this Republican end of the world becomes clear.

Delphi is a singularity; a lens through which all other parts of time and space become clear. In this presentation, however, it is a paradox. In the same way that the Pythia and her vision are a single point encompassing many disparate times and places; Delphi's role as a center point in the Hellenic world (represented by the *omphalos*) is contrasted by its identification with Parnassus and the mountain's own duality in its peaks. In this episode, especially through the ecphrasis of Delphi and Parnassus, the juxtaposition of unity and multiplicity occurs at every level. The Stoic world soul theory (the *anima mundi*) enables the simultaneous singularity and multiplicity of space and time, place and mind. Masters demonstrates how Delphi and Parnassus represent this congruence of perspectives with the “merging of duality into unity,” a process relevant to the religious practice at Delphi (divided between Phoebus and Bacchus) as well as to

the topography of the site itself, where Parnassus is “*the* civil war mountain.”⁷⁵ The parallels between the physical space and the scope of observable time at Delphi (via the Pythia) create another kind of unity from narrative/conceptual multiplicity: because space and time have the same form in the part of Lucan’s text, they can be said to present an example of a chronotope. According to Bakhtin, who coined the term, literature can provide examples of spatio-temporal forms that echo the theories about the natural world and its construction.⁷⁶ The Delphic chronotope is related to Stoic theories about the universe and its limitations – specifically its end – and to the larger narrative of civil conflict. For the inhabitants of Lucan’s poem, the end of the Roman Republic is essentially the end of the world. The cosmic chronotope that appears at Delphi, displaying parallel forms of space and time, stretches from the beginning of the world, alluded to in the ecphrasis, to its end, narrated in the poem itself. The geologic scope of history seen in Delphi, as later in Thessaly, provides the other (the first) end of *series rerum*, matched by the end at the battle of Pharsalus. Where Delphi is the lens through which the cosmos is singularity, Thessaly and Pharsalus are the focal point where the *series rerum* comes to an end.

II. Deep Time: The Evolution of Thessaly

Lucan’s treatment of Thessaly and later, of Pharsalus, follows his figuration of Delphi as a locus of cosmic influences and confluences. Where Delphi is a central point, especially in the context of information about the world, Thessaly is a land with change and conflict written into

⁷⁵ Masters (1992) 108-11.

⁷⁶ Holquist (1981) 84-85, a translation of Bakhtin’s essay, “Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel.” Bakhtin uses Einstein’s theory of space-time as described in his theory of special relativity as a metaphor for the inseparability of space and time in literature. For the application of chronotopes to Classical literature, see also Seaford (2012) 1-7.

its history from the beginning, what Dinter calls the “ultimate in-between place.”⁷⁷ Its poetic identification as Emathia ties it to patterns of civil war, a kind of conflict, moreover, that is significant on a cosmic scale. As Lucan introduces Thessaly in book six, he once again calls it Emathia, a place *bello quam fata parabant* (6.332). The Stoic framework of the Lucanian cosmos makes Thessaly not only a suitable place for continued violence, but even the inevitable location of the decisive battle between Caesar and Pompey.

Lucan lays the poetic foundation for the battle at Pharsalus by taking a wider approach to Thessaly with an excursus that includes information about its natural features – mountains, valleys, and rivers – as well as its mythological legacy and early history. The mountains are first; Lucan highlights individual peaks to sketch out the Thessaly’s borders.

Thessaliam, qua parte diem brumalibus horis
attollit Titan, rupes Ossaea coercet;
cum per summa poli Phoebum trahit altior aestas,
Pelion opponit radiis nascentibus umbras;
at medios ignes caeli rapidique Leonis
solstitiale caput nemorosus summovet Othrys.
excipit adversos Zephyros et Iapyga Pindus
et maturato praecidit vespere lucem;
nec metuens imi Borean habitator Olympi
lucentem totis ignorat noctibus Arcton. (6.333-42)

The peak of Ossa bounds Thessaly, in which part
the sun raises up the day in wintery hours;
when coming summer draws Phoebus through the height of the sky,
Pelion puts his shadows against nascent rays;
and wooded Othrys separates the fires in the middle of the sky
and the midsummer head of swift Leo.
Pindus captures oncoming Zephyr and Iapyx
and cuts off the light with ripening evening;
the inhabitant of Olympus’ base, not fearing Boreas,
is ignorant of Arctos, shining through the whole night.

⁷⁷ Dinter (2012) 69 sees Thessaly as an *interlocus* and because the armies of Caesar and Pompey have non-Roman connections and components, “the world meets in Thessaly, and Thessaly thus unites the world in one place.”

Gigantomachy has been a noted theme in the *Bellum Civile* since its very beginning and comes into play in this geographical location where the conflict between Roman factions echoes the previous mythological war between earth-born *Gigantes* and Olympian gods. Thessaly is, in addition, the location of the even earlier titanomachy, an event that also pitted divine forces against each other, between the mountains of Othrys and Olympus. Though gigantomachy is the more prevalent theme, the Titans and their war lurk in the background of the Thessalian excursus. When the mountains block the sunlight from Thessaly, the sun is called *Titan*; this is a poetic affectation to be sure, but given the richly allusive poetic landscape of this episode, combined with the mythical location of the titanomachy in these same mountains, it is more than coincidental. Masters analyzes the locations of the mountains, indicated by astronomical and meteorological directions, to visualize Lucan's Thessaly, bounded on all sides by peaks: Olympus to the north, Oeta to the south, Pindus to the west, and Ossa, Pelion, and Othrys ranged from north to south along the eastern border of the region.⁷⁸ The locations of Olympus, Oeta, Pindus, and Othrys are all correct, but Pelion and Ossa are misplaced. Masters argues that this geographical error is deliberate on Lucan's part, that it is "programmatically" of the geologic upheaval in the subsequent lines and that it is fitting in context of Pelion and Ossa, especially. Because they are the mountains piled up during the gigantomachy, their mobility, even within the formal literary context of the catalogue, is a "symptom of gigantomachic disorder."⁷⁹ The area enclosed by the peaks of Ossa, Pelion, Othrys, Pindus, and Olympus is prone to darkness or, at least, less illuminated by the sun's light than other more open places. It is also more calm than

⁷⁸ Masters (1992) 151-53. Cf. Pliny, *NH* 4.30, who knows of 34 Thessalian mountains, but lists the most famous: Cercetii, Olympus, Ossa, Pindus, Othrys, and Pelion. According to Pliny, the mountains form a natural theater shape that shelters the region's cities: *omnes theatri modo inflexi, caveatis ante eos LXXV urbibus*. Pliny's image of Thessaly, not surrounded by mountains, but bordered in a way that makes the plain like the stage of a theater, mirrors Strabo's depiction of Delphi. Strabo 9.3.3 states that Delphi is located in a rocky region on Parnassus' southern flank, in a theater-like place (θεατροειδής).

⁷⁹ Masters (1992) 154.

the average location, as the mountains block winds coming from several directions.⁸⁰ Thessaly as Lucan imagines it is sheltered from sun and wind, isolated from these outside influences. It is almost a land unto itself, where, as we will see, people and events evolve in shade and stillness in a way particularly prone to conflict and violence.

Part of the significance of these mountains and their location requires an investigation into the deep geologic history of the region, where the formation of the landscape is tied to the narrative of gigantomachy and the presence of Hercules.

hos inter montes media qui valle premuntur,
perpetuis quondam latuere paludibus agri,
flumina dum campi retinent nec pervia Tempe
dant aditus pelagi, stagnumque inplentibus unum
crescere cursus erat. (6.343-47)

Between these mountains which are pressed into a valley in the middle,
the fields at one time were hidden by endless marshes,
as long as plains held the rivers and Tempe did not provide
a path to the sea, and since they filled a single pool,
to rise was the only option.

Like many origin stories, particularly in Lucan's view of the world, deep in Thessaly's history is a primeval lake (*perpetuis quondam latuere paludibus agri*). Within the literary scope of the excursus, this lake, located in what is now the valley of Tempe, is the geologic precursor to the later geography of the region. In the same way that the peaks of Pelion, Ossa, and the rest block sunlight and winds from entering the valley (6.333-42), their ancient forms, still connected, formed a barrier that prevented rivers from flowing out of the valley (*flumina dum campi retinent nec pervia Tempe / dant aditus pelagi*). The resulting lake was in actuality Thessaly's rivers, also connected, mixing and merging into one body of water. Only during the gigantomachy, when Hercules tore Ossa and Olympus apart did the rivers flow out of the valley and into the sea (*postquam discessit Olympo / Herculea gravis Ossa manu subitaeque ruinam / sensit aquae*

⁸⁰ Masters (1992) 155.

Nereus, 6.347-49).⁸¹ The attribution of landscape transformation in Thessaly to Hercules also connects to the parallel tradition of the creation of the Pillars of Hercules at Gibraltar and the origin of the Mediterranean itself.⁸² Again, Lucan creates parallels between microcosm and macrocosm, or, as is the case with stories involving things on the scale of the landscape, macrocosm and super-macrocosm. Tempe mirrors the pillars; Thessaly mirrors the centrality of the Mediterranean and its surrounding lands. And thus, the relocation of the poem's center to Thessaly is reinforced again. Not only does Lucan transplant in Thessaly the "mythological and political centers of the world,"⁸³ but he writes the world of Thessaly in such a way that it can be a representation of the *mundus* in a more concentrated scale.⁸⁴

During the gigantomachy Hercules changes the landscape in order to fight the *gigantes*. Because of his actions, the region of Thessaly could develop as recorded in myth and history.⁸⁵ The world built up after the gigantomachic battle follows the patterns set by the war's victors: it is Olympian and Herculean. We have seen Caesar performing similar actions (though on a much smaller scale) during the sieges of Brundisium (2.657-79), Massilia (3.426-52), and Ilerda

⁸¹ Masters (1992) 156 cites other sources for the Hercules tradition regarding the formation of Tempe. Cf. Diodorus Siculus 4.18.6, Seneca *HF* 283-88. Lucan also uses the tradition to give Tempe an epithet at *BC* 8.1: *iam super Herculeas fauces nemorosaque Tempe*.

Strabo 9.5.2 mentions the ancient lake (τὸ δὲ παλαιὸν καὶ ἐλιμνάζετο... τὸ πεδίον) and credits Tempe's formation to earthquakes (ὑπὸ δὲ σεισμῶν ῥήγματος γενομένου κατὰ τὰ νῦν καλούμενα Τέμπη καὶ τὴν Ὀσσαν ἀποσχίσαντος ἀπὸ τοῦ Ὀλύμπου).

⁸² For the parallel stories, see Diodorus Siculus 4.18.4-6; for the pillars, see Pliny, *NH* 3.1.4 and Seneca, *HF* 237-38. Cf. Salowey (1994) 78-79 on competing versions of the creations of the Straits of Gibraltar by Herakles.

⁸³ Dinter (2012) 69.

⁸⁴ Masters (1992) 177 calls Thessaly "a fulfillment of the kind of topographical symbolism we have seen throughout the poem. What appeared before as fragmentary instances on a small scale – a pair of opposed hills here, a pair of rivers there, a flooded plain, an amphitheatrical valley – all appear in the Thessalian excursus as a coherent system that is the land of Thessaly."

⁸⁵ Masters (1992) 157 notes the significance of the word *ruina* for the mini-flood that results from the creation of the valley and the draining of the primeval lake, connecting to narratives like the Ovidian account of Deucalion and Pyrrha (*Met.* 1), and hinting at a "miniature creation myth." Cf. also geologic evidence for lakes draining with flood-like results, as in the case of the glacial lake in Montana during the last ice age.

(4.130-47), changing and engineering the landscape to best suit his purposes and help him to victory. In fact, Caesar seems to follow the example set by Hercules, the “*Ur-hydraulic engineer*,”⁸⁶ but neither the glory Hercules achieved in his landscape-modifying labors and feats of strength nor, more importantly, the civilizing influence of Hercules’ modifications have a parallel for the Caesar of Lucan’s poetic world. Following the battle of Pharsalus, Caesar’s perception of the landscape and his role in its current shape take on Herculean proportions but continue to define the monstrous aspects of his character, the implications of which I will discuss at a later point.

The creation of the valley of Tempe and the subsequent draining of the lake allow the land to be settled. As the waters drain away, the place that would become Pharsalus emerges (6.350), as do the locations of Phylace, Pteleon, and Dorion (6.352), Trachis (6.353), Meliboea (6.354), Larisa (6.355), Argos and Thebes (6.356). Moreover, the drainage basin of the lake gives way to a system of rivers (*ergo abrupta palus multos discessit in amnes*, 6.360). All in all, Lucan provides a catalogue of 14 rivers: the Aeas (6.361), the Inachus (6.363), the Achelous (6.363-64), the Euehenos (6.366), the Spercheos (6.367), the Amphrysos (6.368), the Anauros (6.370), the Peneus (6.372),⁸⁷ the Apidanus and the Enipeus (6.373), the Asopos, Phoenix, and Melas (6.374),⁸⁸ and the Titaresos (6.376). This final river is known by the same name in the Homeric catalogue of ships, but is identified by Strabo as the Europus and by Pliny as the Orcus.⁸⁹ The only other extant catalogue of the rivers of Thessaly is in Ovid, introducing the story of Io in *Metamorphoses* 1. Lucan likely used Ovid’s catalogue as a model, as all seven of

⁸⁶ Salowey (1994) 77.

⁸⁷ Strabo 9.5.2 writes about the frequent flooding of the Peneus that inundated the Thessalian plain (ποταμόκλυστός ἐστιν).

⁸⁸ The MSS put these three rivers in the midst of Lucan’s list of the tributaries of the Peneus at 6.374; Housman emends the line by placing it between 368 and 369, so that the Asopos, Phoenix, and Melas are listed between the Amphrysos and the Anauros.

⁸⁹ Homer, *Iliad* 2.751-55; Strabo 9.5.19-20; Pliny, *NH* 4.8.31.

Ovid's Thessalian rivers (Peneus, Enipeus, Apidanus, Spercheos, Amphrysos, Aeas, and Inachus)⁹⁰ are part of the catalogue in *Bellum Civile* 6.⁹¹

The rest of the excursus depends on the Herculean rending of Ossa from Olympus that shaped the valley of Tempe, the Thessalian river system, and the land cleared as a result (*emissis patuerunt omnibus arva*, 6.381). The peoples that settle in this region are the inhabitants of myth and legend, united by their abilities and the inventions tied to violence and conflict. The region itself gives rise to several aspects of civilization that have the ability to prompt violent action (*hac tellure feri micuerunt semina Martis*, 6.395): the creation of the horse, specifically as used in war (*Thessalicus sonipes, bellis feralibus omen, / exiluit*, 6.397-98);⁹² the building and launch of the first ship, taking men and their violence into new regions (*Pagasaeo litore pinus / terrenum ignotas hominem proiecit in undas*, 6.400-401); and the minting of metallic currency, turning the earth's resources into a cause for conflict and a means to fund it (*illic, quod populos scelerata iniegit in arma, / divitias numerare datum est*, 6.406-7). This association of violence and its causes with Thessaly occurs at a mythical level as well: it is the birthplace of the serpent Python (*hinc maxima serpens / descendit Python*, 6.407-8) as well as, of course, the site where the giant Aloadae, Otus and Ephialtes, stacked up mountains to make an attempt at the heavens (*inpius hinc prolem superis inmisit Aloeus, / inseruit celsis prope se cum Pelion astris / sideribusque vias incurrens abstulit Ossa*, 6.410-12).⁹³ Both Python and the titanomachy are representations of a deeply rooted ancient discord.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Ovid, *Met.* 1.568-87. Cf. Pliny, *NH* 4.30-31.

⁹¹ Masters (1992) 166-71, Mendell (1942) 19-20.

⁹² Cf. Vergil, *Georg.* 1.12-14.

⁹³ Gantz (1993) 170-71 cites the varying traditions for the Aloadae: *Odyssey* 11.305-20; *Iliad* 5.385-91; Pindar, *Pythian* 4.88-89; Apollodorus 1.7.4.

⁹⁴ Masters (1992) 176.

The Thessalian excursus is followed by one of the most infamous episodes in the *Bellum Civile*, the necromancy performed by the Thessalian witch Erichtho. One among a number of magic practitioners in Thessaly, Erichtho is associated with the land itself in the way she practices divination.⁹⁵ There is a nexus of negativity woven between Thessaly and its *magoi*, where the history of violent change and warfare associated with the land is reflected in the hostility of the natural world towards humanity. The shade and stillness brought on by the mountains, combined with the ominous nature of the region, recalls the *locus horridus* represented by the grove near Massilia in book three.⁹⁶ In Thessaly, it is more diffuse, encompassing the entire region – and its entire history – rather than being limited to a single grove.⁹⁷ The attribution of sublime danger to Thessaly, however, does still rely on the place itself. When Sextus Pompey seeks knowledge of the future – knowledge he will eventually receive from Erichtho – his mindset is characterized by madness (*vanum saevumque furorem*, 6.434) and this madness is augmented significantly by his environment (*adiuvat ipse locus*, 6.435). The land has not simply been polluted by the presence of conflict or the actions of the Thessalian *magoi*; correlatively, the conflict and the *magoi* cannot be blamed on their environment. Instead, the land and the people who inhabit it are symbiotic; the landscape shaped by and home to war and violence is the natural home of people who perform *nefas* actions.

Even the products of the environment, the plants growing in Thessaly, have the potential to cause damage; the stones meanwhile seem to absorb the influence of Erichtho and those like her.

⁹⁵ Dinter (2012) 68 sees Erichtho as an embodiment of the landscape, citing as evidence Lucan's use of *Thessala* as a common epithet for Erichtho. For more general treatments of Erichtho, see Ahl (1976) 130-49, and Johnson (1987) 19-33.

⁹⁶ Dinter (2012) 66-67. Cf. Schiesaro (1985).

⁹⁷ Masters (1992) 187 compares the grove where the Pythia, Phemonoe, wanders at 5.123-27 and this grove where Erichtho performs the necromancy (6.573-78).

Thessala quin etiam tellus herbasque nocentes
rupibus ingenuit sensuraque saxa canentes
arcanum feralis magos. ibi plurima surgunt
vim factura deis, et terris hospita Colchis
legit in Haemoniis quas non advexerat herbas. (6.438-42)

Even the Thessalian land, in fact, bore harmful
grasses on its crags and stones that perceive the magoi
singing savage secrets. There rise most things able to
constrain the gods, and the Colchian visitor gathered
in Haemonian lands the herbs which she had not brought.

Thessaly's hazards are brought forth from the earth (*Thessala... tellus... ingenuit*) in the form of plants (*herbasque nocentes*). While plant growth is not unusual at all, the language used to indicate their growth and origin (*tellus... ingenuit*) alludes to other living things born from the earth, specifically from Thessalian earth. Within the mythical context of book six, this is an allusion to the Gigantes who piled up the mountains to assail the heavens, an attempt thwarted by Hercules (6.347-49).⁹⁸ The plants themselves that grow in Thessaly are dangerous (*herbasque nocentes*), though the exact nature of the harm they can cause is not stated. They are superlative in their dangerous qualities, though, especially in their utility for users of magic and their connection to the magical threshold between life and death. The plants have great power (*plurima surgunt / vim factura deis*) and have been used by Medea (*Colchis / legit... quas non advexerat herbas*) in the rejuvenation of Aeson.⁹⁹ The harmful quality of the plants (*nocentes*) is comparable to the poisons used in some of the magical practices of Erichtho and her brethren (*noxia*, 6.454). The plants' toxicity characterizes the landscape from which they are plucked but

⁹⁸ Cf. *BC* 4.593-655. Antaeus, another giant-like creature born from the Earth is also pitted against Hercules.

⁹⁹ Cf. Ovid, *Met.* 7.222-31.

also plays a role in the divinatory practice associated with Erichtho and the other Thessalian *magoi*.¹⁰⁰

The approach to divination and nature in book six is set up as a foil to the prophetic mechanism and vision at Delphi in book five.¹⁰¹ Erichtho's necromancy stands in contrast to the Pythia's efforts but outshines them in accuracy, if only because the traditional oracular processes are dubious in Lucan's world.¹⁰² The two episodes – the potentially defunct oracle at Delphi and the necromancy in Thessaly – share in common the philosophical framework that underpins Lucan's poetic world. Just as the *anima mundi*, the chain of causation, and the repetition of patterns between macrocosm and microcosm enable the Pythia to behold the whole of existence, they also enable the efficacy of prophecy by the means that Erichtho and the Thessalian *magoi* practice.

The introduction to Erichtho and the practice of magic in Thessaly demonstrates the power that magic can have, especially in the context of nature and the natural world. In some cases, the language Lucan has established to discuss the world in Stoic terms also figures into the catalogue of magical abilities and their effects on the natural world. In the most basic terms, the Thessalian *magoi* have the power to affect nature: they can cause natural processes to cease, change, or be disrupted (*cessavere vices rerum*, 6.461). Lucan's description of the extent of their powers reads like a catalogue of magical ability:¹⁰³ they can extend the night and halt the day

¹⁰⁰ Thessaly's toxic reputation is also evident in Seneca's *NQ* 3.25.2, where the water is so poisonous that it can eat through all kinds of earth, even mineral deposits of iron or copper: *aeque a noxia aqua in Thessalia circa Tempe, quam et fera et pecus omne devitat; per ferrum et aes exit, tanta vis illi est etiam dera mordendi; nec arbusta quidem ulla alit et herbas necat*. Note that Seneca does not provide a causal correlation between the presence of metals and the water's toxicity.

¹⁰¹ Bartsch (1997) 64; Day (2013) 93-105; Dinter (2012) 69; Johnson (1987) 29; Masters (1992) 180-96; Morford (1967a) 66.

¹⁰² *BC* 6.419-30.

¹⁰³ Ogden (2002) 124 determines that the portrait of Erichtho and the other Thessalian witches in *BC* 6 is the most detailed extant description from antiquity; their abilities are in line with those of the standard

(*dilataque longa / haesit nocte dies*, 6.461-62), cause the *aether* to misbehave (*legi non paruit aether*, 6.462), and slow down the entire world (*torpuit et praeceps audito carmine mundus*, 6.463). They can affect the weather, causing rains (*omnia conplent / imbribus*, 6.465-66), clouds (*calido praeducunt nubila Phoebos*, 6.466), and thunder (*vocibus isdem / umentis late nebulas nimbosque solutis / excussere comis*, 6.467-69). Their power enables storms at sea not caused by wind (*vestis cessantibus aequor / intumuit, rursus vetitum sentire procellas / conticuit turbante Noto*, 6.469-71). Rivers flow in reverse, running uphill (*amnisque cucurrit / non qua pronus erat*, 6.473-74); the Nile does not flood (*Nilum non extulit aestas*, 6.474), the Maeander flows in a straight course (*Maeander derexit aquas*, 6.475), and the Rhone slows down (*Rhodanumque morantem / praecipitavit Arar*, 6.475-76). Mountain peaks become level (*summisso vertice montes / explicuere iugum*, 6.476-77) and snow at high altitudes melts despite freezing weather (*solibus et nullis Scythicae, cum bruma rigeret, / dimadvere nives*, 6.478-79). Animals known for their danger to humans – lions (6.487), tigers (6.487), and snakes (6.488-92) – become gentle and vulnerable and their potential for harm augments the power of the *magoi* (*omne potens animal leti genitumque nocere / et pavet Haemonias et mortibus instruit artes*, 6.485-86). Even cosmic processes are disrupted: the earth and moon are thrown off-balance (6.479-82) and the stars can be drawn down from the sky (*illis et sidera primum praecipiti deducta polo*, 6.499-500). The attention drawn to natural processes recalls the vision of the world and its framework available to the Pythia (5.177-82), but shows how it can be thrown into disorder. The Erichtho episode in particular demonstrates the effect Thessaly, and especially practitioners of magic, can have on the order of the world. Erichtho, though associated with these other Thessalian *magoi*,

foreign sorcerer types (e.g., Egyptians from Memphis, Persians, Babylonians). For Thessalian *magoi*, see Horace *Ep.* 5; Ovid, *Amores* 3.7.27-36; Pliny, *NH* 30.6-7; Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 1.5-19, 2.21-30, 3.15-25. For witches drawing down the moon, compare Aristophanes, *Clouds* 746-57; Plato, *Gorgias* 513a; Ovid, *Amores* 2.1.23-28.

takes their disruptive effects on nature even further. Where their actions are objectively crimes against nature, by comparison to her actions, they are holy (*hos scelerum ritus, haec dirae crimina gentis / effera damnarat nimiae pietatis Erichtho*, 6.507-8). This is the same kind of effect on natural order that the conflict of the civil wars produces.

While Thessalian *magoi* and Erichtho have great power over nature and its constituent parts, their ability is not supreme. Erichtho herself concedes that while she and her kind can delay death and aging in individual cases, affecting the fate of a single person (6.607-10), events that involve humanity as a whole are controlled by larger forces.

at, simul a prima descendit origine mundi
causarum series, atque omnia fata laborant
si quicquam mutare velis, unoque sub ictu
stat genus humanum, tum, Thessala turba, fatemur,
plus Fortuna potest. (6.611-15)

But, just when the series of causes comes down from the first beginning of the world, and all fates struggle if you wish to change anything, and the human race stands under a single blow, then, we, the Thessalian crowd, admit it: Fortune is more powerful.

The inexorable effects of Fortuna, as understood by Erichtho, conform to the same causal Stoic framework Lucan uses to illustrate the legitimacy of prophetic endeavor at Delphi. The *causarum series* here, traced from the world's beginnings (*a prima... origine mundi*) to the present, reiterates the *rerum series* visible to the Pythia. When the Stoic theory of universal causation comes out of the mouth of Erichtho, the most *nefas* of all, it emphasizes both the consistency of that philosophical principle in Lucan's universe and how the chain of events running through existence comes to an end at Pharsalus. Moreover, it also demonstrates that the end is more dire and negative than thinkers of the Stoic school generally agreed upon. The whole of the universe leads up to the events narrated in the *Bellum Civile*; the civil wars are a damaging

blow against humanity (*unoque sub ictu stat genus humanum*) brought on by Fortuna (*Thessala turba fatemur, plus Fortuna potest*).

In the episode that follows, Erichtho retrieves a corpse from the battlefield and performs the necromantic rituals¹⁰⁴ that force the reanimated body to provide information about the outcome of the war. The location of the necromancy – and thus, the place of divination – recalls the Delphic model from book five, but also draws on other sources – from Vergil, Ovid, and Lucan himself – that concern the nature of the place. The caverns Erichtho chooses are deep and dark:

haud procul a Ditis caecis depressa cavernis
in praeceps subsedit humus, quam pallida pronis
urguet silva comis et nullo vertice caelum
suspiciens Phoebos non pervia taxus opacat.
marcentes intus tenebrae pallensque sub antris
longa nocte situs numquam nisi carmine factum
lumen habet. non Taenariis sic faucibus aer
sedit iners, maestum mundi confine latentis
ac nostri, quo non metuant admittere manes
Tartarei reges. (6.642-51)

Sunken not at all far from the blind caves of the underworld,
the earth plunges into the depths, a place pale woods crowd
with drooping leaves and the yew is opaque to the sun,
looking up at the sky with no canopy.
Inside feeble darkness and neglect, pale from the long night
within the cave, have no light unless it is made by a spell.
Not so does the air settle, motionless, in Taenarian
throats, the gloomy boundary of the hidden world and
of our world, where kings of Tartarus would not fear
to admit the ghosts.

Lucan has described caverns as *caecae* before: the caves at Delphi where the *numen* is condensed from the *aether* are *caecas...cavernas* (5.87), another parallel between the divination

¹⁰⁴ Graf (1994) 190-94 puts Erichtho's necromancy in context of the practice depicted in other ancient texts.

episodes.¹⁰⁵ Both instances of *caecae... cavernae* in Lucan may allude to Ovid, who used the phrase twice in his *Metamorphoses*, once of the underground channel taken by the Arethusa,¹⁰⁶ and again of winds in underground caverns and their ability to shape terrain.¹⁰⁷ The gloomy caverns surrounded by a dark forest also recall the *locus horridus* of the Massilian grove from book three. In that grove, the hollow caverns were tied to subterranean wind and earthquakes (*cavas motu terrae mugire cavernas*, 3.418), and yew trees grow nearby (*procumbentes iterum consurgere taxos*, 3.419) as they do near Erichtho's cave (6.645). The gloomy atmosphere of the Massilian grove was caused in part by the way the canopy blocked the light of the sun (*lucus erat... obscurum cingens connexis aera ramis / et gelidas alte submotis solibus umbras*, 3.399-401). Likewise, the forest near Erichtho's caverns, especially the yew trees therein, blocks sunlight (*nullo vertice caelum / suspiciens Phoebos non pervia taxus opacat*). The light-blocking trees, as well as being modeled on the *locus horridus* modeled at Massilia, evoke the light-blocking mountains surrounding Thessaly (6.333-38). Carrying the parallel between Erichtho's cave and the whole region further, those same mountains hinder the winds that would blow into Thessaly and cause the air therein to remain calmer (6.339-42); likewise, the air in the caverns where Erichtho works is still, moreso even than at a purported physical entrance to the underworld (*non Taenariis sic faucibus aer / sedit iners*).¹⁰⁸ The many dangers of Thessaly are

¹⁰⁵ Masters (1992) 190 finds remembrance of Delphi in these Thessalian caves and suggests that Aeneas' visit to the Sibyl at *Aen.* 6.236-47 provides another model for the cave, forest, air quality, and prophetic practice. Day (2013) 103 connects Erichtho's cave to "the *hiatus* through which Phemonoe receives inspirations" at 5.82.

¹⁰⁶ Ovid, *Met.* 5.639: *Delia rupit humum; caecisque ego mersa cavernis / advehor Ortygiam, quae me cognomine divae / grata meae superas eduxit prima sub auras.*

¹⁰⁷ Ovid, *Met.* 15.299: *nam (res horrenda relatu) / vis fera ventorum; caecis inclusa cavernis, / exspirare aliqua cupiens luctataque frustra / liberiore frui caelo.*

¹⁰⁸ Lucan's *Taenariis... faucibus* (6.648) echoes a similar phrase from Vergil's fourth *Georgic* (*Taenarias... fauces*, 4.467), describing the entrance to the underworld as seen by Orpheus. For Taenarus elsewhere in Latin poetry, see Horace, *Carm.* 1.34.10-11; Ovid, *Met.* 10.13; Seneca, *Troades* 402 and *Phaedra* 1201 (*Taenarii specus*); cf. Pindar, *Pythian* 4.43-44; Euripides, *Herakles* 23-24; and Strabo 8.5.1, where Taenarus is the location of a cavern (ἄντρον) through which Hercules brought Cerberus up

condensed; they are represented by Erichtho, her practice, and the place itself. Just as Delphi functions as a central point, both geographically and poetically, Erichtho's cave and grove bring Thessaly's nature into focus before the events at Pharsalus.

III. *Venit summa dies*: The End of the World at Pharsalus

The preceding books of the *Bellum Civile* all lead up to the battle of Pharsalus in book seven, while the repeated concentration on the importance of fate and the Stoic idea of causation in the cosmos at Delphi and in Thessaly make the battle thematically inevitable. Not only is it the central point of the poem, but within Lucan's universe, all of history seems to be aimed at this one point in time. Due to the extreme negativity of the battle and its consequences, however, the *mundus* seems to practice delaying tactics which, if they cannot prevent the battle, can at least prolong the time before it begins. Book seven begins with this kind of delay.

segnior, Oceano quam lex aeterna vocabat,
luctificus Titan numquam magis aethera contra
egit equos cursumque polo rapiente retorsit,
defectusque pati voluit raptaeque labores
lucis, et attraxit nubes, non pabula flammis
sed ne Thessalico purus luceret in orbe. (7.1-6)

More slowly than eternal law called him from Ocean,
mournful Titan never drove his horses more
against the aether and reversed his course while the sky hurried him on,
and he wished to endure an eclipse and the struggles of
stolen light, and he drew clouds to him, not food for flames
but so that he, clear, would not illuminate the Thessalian world.

The armies are in place in Thessaly and the day of the battle has dawned, but in the natural world there is an almost omniscient awareness and dread of what is to come. The sun (*luctificus Titan*)

from the underworld. Pausanias 3.25.5 casts doubt on the presence of an underworld entrance at Taenarus, partly due to disbelief in the collection of souls underground and partly due to the geology of the cave, which had no clear path into the earth (οὔτε ὑπὸ γῆν ὁδοῦ διὰ τοῦ σπηλαίου φερούσης); a terminal cave would also prevent the free flow of air to other underground spaces.

moves more slowly than ever before across the sky (*segnior... numquam magis aethera contra egit equos*) and attempts to move eastward, counter to its established course (*cursumque polo rapiente retorsit*) in order to avoid the coming confrontation at Pharsalus (*ne Thessalico purus luceret in orbe*). Dilke focuses on the Stoic resonance of this image, noting that the sun here does not comply directly with the call of destiny (εἰμαρμένη).¹⁰⁹ Intervention in the processes of the universe and natural world – here performed by the sun itself – also recall the abilities of the *magoi* in Thessaly. According to Erichtho, their magic allows them to shorten the day and slow down the world’s progress.

cessavere vices rerum, dilataque longa
 haesit nocte dies. legi non paruit aether,
 torpuit et praeceps audito carmine mundus,
 axibus et rapidis impulsos Iuppiter urguens
 miratur non ire polos. (6.461-65)

The changes of nature ceased, and day, extended
 by a long night, halted. Aether did not obey law,
 and the hurried universe slowed when the spell was heard,
 and Jupiter, driving on the course with swift axles,
 marvels that the sky does not move.

While the powers of *magoi* are vast, they cannot disrupt the course of fate as it affects humanity on a larger scale (6.611-15). Moreover, the *magoi* are not directly concerned with the conflicts within the Roman state, beyond Sextus Pompey’s inquiry to Erichtho. Lucan has spent six books so far building up the image of Rome as cosmos, so when part of that cosmos acts as the sun does here at the beginning of book seven, going against its traditional course and trying to delay the oncoming battle, it has a wider resonance. This shows how even cosmic forces like the sun cannot compete with or prevent fated action, and also provides another opportunity for the reiteration of the theme of civil strife: a part of the wider cosmos (the sun) is rebelling against its

¹⁰⁹ Dilke (1960) 82 *ad* 1 also cites the Stoic theory of the “immutable chain of cause and effect” that governed the universe as in connection to this passage.

course.¹¹⁰ Finally, because the seventh book begins with an image of the sun reversing its course, trying to turn back time, the idea that the natural world itself is in opposition to the war and its participants gains new ground. Just as the landscape at Ilerda in book four was hostile to the Roman soldiers, portents and signs originating in nature will illuminate in Thessaly the inevitability of battle, as well as the landscape's opposition to it.

As the armies muster in preparation for the battle, a number of meteorological and astronomical events occur which portend the disastrous nature and consequences of the coming fight. According to the Stoic view of divination, naturally occurring signs could be utilized to know the future, as the past, present, and future of the physical world were all connected by a *causarum series*. The soldiers in the Pompeian camp find the entire sky full of portents that discourage their course of action.¹¹¹

non tamen abstinuit venturos prodere casus
per varias Fortuna notas. nam, Thessala rura
cum peterent, totus venientibus obstitit aether
[inque oculis hominum fregerunt fulmina nubes]
adversasque faces inmensoque igne columnas
et trabibus mixtis avidos typhonas aquarum
detulit atque oculos ingesto fulgure clausit;
excussit cristas galeis capulosque solutis
perfudit gladiis ereptaque pila liquavit,
aetherioque nocens fumavit sulphure ferrum; (7.151-60)

Nor still did Fortune abstain from offering disasters to come

¹¹⁰ *Torquere* is commonly used of attacks and fighting in the *BC*; *retorquere*, to bend back or, perhaps to fight back against one's own side, is used only here (7.3).

¹¹¹ Dilke (1960) 100 *ad* 151-80: portents before the battle of Pharsalus are also included in the accounts of Cassius Dio 41.61.2, Valerius Maximus 1.6.12, and Appian *BC* 2.68. Dio, Valerius, and Appian all include another portent missing in Lucan's version: a swarm of bees that settle on the standards (or on an altar on which Pompey was performing a sacrifice) and obscure them. The standards on which the bees might have settled, are mentioned at 7.161 (*nec non innumero cooperta examine signa*), but this line is usually dismissed, based on the Housman's emendations. Another instance of portents involving bees in Roman epic is worth mentioning here: *Aen.* 7.64-67; Vergil's bees precede a war that will end in two peoples joined together to form Rome; Lucan's portents and narrative show the Roman people divided. By omitting the bees amidst the other natural portents in book seven, he neatly avoids the comparison with Vergil. Cf. *BC* 9.285-93, where Cato is the *pastor* to his soldiers who, before they leave Cyrene to march across the Libyan desert, are themselves compared to bees.

through various signs. For, when they sought Thessalian fields, the whole aether opposed them approaching [in sight of the men, the flashes of lightning shattered clouds] and it brought down hostile meteors and huge columns of fire and whirlwinds greedy for water mixed with fireballs and closed their eyes with lightning thrown in; it shook crests from their helmets and flooded hilts with melted swords and liquified the javelins it seized, and harmful iron smoked because of the aether's sulfur.

These portents are truly cosmic in scope, coming from the *aether* and taking up the entire sky (*totus... aether*); moreover, they are meant to be read as hostile to the battle preparations (*obstitit*). The weather is inclement to the point of being dangerous: columnar clouds filled with fire (*inmensoque igne columnas*), lightning-laced (*trabibus mixtis*) whirlwinds that create waterspouts (*avidos typhonas aquarum detulit*), and blinding lightning (*oculos ingesto fulgure clausit*) are all visible.¹¹² The terminology for the storm and lightning Lucan uses here reflects the larger scientific and philosophical conversation about this topic in the first century, when terms including *fulmen* (7.154), *faces* (7.155), *columna* (7.155), and *trabes* (7.156) appear in natural philosophy texts from Seneca and Pliny in discussions of various kinds of lightning.¹¹³ For Seneca, *fulmen* is part of the discussion of lightning's origins and nature,¹¹⁴ while *columna*, *trabes*, and *faces* not only describe lightning occurring in different shapes and circumstances, but also the meteorological phenomena associated with it.¹¹⁵

Not only are the portents impressive in their origin, form, and power, but they oppose the soldiers who observe them. The wind and heat from the clouds and lightning detach crests from

¹¹² Dilke (1960) 101 *ad* 155 compares these meteorological phenomena to modern terminology applied to varieties of lightning: sheet, streak, beaded, ribbon, forked, ball.

¹¹³ Dilke (1960) 100 *ad* 155 cites Seneca *NQ* 7.10.3 and *Ep.* 94.56, Manilius 1.841, and Pliny *NH* 2.134.

¹¹⁴ Seneca *NQ* 2.20.1-2.26.9.

¹¹⁵ *Trabes*: *NQ* 7.4.3-4, *Ep.* 94.56; *faces*: *NQ* 7.4.3-4. Williams (2012) 278 traces how Seneca differs in his descriptions of lightning, where he prefers to attribute *trabes* and *faces* to "atmospheric friction," from Epigenes, who thought they came from whirlwinds. Seneca's thoughts on lightning are part of his larger search for what Williams calls "correspondence and interconnection in nature."

helmets (*excussit cristas galeis*), and melt parts of swords (*capulosque solutis / perfudit gladiis*). When the *capuli* – either hilts or sheaths, depending on the interpretation – are flooded with molten metal from the melted *gladii*, Lucan employs the same verb, *solvere*, that he uses of melting snow (*resolutae... Alpes*, 1.219; *Pyrenaeae, quas numquam solvere Titan / evaluit, fluxere nives*, 4.83-84) and of the dissolution of the cosmos at *ekpyrosis* (*conpage soluta*, 1.72). The fire from the storms also liquifies spears (*ereptaque pila liquavit*), and causes weapons to smoke with sulfur (*aetherioque nocens fumavit sulphure ferrum*). The accoutrements of warfare are disrupted and destroyed by the winds and lightning; these portents are not passive, meant only to be seen and to inform, but actively seek to prevent the coming events by disarming the combatants. The normal pattern of observer and spectacle transforms: the observers themselves become part of the spectacle.¹¹⁶

Reports of further portents make the landscape of Thessaly itself the source of terrifying motions and visions, though Lucan credits these reports to either reality or fear.

iam (dubium, monstrisne deum, nimione pavore
crediderint) multis concurrere visus Olympo
Pindus et abruptis mergi convallibus Haemus,
edere nocturnas belli Pharsalia voces,
ire per Ossaeam rapidus Boebeida sanguis;
inque vicem voltus tenebris mirantur opertos
et pallere diem galeisque incumbere noctem
defunctosque patres et iuncti sanguinis umbras
ante oculos volitare suos. (7.172-80)

Now (it is unknown whether they believed portents of the gods

¹¹⁶ Tacitus and Suetonius, writing about the Neronian period, include accounts of *spectacula* (gladiatorial, musical, etc.) that can be connected to a moral corruption in Roman society, especially connected to Nero, as well as to the increasingly blurred lines between spectator and spectacle. See Tacitus, *Annales* 14.14 (Nero driving a chariot near the city, a precursor to the increasingly public spectacle he would make of himself; *equites* in the arena), 14.17 (the gladiatorial show in Pompeii that became a deadly brawl between the citizens of Pompeii and the Nuceriaans), 14.20-21 (theatrical spectacle and morality), and 14.22 (a comet interpreted as a portent concerning the Nero's rule). See also Suetonius, *Nero* 12: 400 senators and 600 *equites* compelled to fight in the arena, though wealthy and of good reputation (*quosdam fortunae atque existimationis integrae*).

or excessive fear) to many Pindus seemed to crash into Olympus and Haemus seemed to be sunk into steep valleys, Pharsalia seemed to put forth nocturnal sounds of war, whirling blood seemed to imbue Ossean Boebeis; and they marvel in turn at their concealed faces and that the day is faded and night settles on their helmets, that departed parents and ghosts of their own blood hover before their eyes.

The landscape seems to undergo swift and violent changes: mountains collide (*multis concurrere visus Olympo / Pindus*) or sink into valleys (*abruptis mergi convallibus Haemus*), a lake is tainted with blood (*ire per Ossaeam rapidus Boebeida sanguis*), and darkness falls, allowing ghosts to wander (*umbras / ante oculos volitare suos*). In these signs, the changing landscape evokes a sense of geologic chaos, a hostile reaction to the upcoming battle at Pharsalus, and the rich allusive web woven into the poetic and geological history of Thessaly and its wars. When Olympus and Pindus, Thessalian mountains, clash, they recall again the narrative of gigantomachy lurking in both the region and in the poem. Haemus, another mountain, crumbles and sinks into its neighboring valley. The significance of Haemus is twofold: the mountain's collapse mirrors the larger cosmic process metaphorically parallel to the narrative of the Roman Republic's decline and collapse and does so at an alarmingly accelerated rate; secondly, although Haemus is geographically removed from Thessaly,¹¹⁷ its mythological connection to gigantomachic – or, more accurately, titanomachic – conflict provides another example to bolster Lucan's narrative. In Apollodorus, Haemus is the place where in the course of their conflict Zeus caught up to Typhon, smote the mountainside, and caused blood to flow forth.¹¹⁸ This makes Haemus both the site of a mythological elemental conflict between volcanic fire and celestial

¹¹⁷ Dilke (1960) 104 *ad* 174 locates Haemus in the Balkans, in a range of mountains in what was then Thrace.

¹¹⁸ Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 1.6.3. The blood (αἷμα) gave the mountain its name, Haemus. For Typhon and gigantomachy in the Greek tradition, see Ogden (2013) 73-75.

lightning,¹¹⁹ and a parallel for the Thessalian lake that follows it in book seven, Boebeis near Mt. Ossa. Lake Boebeis has historic resonance beyond its comparison with Haemus, however. The portentous appearance of blood in water at Caere also preceded the Second Punic War, as recorded by Valerius Maximus (*Caerites aquas sanguine mixtas fluxisse*, 1.6.5). Within Lucan's text more specifically, the bloody lake predicts the bloody landscape following the battle at Pharsalus (*Caesar, ut Hesperio vidit satis arva natare / sanguine*, 7.728-29), and further embodies the idea of displacement with Italian blood in Thessalian water. Finally, the darkness that shadows the observers in Pompey's army taps into the imagery of the *locus horridus* so prevalent in the *Bellum Civile*, while the wandering shades evoke both underworld and the dire portents in Italy in book one.¹²⁰

The portents are not sufficient to prevent the battle at Pharsalus and, according to the narrative of inevitability based on Stoic principles, the soldiers from both Caesarian and Pompeian armies approach their meeting place. The opposing armies pause, frozen, at Pharsalus (7.466-69), but the tableau is broken by a fanfare from the trumpets (7.475-76). The immediate action that follows is not that of men, but rather comes from the landscape.

tunc ausae dare signa tubae, tunc aethera tendit
 extremique fragor convexa inrumpit Olympi,
 unde procul nubes, quo nulla tonitrua durant.
 excepit resonis clamorem vallibus Haemus
 Peliacisque dedit rursus geminare cavernis,
 Pindus agit fremitus Pangaeaeque saxa resultant
 Oetaeaeque gemunt rupes, vocesque furoris
 expavere sui tota tellure relatas. (7.477-84)

Then trumpets dared to give the signal, then the noise claims
 the air and breaks into the vault of distant Olympus,
 where the clouds are far away, and no thunders endure.

¹¹⁹ Ogden (2013) 73-74; cf. Hesiod, *Theogony* 820-28, 854-80. For Typhon or Typhoeus buried under Sicily and responsible for the volcanic activity of Aetna, see also Nonnus, *Dionysiaca* 2.

¹²⁰ BC 1.568-70: *conpositis plenae gemuerunt ossibus urnae. / tum fragor armorum magnaеque per avia voces / auditae nemorum et venientes comminus umbrae.*

Haemus received the noise in resonant valleys
and gave it to Pelian caves to double it back,
and Pindus, roaring, drives it on, and Pangaeian stones resound
and Oetaean cliffs groan, and the [soldiers] were terrified of
the sounds of their own madness borne back by the whole earth.

The noise of the horns (*fragor*) takes on arrogant agency and, in yet another gigantomachic reference, assails the peak of Olympus (*extremique... convexa inrumpit Olympi*), but in this case, one that also echoes the broken peace at Ariminum when Caesar crosses the Rubicon.¹²¹ In the *Bellum Civile*, at least, this is the first move towards the ultimate battle at Pharsalus; its implied presence in *fragor... inrumpit* emphasizes the inevitability of this confrontation. The other mountains of Thessaly, as mapped out by Lucan at 6.333-42, also take up the noise of the war trumpets: Pelion's caves repeat the noise (*Peliacisque dedit rursus geminare cavernis*) and Pindus roars (*Pindus agit fremitus*). Even non-Thessalian mountains are included. Haemus makes another appearance so the sound can resonate in its valleys (*exceptit resonis clamorem vallibus Haemus*), while another Thracian mountain, Pangaea, has stones that resound with the noise (*Pangaeaque saxa resultant*). Though Pangaea was not a Thessalian mountain, Lucan is not the only Roman poet to closely associate it with Pindus: Seneca pairs the two mountains in his *Medea* (*has Pindus ingens, illa Pangaei iugis / teneram cruenta falce deposuit comam*, 721-22) and *Oedipus* (*nunc Edono pede pulsavit / sola Pangaeo, / nunc Threicio vertice Pindi*, 433-35).¹²² Within *Bellum Civile* 7, Pangaea's name makes its inclusion here relevant to the battle's significance and scope. Lucan may be making a pun on the mountain's name, as πᾶσα + γαῖα, to indicate the entire earth. Because the comparison of Rome and its civil wars to the world and its ultimate collapse has pervaded the poem since the beginning, Pangaea can represent the entire

¹²¹ *BC* 1.237-48: *stridor lituum clangorque tubarum / non pia concinuit cum rauco classica cornu*.

¹²² Dilke (1960) 133 *ad* 482 locates Pangaea in southern Thrace and notes its fame for gold and silver mines (cf. Statius, *Silvae* 1.2.223). Oberhummer (1958) 18.3.589-92 identifies the Greek name Πάγγαιον with the Latin *mons Pangaeus*; cf. Pliny, *NH* 4.40-42.

world resounding with this battle fanfare. In fact, this interpretation is supported by the next lines, wherein the magnified *fragor* and *clamor* returns to the armies, re-echoed by the whole earth (*vocesque furoris / expavere sui tota tellure relatas*), and terrifies them, setting an opposition not only between divided Romans, but between people and *tellus/mundus*.

The geographic universal unity present in Thessaly when the mountains resound and magnify the armies' fanfare is half of the Stoic physical equation; its spatial unity is matched by a temporal continuity that stretches from the world's beginning to its end. Because the *Bellum Civile* and the battle of Pharsalus are a story of the Roman world, however, Lucan establishes clear beginning and end points to the Republic's timeline. The latter is more obvious: throughout the poem and in book seven especially, the battle of Pharsalus marks the end of the Republic and thus the end of the "world" it represents. The first example of this also relies on the series of portents visible before Pharsalus, some of which, according to reports, were observed in Italy.

Euganeo, si vera fides memorantibus, augur
 colle sedens, Aponus terris ubi fumifer exit
 atque Antenorei dispergitur unda Timavi,
 'venit summa dies, geritur res maxima,' dixit
 'inpia concurrunt Pompei et Caesaris arma,' (7.192-96)

The augur sitting on the Euganean hill, if those recalling
 are truthful, where smoking Aponus comes out of the earth
 and the wave of Antenorean Timavus is spread out, said,
 "The final day has come, the greatest issue is undertaken,
 the impious arms of Pompey and Caesar are at war."

This Italian augur, identified by Postgate as C. Cornelius,¹²³ observes signs from his location near Patavium.¹²⁴ He concludes that the battle waged and deeds done at Pharsalus bring on the

¹²³ Postgate (1900) 45 *ad* 192 cites Aulus Gellius *Noct. Att.* 15.18 for this information. He also reconstructs the augur's words as *res geritur; homines concurrunt; vincis, Caesar*, by comparing Lucan's text with Gellius and Plutarch, *Caesar* 47. Plutarch's source was Livy, who, as a native of Padua, would have had local knowledge about the region.

final day. This phrase, *venit summa dies*, comes from Vergil's *Aeneid*; in the account of the fall of Troy, Panthus, a priest of Apollo, proclaims to Aeneas that Troy's final and inevitable time have come (*venit summa dies et ineluctabile tempus / Dardaniae*, 2.324-25).¹²⁵ The Vergilian *summa dies*, while violent and horrific, still enables a potentially positive interpretation. The fall of Troy leads to the rise of Rome; from death and disorder comes a new state.¹²⁶ Lucan's poetry does not include the same hope for the future and, moreover, sets up a comparison to another prophetic moment in the *Aeneid*: Jupiter's promise to Venus of *imperium sine fine* (*Aen.* 1.279) for the Trojans. When Venus makes her plea to Jupiter, she mentions other Trojan survivors, led by Antenor, who had passed by the mouths of the Timavus before he settled at what would become Patavium (*Aen.* 1.242-46). For Vergil, the Timavus is associated with new beginnings and the promise of a better future. The *summa dies* at Pharsalus is observed and interpreted by an Italian augur near the Timavus, in part due to the physical shape of the hot spring at Aponus. Such springs demonstrate the subterranean nature of the local watershed, offering a potential explanation for the portents seen simultaneously in Thessaly and northern Italy: the two locations, separated geographically, are connected by their geology.¹²⁷ It is the *summa dies*, moreover, that gives rise to a new state portrayed by Lucan as disordered and evil, an unbalanced neo-cosmos under the heel of a Caesar. Stover calls Lucan's prophecy for Rome "a radical

¹²⁴ Dilke (1960) 106 *ad* 193: Aponus was a medicinal hot spring near Patavium. See Claudian, *Carm. Min.* 26. Postgate (1900) 45 *ad* 194 connects Patavium to Antenor, its founder, and cites Vergil *Aen.* 1.242-44.

¹²⁵ Ambühl (2010) 23 also connects motif of fatal day to Lucan 2.98-104, when Marius returned to Rome (*pro fata, quis ille, / quis fuit ille dies...*) and to the lines of the *Iliad* (4.164-65 = 6.448-49) quoted by Scipio at Carthage.

¹²⁶ Leigh (1997) 19. See also Stover (2012) 31-32: "The fall of Troy is not really an ending at all, but the necessary precondition for a new start, for the movement into a *better* era of human history..." Stover also notes that Vergil's model for *summa dies* may be *Iliad* 6.448 when Hector predicts the fall of the city: ἔσσειται ἡμᾶρ ὅτ' ἄν ποτ' ὀλώλη Ἴλιος ἱρῆ.

¹²⁷ Cf. Seneca, *NQ* 3.26.3: *sub terra vacat locus; omnis autem natura umor ad inferius et ad inane defertur*. Seneca argues that rivers can and do flow underground because 1) the earth is hollow, and 2) water naturally flows downward.

deconstruction of the Vergilian model,” and argues that the lack of civil refoundation in the Lucanian universe also takes apart the *ekpyrosis* model from the first simile, which relies on Stoic theory that predicts a new world following the end of the old world.¹²⁸ This does not, however, invalidate the metaphor of cosmic collapse. Instead, by deconstructing his own simile, Lucan only reinforces it. Metapoetically, the simile of cosmic collapse and universal ruin mirrors what happens to the state in the *Bellum Civile* by means of its own failure.

From one narrative of a civilization’s fall to another: the Paduan augur predicts an ending for Rome to match the end of Troy. Lucan singles out the day of the fateful battle with a depiction of temporal progression that is even more inexorable than that written by Vergil.

dissimilem certe cunctis quos explicat egit
Thessalicum natura diem: si cuncta perito
augure mens hominum caeli nova signa notasset,
spectari toto potuit Pharsalia mundo. (7.201-4)

Nature led in the Thessalian day, different, certainly,
than all others which unfold: if, through a skilled augur,
every human mind had observed the strange signs of heaven,
Pharsalia would be able to be seen through the whole world.

The progression of time is a process of the natural world as it governs the line of days making up that larger timeline. Nature is here part of a military metaphor; *explicat* and *egit* both position *natura* as a general to an army of days.¹²⁹ Though this comparison maintains the representation of *natura* as a powerful force, it also plays with the idea of civil conflict again. When book seven begins, various parts of the natural world – the sun, most notably – rebel against their usual course in order to slow the flow of time and delay the moment of the final battle. The parts of the natural world are even in conflict with themselves, just like the parts of the Roman Republic.

¹²⁸ Stover (2012) 34-35.

¹²⁹ Dilke (1960) 107 *ad* 201.

The motif of the final day occurs again before the battle begins in the context of the glorious history of Rome and the people who made it possible. Lucan contemplates the scope of the Roman world, so vast after acquiring territory in foreign wars that it seemed to stretch from pole to pole (*omnibus annis / te geminum Titan procedere vidit in axem*, 7.421-22). The *summa dies* that will take place at Pharsalus is the death of that Roman world and its accomplishments.

sed retro tua fata tulit par omnibus annis
Emathias funesta dies. (7.426-27)

But that fatal day of Emathia, equal to all the years,
bore back your fates.

The final day (*funesta dies*) is equivalent in importance to all the years (*par omnibus annis*) that preceded it.¹³⁰ The forward progression of time that brings this final day is again presented in figurative language. While earlier *natura* was a general that drove on its troops, the *dies*, in this case the *funesta dies* reverses Rome's *fata*, like a river sweeping a boat downstream. Postgate cites Vergil's first *Georgic* for this metaphor (*sic omnia fatis / in peius ruere ac retro sublapsa referri*, 1.199-200), which Dilke compares to verses from *Aeneid* 2 (*ex illo fluere ac retro sublapsa referri / spes Danaum, fractae vires, aversa deae mens*, 2.169-70).¹³¹ The hypothetical wish that Rome had not exceeded its original size and proceeded on its current path to Pharsalus looks back to the city's foundation. The beginning of Rome's world, and of the *causarum series*, looks to its end: the *summa* or *funesta dies*.

volturis ut primum laevo fundata volatu
Romulus infami conplevit moenia luco,
usque ad Thessalicas servisses, Roma, ruinas. (7.437-39)

When first the city was founded by a vulture's left-hand flight

¹³⁰ Day (2013) 207: "In a single day Pharsalus halts and undoes Rome's might advance *per prospera fata* (7.420). The sublime experience of what Rome was gives way to the traumatised awareness that this identity has been permanently destroyed."

¹³¹ Postgate (1900) 61 *ad* 426 suggests the metaphor of the river which breaks a tow rope and sweeps boat and crew downstream, citing Vergil, *Geor.* 1.199-203. Dilke (1960) 128 *ad* 426.

and Romulus filled its walls from the infamous grove,
until the point of Thessalian ruin, Rome, you should have been enslaved.

Rome began with Romulus, in the famous grove on the Capitoline. Though the Roman world that comes to an end in the *Bellum Civile* is the Republic assailed by Caesar, its history included the kings stretching back to Romulus. So the scope of the timeline is from Romulus to Pharsalia, a range summed up neatly in these verses. What begins in a grove with Romulus comes to its end in Thessalian ruin.

When the battle at Pharsalus actually commences, Lucan's poetry is surprisingly free of geographical markers or indications as to the location of the action or the individuals who are involved. Whereas earlier skirmishes include specific references to the soldiers' places in the landscape or the environment's contributions to the fighting,¹³² the battle of Pharsalus lacks both geographic and personal specificity. The battle occurs on a wide plain (*toto... campo*, 7.506; *latis... campis*, 7.565), but all other spatial notations are relative, marking the position of one army or individual against another.¹³³ The battle almost seems to exist in a vacuum, with direction indicated only by the location of each army and their movements against each other. This is the climactic moment in the poem, given the programmatic direction of the first simile in book one that compared the Republic's fall to the end of the world at *ekpyrosis*. In a poem that is highly aware of the physical world, to what extent does Lucan's depiction of the battle of Pharsalus, uniquely devoid of geographical markers, conform to theories about the mechanism

¹³² See my discussion of the Rubicon and Ariminum, as well as of Brundisium in Chapter 1; of Massilia and Ilerda in Chapter 2; and of the various parts of Libya in Chapter 4.

¹³³ Dilke (1960) 41-50 comments on the scholarly dispute concerning the site of the battle, located somewhere on the Pharsalian plain, a 12 mile long area in Thessaly. Consultation of other ancient sources reveal the probable propinquity of the river Enipeus, but do not provide a firm location to the north or south of that river. Archaeological evidence is also inconclusive. Cf. Caesar, *BC* 3.100, *proelium in Thessalia factum*; Pliny, *NH* 7.94, *apud Pharsaliam*; Appian, *BC* 2.75, *παρέτασσε τοὺς λοιποὺς ἐς τὸ μεταξὺ Φαρσάλου τε πόλεως καὶ Ἐνιπέως ποταμοῦ, ἔνθα καὶ ὁ Καίσαρ ἀντιδιεκόσμηι*; Strabo 9.5.6.

and extent of *ekpyrosis*? Does this battle, fought in relative vacuum, mirror the conflagration expanding outward into the extra-cosmic void?¹³⁴

The attention to geographic and spatial detail resumes after the fighting is over and, in a departure from previous omniscient-narrator presentations of the landscape, is presented from Caesar's point of view.¹³⁵ Upon surveying the field and witnessing the bloodshed (*Caesar, ut Hesperio vidit satis arva natate / sanguine*, 7.728-29), Caesar spares the lives of his defeated opponents (*iam ratus ut viles animas perituraque frustra / agmina permisit vitae*, 7.730-31). When the following day dawns, the remains of the battlefield and the consequences of the fight are illuminated over breakfast.

tamen omnia passo,
postquam clara dies Pharsalica damna retexit,
nulla loci facies revocat feralibus arvis
haerentes oculos. cernit propulsa cruore
flumina et excelsos cumulis aequantia colles
corpora, sidentes in tabem spectat acervos
et Magni numerat populos, epulisque paratur
ille locus, voltus ex quo faciesque iacentum
agnoscat. iuvat Emathiam non cernere terram
et lustrare oculis campos sub clade latentes. (7.786-95)

Though [Caesar], having endured all these things,
afterward when bright day renewed Pharsalian losses,
the appearance of the place does not recall his eyes,
clinging to funeral fields. He sees rivers flowing with
blood and corpses piled up as high as lofty hills,
he observes piles settling into decay
and counts Magnus' peoples. That place is prepared
for banquets, from which he can recognize the faces and
appearance of the fallen. He is happy that he does not see

¹³⁴ Sellars (2006) 97 describes the void, as the Stoic conceived of it, as infinite and incorporeal. At the moment of *ekpyrosis*, the fires of the conflagration expanded outward into the void from the space taken up by the cosmos. Posidonius differed from his Stoic predecessors, calling the void non-infinite; see fr. 97a-b (Edelstein and Kidd).

¹³⁵ See Leigh (1997) 304 for Lucan and his criticism of "imperial spectator-society." Leigh argues that by showing the Caesarian mentality, where civil war is a spectacle seen by the Italian augur and enacted by Caesar's troops, Lucan uses the beginnings of this imperial state of mind in the *Bellum Civile* to make a point about life under Nero's imperial regime.

the Emathian land and that he sees fields hidden under slaughter.

The battlefield that Lucan presents to his readers reflects Caesar's view of the carnage (*nulla loci facies revocat feralibus arvis / haerentes oculos*).¹³⁶ What Caesar sees is striking: rivers of blood (*propulsa cruore / flumina*) and bodies piled up into hills (*excelsos cumulis aequantia colles / corpora*). Rivers tainted with blood to varying degrees are present in the *Bellum Civile* prior to book seven and are meant to show the extent of the bloodshed during a battle, but after the battle of Pharsalus, the bloodshed is so plentiful that it forms new rivers.¹³⁷ Rather than infusing or infecting the established landscape, the blood from Roman battles creates new landscape elements. A similar process can be seen with the bodies of the dead, which are piled up into mounds that resemble hills (*colles*). The level of devastation is so high that the battle and the carnage it produces do more than affect or contaminate the natural world. The bodies and blood actually become parts of the natural world and in doing so, redefine what the world is made of. The battle almost seems to augment the geologic record. The dead bodies are so numerous that they cover the ground completely (*iuvat Emathiam non cernere terram / et lustrare oculis campos sub clade latentes*), creating a new stratum in the landscape. Leigh interprets these lines in light of Vergil's first *Georgic*, where blood has a very different effect on the fields after the battle of Pharsalus.

ergo inter sese paribus concurrere telis
Romanas acies iterum videre Philippi;
nec fuit indignum superis bis sanguine nostro
Emathiam et latos Haemi pinguescere campos. (1.489-92)

Therefore Philippi saw again Roman battle lines

¹³⁶ Johnson (1987) 102 compares the "wallowing in gore" to "Caesar's *aristeia*."

¹³⁷ Dinter (2012) 34. Cf. *BC* 7.292-94, *videor fluvios spectare cruoris / calcatosque simul reges sparsumque senatus / corpus et inmensa populos in caede natantis*; 7.635-37, *sanguis ibi fluxit Achaeus / Ponticus, Assyrius; cunctos haerere cruores / Romanus campisque vetat consistere torrens*. Leigh (1997) 295 compares Lucan's bloody rivers to *Aen.* 6.86-87: *bella, horrida bella / et Thybrim multo spumantem sanguine cerno*.

clash against themselves with equal spears;
nor to the gods was it undeserving that Emathia and wide
fields of Haemus twice be enriched by our blood.

The horror of civil war is still at issue, but the fields are enriched (*pinguescere*) by the blood rather than polluted by it. Vergil consistently uses *pinguis* for the richness of soil in the *Georgics*,¹³⁸ and the concept of bodies used as fertilizer is not unattested.¹³⁹ So when Lucan's Caesar sees a landscape made of corpses, not only does he follow in the divine or giant footsteps of Hercules and the *Gigantes*, but he can be seen as a "successful farmer" looking at his fields and their potential.¹⁴⁰

Caesar sees a new world made up of the ruins – the bodies – of the old. This new world vision, then must be considered in light of the apocalyptic metaphor of *ekpyrosis*, carried throughout the first seven books of the *Bellum Civile*, which comes to its conclusion at the battle of Pharsalus. The cosmic dissolution model that Lucan employs as an analogy for the civil wars contradicts the traditional interpretation of *ekpyrosis* as a relatively positive part of Stoic cosmological theory, in which a new universe emerges from the remains of the old one;¹⁴¹ Lucan takes apart the "regenerative model of history in which political collapse gives way to refoundation"¹⁴² by warping the anticipated new world into something fundamentally different

¹³⁸ Thomas (1988) 150 *ad* 1.492 cites *pinguis* in this context at 2.92, 139, 184, 203, 248, and 274.

¹³⁹ Leigh (1997) 292-94. Plutarch, *Marius* 21 describes how the Massilians surrounded their vineyards with corpses after a battle with Marius; their crop the following year was excellent. For corpses or blood as fertilizer, see also Aeschylus, *Sept.* 587; Ovid, *Her.* 1.54; Petronius 120.99; Silius Italicus, *Pun.* 3.261, 14.130; Statius, *Theb.* 7.545-46. For skepticism on the nourishing qualities of blood, see Horace, *Carm.* 2.1.29-31.

¹⁴⁰ Leigh (1997) 295 compares *BC* 7.791 (*spectat acies*) to Vergil, *Georg.* 1.158 (*heu magnum alterius frustra spectabis acervum*).

¹⁴¹ Long (1985), Hahn (1977) 185-99. See also Sellars (2006) 99 who notes that, because the cosmos is governed by reason, the Stoics held that it is in its ideal configuration at all times; therefore, the world-cycles are not so much an endless series of *cosmoi* so much as a single, endlessly repeated cycle.

¹⁴² Stover (2012) 30.

and worse than its predecessor.¹⁴³ The world of the Republic ends, but the new world that emerges from the ruins – or, rather, is built from the ruins – shakes off the metaphorical bonds of Stoic order. This idea, that Caesar creates his own landscapes and world from pieces of the existing environment, is not new at Pharsalus. During the siege of Brundisium in book one, Caesar tried to prevent Pompey from escaping by filling in the harbor with huge stones before building a barrier to closer the harbor’s mouth. At Massilia, Caesar cut down trees in the sacred grove to built siege works which moved like monstrous new landforms; the ships used during the naval battle offshore were also comparable to man-made islands. After the storm that caused the Sicoris to flood near Ilerda, Caesar took control over the paths of the receding floodwaters to best suit his own purposes. Over the course of the first seven books of the *Bellum Civile*, then, Caesar is partially responsible for the end of the Republic – the metaphorical apocalypse – and is prone towards the manufacture of landscape elements from trees, stones, and other parts of nature. Only at Pharsalus does his engineering of reality begin to use the bodies of Romans. Caesar, like Hercules, transforms the landscape of Thessaly. Unlike Hercules, however, he does not tear down mountains and precipitate the growth of civilization; the piled corpses (*colles*) are new and grotesque forms, visual echoes on mountains on a smaller scale. Caesar is again more than human, but in the battle narrative of Thessaly, he is more Giant than hero.¹⁴⁴

The battle of Pharsalus is followed by an apostrophe to the land of Thessaly (*Thessalia, infelix... tellus*, 7.847), with which Lucan concludes book seven. The double effect of the battle dead from Pharsalia continues to define the land: they are both a part of the landscape and a corrupting presence in the landscape. The grasses that grow in these fields are afterwards tainted

¹⁴³ Williams (2012) 127 comments on the moral dimension of *ekpyrosis* theory, especially in Seneca. At *NQ* 3.27.1, nature seeks “the destruction of the human race,” but Seneca still maintains the optimism of the traditional *ekpyrosis*: the addition of the moral dimension makes the end of the world equivalent to a cleansing catharsis.

¹⁴⁴ Feeney (1991) 297: “it is a very odd sort of gigantomachy, since the giant succeeds.”

and discolored (*quae seges infecta surget non decolor herba*, 7.851). Any agricultural effort is essentially a desecration of a mass grave (*quo non Romanos violabis vomere manes*, 7.852), and the significance of the battle seems to make the quantity of the dead and their remains overwhelming.

omnia maiorum vertamus busta licebit,
et stantes tumulos et qui radice vetusta
effudere suas victis conpagibus urnas,
plus cinerum Haemoniae sulcis telluris aratur
pluraque ruricolis feriuntur dentibus ossa. (7.855-59)

We may turn out all the tombs of our ancestors,
both the mounds still standing and those that have poured out
their urns, joints overcome by an ancient root,
more ashes are plowed in the furrows of the Haemonian land
and more bones are struck by the rustic tools.

The remains of all Rome's ancestors, pouring out from broken urns (*effudere suas victis conpagibus urnas*), do not equal the ashes and bones left behind by this single battle. While this is a clear case of Lucanian hyperbole, the equation of Pharsalus and its consequences with the entirety of Roman history is not without precedence: earlier in book seven the *Emathia funesta dies* is equal to all the years of Roman society that preceded it (7.427). The effect, moreover, on the land is indelible; any future farmer who ploughed the fields in Pharsalus would turn up the bones of the dead (*pluraque ruricolis feriuntur dentibus ossa*). The image of bones in the ploughshare's teeth relies on a similar illustration of the aftermath of war and its effect on the land in Vergil's *Georgics*.

scilicet et tempus veniet, cum finibus illis
agricola incurro terram molitus aratro
exesa inveniet scabra robigine pila
aut gravibus rastris galeas pulsabit inanis
grandiaque effossis mirabitur ossa sepulchris. (1.493-97)

No doubt the time will come when on those borders
a farmer, working the earth with curved plow,

will discover rough javelins, corroded by rust,
or will strike empty helmets with his heavy hoe
and he will marvel at the aged bones from the excavated grave.

Where Vergil's *agricola* is amazed by the weapons, armor, and bones he turns up with his plough, Lucan's image is impersonal. The physical evidence of the battle is self-evident and its disturbance is essentially that of a graveyard. In Lucan, the land cannot be reclaimed for peacetime activities like agriculture without disrupting and being disrupted by the memory and remains of this battle. Any poetic allusion to a golden age of bucolic ease is also impossible. Lucan's grim vision of the civil wars and the end of the Roman Republican "world" prevents a narrative of refoundation for Rome. All that remains is a land with a deep history of violence further tainted by war until the new Caesarian world, built with and upon the remains of the old world, is nothing but a graveyard.

The depiction of Greece in the *Bellum Civile*, through the landscapes of Delphi, Thessaly, and Pharsalus, not only fulfills the programmatic image of cosmic dissolution introduced in book one, but provides a venue for Caesar's transition from a character comparable to a force of nature into a world-builder, a monstrous and corrupt artificer who replaces divine *Natura*. The cosmic scope of the poem is renewed in the geographic and political dislocation of action away from Rome and the institutions of the Republic, and in the importance of this one battle for the course of the civil wars, as retold by Lucan. Delphi and Thessaly, places with rich mythical, historic, and geologic pasts, prove to be the ideal sites for Lucan to focus on and explain the Stoic-inspired world of his poem.

Chapter 4: North Africa

The Romans adopted the term *Libya* from the Greeks to denote the known parts of the continent of Northern Africa.¹ Lucan writes about several specific regions within Libya: Cyrenaica, west of Egypt; the Libyan desert in Tripolitania, a region that includes Leptis Magna; and Africa Vetus, also called Africa Proconsularis, the location of the ruins of Carthage and the proconsul's seat at Utica. Curio's campaign against Juba takes place near Carthage in book four; Cato leads the remains of the Republican army in a trek across the desert from Berenice in Cyrenaica to Leptis Magna in book nine. Lucan approaches the representation of the natural world in the Libyan episodes of the *Bellum Civile* in a precise and intense way that focuses on the peculiarities of the landscape and the hazards they present to the intruding Romans. The region is consistently dangerous to the Romans, regardless of their political affiliation. Both Caesarians and those on the side of the Republic, like Cato, are subjected to the harshness of the Libyan environment. For the indigenous inhabitants of Libya, however, the dangers of nature are lessened. While the Romans struggle with heat, thirst, storms, pathless places, and wildlife, the Libyan peoples find nothing out of the ordinary in a landscape that provides them with protection and livelihood.

In both of Lucan's Libyan episodes, Roman anxieties about the land are manifest in its lack of water and in the ill-defined knowledge the Romans have about it. Thus, borders are persistently unclear and boundaries are transgressed in Lucan's Libya, a pattern that applies not only to geo-political borders, but to the meeting of land and sea in the Syrtes or to the overlap of myth onto history. These border problems are characteristic of Lucan's approach to the

¹ Pliny, *NH* 5.1: *Africam Graeci Libyam appellavere et mare ante eam Libycum*. Cf. cognate names used as a toponym in Homer (*Od.* 4.85, 14.295).

macrocosmic metaphor – the universal dissolution in *ekpyrosis* – that underpins his narrative. If the conflict of the civil wars, especially the battle of Pharsalus, are comparable to the end of the world which is defined as Republican Rome, then Libya, following the climactic battle in book seven, is post-apocalyptic in the world of the *Bellum Civile*. Accordingly, Lucan depicts a place with little in the way of arable land, few visible inhabitants, and great swaths of hazardous and even toxic wasteland. This landscape even acts as an allegory that incorporates Cato's ethical dilemma about his participation in the civil wars as well as the themes of cosmological unraveling that mirror the collapse of the Republic.

Though mythic digressions are quite rare in Lucan's work, in his description of Libya, they are more frequent and lengthy. A local man's narration of the fight between Hercules and Antaeus precedes Curio's confrontation with Juba in book four. Later in book nine, the story of Medusa, her decapitation by Perseus, and the transport of her head back towards civilization provides an origin for Libya's snakes. Other, shorter mythical stories (the Garden of the Hesperides, the body of water called Tritonis) follow the same pattern, helping demonstrate the surrealism of the Libyan landscape and its removal, both spatially and conceptually, from the other geographic areas described in the poem. Ultimately, depictions of Antaeus and Medusa, as well as repeated emphasis on the harsh landscape and climate of Libya, portray a place that is monstrous and vital in itself, but hostile and even toxic to the Romans.

I. A More Hazardous Land: Desert Anxieties

Bellum Civile 4 concludes with C. Scribonius Curio's campaigns in North Africa, first against P. Attius Varus, the proconsul of Africa and a zealous Pompeian ally,² and later against Juba, the king of Numidia and another ally of Pompey.³ In the latter confrontation especially, descriptions of the African landscape define the region's character and are as a crucial element in Curio's defeat. Curio sails from Sicily (*rates audax Lilybaeo litore solvit*, 4.583) and makes landfall on the Libyan coast between the ruins of Carthage and the fort at Clipea (4.585-86).⁴ Before Curio even meets Juba and his army, this place is associated with the Punic Wars and the narrative of past Roman victories in Africa. Its identification as the site of Hercules' battle with Antaeus (4.589-655) gives Africa a connection to myth as aetiology, which I will discuss below in section III.⁵ Curio does not set foot among Carthage's ruins as Caesar later does at Troy, but Lucan's description of them simultaneously evokes their former greatness and the peculiar state of their desolation.

namque rates audax Lilybaeo litore solvit
Curio, nec forti velis Aquilone recepto
inter semirutas magnae Carthaginis arces
et Clipeam tenuit stationis litora notae,

² Caesar, *BC* 1.12-13. Lucan spends little time on of Varus, only noting that he was, at that time, the magistrate in charge of the province: *omnis Romanis quae cesserat Africa signis / tum Vari sub iure fuit* (4.666-67).

³ Manton (1988) 36 cites North Africa's wealth, the loyalty of the legions stationed there, and the aid of Juba and his troops as some of Pompey's advantages during the conflict with Caesar.

⁴ Caesar *BC* 2.24.1-4 describes Curio's arrival in Libya, using the Bagrada as a geographic reference point.

⁵ Lucan is the only writer who places Antaeus near Carthage. Many authors, both Greek and Roman, simply locate Antaeus in Libya (Pindar, *Isthmian* 4; Apollodorus 2.5.11; Diodorus Siculus 4.17.4); even the authors who are more specific tend to place Antaeus further west than Lucan does. Propertius 3.22.9-12 lists Antaeus among other legendary figures and places (Medusa, Atlas, the Hesperides) that would be closer to the Atlantic. Pliny, *NH* 5.1.2-4 identifies Antaeus' realm with Lixus, a city on the Atlantic coast where an inlet of the sea (*aestuarium*) was guarded by *dracones*; he also locates the Garden of the Hesperides at Lixus, and compares the city to Carthage in size and influence. Strabo 17.3.8 cites Artemidorus and Eratosthenes, who provided the alternate name Lynx for Lixus, and debated the possibility of misty air in an arid region; Strabo also cites the Roman historian Gabinius, who puts the tomb of Antaeus in Lynx.

primaque castra locat cano procul aequore, qua se
Bagrada lentus agit siccae sulcator harenae. (4.583-88)

For bold Curio sets loose his ships from the Lilybaean shore, and with gentle Aquilo taken into the sails, landed on the shores of the famous post between the half-ruined towers of great Carthage and Clipea, and he places the first camp far from the white sea, where smooth Bagrada makes its way, the furrower of dry sand.

Carthage had been a formidable enemy (*magnae Carthaginis*), but is falling into ruin nearly a century after its defeat at the end of the Third Punic War. The city's *arces* are partially fallen (*semirutas*). *Semirutus* is a rare word in Classical Latin, used only seventeen times in the extant corpus, applied primarily to architectural structures like *urbes*, *tecta*, *muri*, and *moenia*.⁶ Only three of these uses are in poetry;⁷ two are in the *Bellum Civile* and thus connect the places they describe, Italy and Carthage. In the proem in book one, Lucan describes the effects of war on the Italian countryside and devastation of its towns: *at nunc semirutis pendent quod moenia tectis* (1.24). The conflict brought by civil war leads to an Italy that is deserted and has fallen into a state of disrepair⁸ on par with the century-old ruins of Rome's former geopolitical nemesis. *Semirutis... tectis* in book one and *semirutas... arces* in book four create a parallel between Rome and Carthage and, by depicting a specific kind of *ruinae*, these words form the cornerstones of a larger narrative of destruction in the *Bellum Civile*.⁹ The devastation caused by war against the Romans ruins states, whether Rome's enemy is external or internal.

⁶ Asso (2010) 217 on line 585. The first known use comes from Sallust, *Hist.* 2, fr. 64.3 (Maurenbrecher) *semiruta moenia*, of Saguntum.

⁷ The third poetic use of *semirutus* is at Statius, *Silvae* 5.3.104 and applies metaphorically to *vultus*. Asso (2010) 217 compares Lucan's *semirutas magnae Carthaginis arces* to Florus, *Epit.* 1.31.44, *semiruta Carthagine*.

⁸ For further discussion of the Italian countryside, landscape, and infrastructure in 1.24-29, see Chapter One.

⁹ Lucan's use of *ruina* to describe both Carthage and Rome picks up on the same kind of narrative of urban ruin and destruction that exists in Livy's account of Rome's early centuries. In *Ab urbe condita*, the

Curio marches toward Clipea and sets up his camp near the Bagrada, one of the only local sources of fresh water inland from the sea.¹⁰ Rivers play a prominent role in the *Bellum Civile* and often serve as shapers of both landscape and *limites*.¹¹ The Bagrada appears only here in Lucan, but Curio's proximity to it is geographically significant in terms of the river's place in the landscape, and historically relevant to previous campaigns by Romans and to Regulus' infamous encounter with a serpent. The Bagrada is, according to Lucan, far from the sea (*cano procul aequore*, 4.587), and this may be why it has such agency as a water feature.¹² The Bagrada, though not a fast or violent river (*Bagrada lentus*), carves its own path (*agit... sulcator*) in the dry land around it (*siccae... harenae*). By imagining the river as *sulcator*, Lucan provides a model for later poets of the first century CE¹³ and, as Asso has pointed out, imbues the river with a serpentine appearance as it moves sinuously through the landscape, mirroring a snake moving across a sandy beach, as in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (*sulcat*, 15.726).¹⁴ The combination of location and serpentine motion strengthens the allusion to the legendary confrontation between the Roman general Atilius Regulus and a giant serpent in the Bagrada during the First

Romans bring *ruina* to both Alba (1.29.6) and Fidenae (4.33.8); later, during the Gallic sack of Rome, the same condition (*ruina urbis*, 5.39.12) is brought upon them.

¹⁰ Martina (1995) examines Curio's actions and character in light of 4.581-90, touching briefly on Curio's leadership ability and decision-making process in the context of Africa.

¹¹ Mendell (1942).

¹² There is some inconsistency in the identification of the Bagrada. Holmes (1915) 173 associates it with the modern Medjerda river, which flows east from Algeria, through Tunisia, and into the Gulf of Tunis; he notes that the modern river course has shifted north since the Roman period, when it flowed into the Gulf about ten miles southeast of Utica. Leigh (2000) 96 states that the Bagrada flows west from Utica, making it completely separate from any watercourse potentially related to the Syrtes region between Lake Tritonis and Cyrene.

¹³ *Sulcator* appears in the extant corpus of Latin literature only four times; besides Lucan, it occurs in Silius Italicus *Punica* 7.363, and twice in Statius' *Thebaid*, at 8.18 and 11.588. Both Silius and Statius associate the word with nautical metaphors, attributing it, respectively, to a *navita* steering a ship and to Charon the ferryman of Avernus, rather than to the water itself, as Lucan does.

¹⁴ Asso (2010) 219 *ad* 4.588; cf. Ovid, *Met.* 15.725-26: *litoream tractu squamae crepitantis harenam / sulcat*, of snakes.

Punic War.¹⁵ During a campaign in 256 BCE, Regulus and his soldiers encountered a colossal serpent near the Bagrada; while the missiles and stones thrown by the soldiers could not kill it, a more directed attack from Regulus himself did.¹⁶ This episode is not explicitly mentioned, though its contents – the dangerous serpent and a fight with a giant near the Bagrada – are relevant to the Libyan episodes in *Bellum Civile* four and nine. By evoking, albeit implicitly, the giant serpent of the Bagrada, Lucan makes snakes one of the characteristics of the Libya described in his poem. Moreover, Libyan snakes become a hostile force to Romans within the first ten lines of poetry dedicated to this region. The infamous snake catalogue and attack later in book nine fulfills the threat of danger lurking in the landscape since the beginning.

The Bagrada and Curio's camp near it also evoke previous Roman camps in the area and the campaigns which made them necessary. The allusion to Scipio Africanus and the Second Punic War is brought to the forefront during Curio's interaction with a local inhabitant, who, while telling him about the battle between Hercules and Antaeus, concludes his story with a reminder of Scipio's role.

sed maiora dedit cognomina collibus istis
 Poenum qui Latiis revocavit ab arcibus hostem
 Scipio; nam sedes Libyca tellure potito
 haec fuit. en, veteris cernis vestigia valli.
 Romana hos primum tenuit victoria campos. (4.656-60)

But he gave a greater name to these hills,

¹⁵ Bassett (1955) explores Silius' take on the legend at *Punica* 6.118-550, though he notes that Regulus and the serpent are more literarily comparable to Lucan's Hercules and Antaeus than to the snakes in *BC* 9. Leigh (2000) 95 n. 8 compiles a list of ancient sources for Regulus and the serpent: Aulus Gellius, *Atticae Noctes* 7.3; Livy, *per.* 18; Valerius Maximus 1.8 ext. 19; Silius *Punica* 6.140-205; Seneca, *Ep.* 82.24; Pliny, *NH* 8.37; Dio Cassius fr. 43.23; Florus 1.18.20; and Orosius 4.8.10-15. Ogden (2013) 217 offers a linguistic connection between the name Regulus and the snake, *basiliscus*, both of which translate to "little king."

¹⁶ The story is mentioned by in Livy, *Per.* 18. Aulus Gellius, *NA* 7.3 quotes the annalist Aelius Tubero on the same topic. Orosius 4.8.10-15 later elaborated on previous accounts, noting that the serpent had been 120 feet long. Ianziti (2012) 80 summarizes the sources for Regulus' story and analyzes their influence on historiographers in Renaissance Italy.

Scipio, who called back the Punic enemy from Latin citadels;
for when the Libyan land was obtained, this was
his place. There, you can see the remains of the old wall.
Roman victory first held these fields.

Scipio, who received his famous cognomen from his participation and victory in the African theater during the war, in turn gave the hills near the Bagrada their name (*maiora dedit cognomina collibus istis*) by setting up his camp there (*sedes Libyca tellure potito / haec fuit*), as Curio later would as well. The storyteller finishes his account by showing Curio the ruined remains of Scipio's camp (*en, veteris cernis vestigia valli*),¹⁷ a gesture with multiple layers of significance. On a narratological level, the actual physical ruins are explained by a story of their historical origin, a story that has ties to a larger mythological narrative, and thus, by association, blurs the lines between myth and reality, legend and history.¹⁸ As I will demonstrate, this indeterminacy of boundaries is thematic of Lucan's treatment of Libya as a whole. Because the story concludes with the ruined Roman structures (*veteris... vestigia valli*), it also looks to other ruins in the poem. Already in Curio's story the half-fallen towers of Carthage (*semirutas magnae Carthagine arces*, 4.585) evoke the dilapidated towns of contemporary civil war Italy (*semirutis pendent ... tectis*, 1.24). Beyond this reference, the *vestigia* of the *Castra Cornelia* look forward to the *vestigia* of Troy as witnessed by Caesar at the end of book nine (*magnaue Phoebei quaerit vestigia muri*, 9.965).

¹⁷ Asso (2010) 246 *ad* 4.656 identifies the ruins the storyteller points out as the *castra Cornelia*. Uhle (2006) 446 notes that the reference to Scipio and the *castra Cornelia* within the larger digression on Hercules and Antaeus is not included simply for its historical relevance, but has a larger purpose. Ahl (1976) 91 notes that the local's story, while poetically rich, would have been unnecessary to Curio who was "hardly a fool" and would have known both the story of Hercules and the location of Scipio's camp. Saylor (1982) 172 addresses Curio's attachment to the *castra*, writing that he "sees power in the spot because it has been invested by another general with a potency for victory," not because of any awareness of his natural environment.

¹⁸ Lucan's presentation of the *castra Cornelia* as mythically, thematically, and historically significant is a stark contrast to Caesar's, which acknowledges the area's practical value (*is locus peridoneus castris habebatur*, *BC* 2.24.2).

The story of Hercules and Antaeus and the quick verbal memorial to Scipio is set in a landscape notable for its hostility, due to its climate, its terrain, and its double-edged role as a place of suffering for the Romans and a place of refuge or aid for its own people. Though Varus was the Roman magistrate (*omnis Romanis quae cesserat Africa signis / tum Vari sub iure fuit*, 4.666-67), Lucan's description of the land's geography and his catalogue of its various peoples attribute control of the land more securely to Juba.¹⁹

non fusior ulli
terra fuit domino: qua sunt longissima, regna
cardine ab occiduo vicinus Gadibus Atlans
terminat, a medio confinis Syrtibus Hammon;
at, qua lata iacet, vasti plaga fervida regni
distinet Oceanum zonaeque exusta calentis. (4.670-75)

No master had
a more extended land: where it is longest, Atlas,
near Gades, bounds his kingdom at the western edge,
at the middle Ammon, near Syrtes, is the boundary;
but, where it lies spread out, the burning region of his vast
kingdom separates the Ocean from the burnt area of the hot zone.

The region ruled by Juba is mapped along a latitudinal axis (*longissima*) that runs between the Mediterranean coast in the north and the Sahara desert in the south. In the far west, Juba's kingdom and power end only where the land itself does, reaching as far as Gades (the Roman name for Cádiz, and here, synecdoche for Gibraltar) and Atlas (*cardine ab occiduo vicinus Gadibus Atlans / terminat*).²⁰ The soldiers Juba calls up into battle literally come from the ends of the earth (*extremaque mundi*, 4.699). Egypt and Cyrene occupy the far eastern portion of the northern part of the African coast, but Juba has control of the remainder, including both the Syrtes region and the oracle of Ammon (*a medio confinis Syrtibus Hammon*). In fact, the land is

¹⁹ Asso (2010) 260 *ad* 688 clarifies that this is Juba I, son of Hiempsal II of Numidia. Cf. Appian *BC* 2.44.

²⁰ Asso (2010) 253 *ad* 672 reads *cardo* as a line rather than a point or region of the sky, citing the *agrimensores* as a model.

so extensive and so defined by heat that it, rather than Juba, holds the Mediterranean's waters²¹ and the heat of the torrid zone (i.e., the desert) apart from each other (*vasti plaga fervida regni / distinct Oceanum zonaque exusta calentis*).

The physical extent of Juba's kingdom is matched by the diversity of its inhabitants. The catalogue of Libyan peoples that follows is reminiscent of the catalogue of Gallic tribes at 1.396-465; both catalogues are distinct from previous epic models in that they focus on groups of people rather than individuals.²² There are eleven distinct tribes included in the catalogue: the Autololes²³ (4.677), the Numidians²⁴ (4.677), the Gaetulians²⁵ (4.678), the Mauri²⁶ (4.679), the Nasamones²⁷ (4.679), the Garamantes²⁸ (4.679), the Marmaridae²⁹ (4.680), the Medi (4.681), the

²¹ While the westernmost border of Juba's kingdom, Mauretania, did border on the Atlantic Ocean directly, in the portion west of Gibraltar, it is likely that Lucan uses *Oceanum* at 4.675 to mean the Mediterranean. Because Juba's kingdom separates *Oceanus* from the torrid zone all along its length (*qua lata iacet*, 4. 674), the Mediterranean coast is the clear northern boundary. See my discussion of Lucan's use of *Oceanus* and its application to the Mediterranean in Chapter 2, section ii, as it pertains to *BC* 4.98-105.

Hardie (1890) 14 *ad* 671-75 seems to think that Lucan uses *Oceanus* literally to mean the circular Ocean river that encircled the world and that *distinct Oceanum* denotes separation of east and west; this is untenable not only because the torrid zone (*zonaque exusta calentis*) refers to the latitudinal zones and thus would be roughly parallel to the Mediterranean, not the some portion of the Ocean river, but mainly because the Romans of the first centuries BCE and CE had enough of a grasp of geography to know that the Ocean was not a river in the sense that ancient myth held it to be.

Thomson (1955) 51 summarizes the evolution of geographical theory regarding the Ocean and the shape of the world from Homer's time onwards, showing the solidification of the mythical Ocean-stream surrounding a flat earth-disk to a real sea beyond the Mediterranean on a globe (a Pythagorean idea) divided into climate zones (Eudoxus, Eratosthenes, etc.).

²² Asso (2010) 254 *ad* 676-86.

²³ Dessau (1896) 2599 calls the Autololes a Gaetolian people who lived on the west coast of Africa, at the foot of the Atlas mountains. Cf. Ptol. 4.6.17; Pliny, *NH* 5.9.17.

²⁴ Windberg (1937) 1360-61 concludes that the name Numidae refers to a confederation of smaller tribes, located between the Mauri in the north and the Gaetuli in the south.

²⁵ Dessau (1910a) 464-65 locates the Gaetuli south of the Mauretanian and Numidian peoples. During the Second Punic War, the Gaetuli were mercenaries in Hannibal's army; later, in 46 BC, they were both in Juba's cavalry and in the legions of the senatorially allied generals. For their name, cf. Varro, *RR* 2.11.11; Sallust, *BJ* 18.

²⁶ Weinstock (1930) 2352 lists the Mauri as a nomadic tribe among the various people of Mauretania who, as smaller sub-groups, were perhaps identifiable with the Mauri.

²⁷ Windberg (1935) 1776 calls the Nasamones a powerful people of North Africa. The earliest reference to them is Herodotus 2.32 and 4.172, where they are said to live east of the Syrtis Minor.

Mazaces (4.681), the Massylians³⁰ (4.682), and another tribe likely called Arzuges³¹ (4.684). Asso evaluates Lucan's ethnographic work in these lines as more difficult than average because the majority of the tribes mentioned are nomadic, people who "are mobile and do not have *fines*."³² Even in a passage designed to categorize and map, the land and its peoples defy definition by Roman means. While the Gauls of book one had the power to cross boundaries, the various Libyan peoples do not need this ability because they have no boundaries. The issue of permeable, changing, and non-existent *limites* and *fines* will continue to be an important factor in discussion of Libyan geography and the relation of Lucan's Roman characters to their environment.

After Curio defeats Varus, he and his legions confront Juba's amalgamation of Libyan soldiers in an area that features both wide plains and hills with hidden valleys. The topography of the region works against the Romans who are unfamiliar with it, but is a great aid, or perhaps another kind of weapon, for the Libyans. When Juba sends his second in command, Sabbura,

²⁸ Dessau (1910b) 751 identifies this name with the people who inhabited oases in the eastern Sahara, though in Roman times it mainly indicated inhabitants of the Fezzan (Herodotus 1.174, 183; Apollonius 4.1495). The Garamantes had significant power and in 70 CE made an incursion into the coastal areas of Tripolitania around Leptis Magna; the Roman governor at the time led a march against them (Tacitus, *Hist.* 4.50; Pliny, *NH* 5.38).

²⁹ Asso (2010) 258 *ad* 680 suggests the Marmaridae might be identical with the Psylli (9.893). Kees (1930) 1882-83 locates the Marmaridae within the area known as Marmarica, located on the north coast of Africa, east of modern Benghazi. The Marmaridae themselves, with the Garamantes, are mentioned as combatants in a war which was fought near the Syrtis Mairo in 20 CE against the proconsul of Crete and Cyrenaica, P. Sulpicius Quirinius.

³⁰ Schwabe (1930) 2166 identifies the Massyli as a Libyan tribe in northwest Africa. They were auxiliaries in the Carthaginians army during the Second Punic War (Polybius 3.33.15; Livy 28.17). Later, their name became associated with the Gaetuli and the Numidians; in poetry, especially Silius' *Punica*, their name became a poetic assignation for the peoples of North Africa more generally.

³¹ Asso (2010) 259 *ad* 684, cf. Shackleton Bailey (1987) 81: J. D. Morgan emended *Afer*, a change supported by Shackleton Bailey, who cites Sidonius, *Carm.* 5.336-37: *Gaetulis, Nomadis, Garamantibus, Autololisque, / Arzuge, Marmarida, Psyllo, Nasamone timetur*. Pietschmann (1896) 1498-99 describes the Arzuges as a north African tribe that lived in the border areas between the Roman provincial areas of Byzacena and Tripolitania (the central and south thirds of the former province of Africa Proconsularis, after its division in the 3rd century by Diocletian).

³² Asso (2010) 255 *ad* 676.

with a small force, to draw out the Romans from their *castra*, the duality of the landscape – its relative hostility or helpfulness – becomes clear.

ipse cava regni vires in valle retentat:
aspidas ut Pharias cauda sollertior hostis
ludit et iratas incerta provocat umbra
obliquusque caput vanas serpentis in auras
effusae tuto comprehendit guttura morsu
letiferam citra saniem; tunc inrita pestis
exprimitur faucesque fluunt pereunte veneno. (4.723-29)

He himself holds his kingdom's forces back in a hollow valley:
just so the cleverer enemy deceives the Pharian asps with
his tail; and he provokes the angry snakes with his moving shadow
and sideways, seizes the throat of the serpent, thrusting its head
into empty air, with a safe bite, short of the deadly poison; then the useless
bane is pressed out and its jaws flow with venom spent in vain.

The hollow valley (*cava... valle*) which conceals Juba's soldiers, prompts a simile that again, like the movement and legendary history of the Bagrada, draws comparisons involving the Libyan land, its people, and deadly snakes. The Libyan soldiers have the upper hand; they are like an ichneumon (*sollertior hostis*), a kind of mongoose, that deceives an asp with its tail (*cauda*) and with movements that cause its shadow to move (*incerta provocat umbra*).³³ When the snake strikes it does not succeed in biting the ichneumon (*vanas... in auras*), but instead is grasped by the neck itself (*comprehendit guttura*), its venomous bite rendered harmless (*pereunte veneno*). In this particular case, Lucan inverts expectations: the asp, striking at and failing to damage an ichneumon, represents the Romans; the predatory and skillful ichneumon represents Juba's force.³⁴ The last third of the simile describes the asp's venom: it is something deadly

³³ Asso (2010) 267 *ad* 725 notes that the phrase *incerta umbra* occurs elsewhere only at Vergil, *Eclogue* 5.5: *sub incertis Zephyris motantibus umbras*. Leigh (1997) 274 n. 104 explores the use of *provocare* as a challenge to a fight. He cites this simile and notes that the ichneumon is compared to an athlete elsewhere: Plutarch, *Mor.* 980e, 966d; Pliny, *NH* 8.88; Strabo 17.1.39. For ichneumon as soldier see Gellius *NA* 3.22.

³⁴ Asso (2010) 267 *ad* 724-29 lists Pliny, *NH* 8.88 as another source for duels between a snake and an ichneumon. Cf. Aristotle, *Historia Animalium* 9.6.612a; Strabo 17.39. Ahl (1976) 102 discusses this

(*letiferam... saniem*)³⁵ that drips from the snake’s jaws in a way that gives the appearance of melting (*faucesque fluunt*).³⁶ In this simile, even though the asp’s bite and its poison have no effect on the ichneumon, this does not negate the danger of the venom, but shows how it can be successfully avoided. Likewise, the Roman soldiers under Curio have great military power, but are outmaneuvered by Juba and Sabbura.

Sabbura’s lure is a success; Curio’s cavalry burst³⁷ from their camp to ride against the Libyan force, demonstrating how their ignorance of the land and its features is detrimental to their efforts.

Curio nocturnum castris erumpere cogit
ignotisque equitem late decurrere campis. (4.732-33)

Curio drives his cavalry to rush forth from their camps
at night and to rush down, spread wide over unknown fields.

The wide plains across which the cavalry ride (*late... campis*) stand in contrast to the sheltered and hidden valley where Sabbura lies in wait (*cava... in valle*, 4.723). The plains are unknown: whether due to foreign terrain or because the raid happens at night (*nocturnum*), they are

simile as part of a large exploration of Curio. Hinkle (1996) 96-97 notes that Juba’s strategy, as represented by the trickiness of the ichneumon, indicates his connection to the land in that he knows the “trick” for surviving and winning in Africa.”

³⁵ Asso (2010) 268 *ad* 728 traces the poetic tradition of *letiferus*, a word that occurs in epic poetry almost exclusively (Catullus’ epyllion 64.394; Vergil, *Aen.* 3.139, 10.169; twice more of snakes in Lucan, at 9.384 and 9.729); the exception is Columella *Res Rustica* 7.12.14, *letifer morbus*.

³⁶ Lucan uses *fluere* of snake venom again at 9.635, describing how the snakes that make up Medusa’s hair release venom when she combs them. *Fluere* is also associated with the effects of snake venom, namely, the melting and flowing bodies of Cato’s soldiers, at 9.770, 773, 781, and 814. I will discuss the implications of this later in this chapter.

³⁷ For *erumpere cogit*, cf. Lucretius *DNR* 6.888, the only other use of this phrase, and commentary: Bailey (1947) 1688-90. Lucretius’s *erumpere cogit* is part of a description of a spring at Dodona and the dispersion of “seeds” of heat from the earth and water into the air. Lucan, like many other writers who used the hexameter, often placed *erumpere* in the fifth foot of a line. He does so three other times in the *BC*: 3.460 (*erumpere ventum*, of winds and earthquakes), 10.256 (*erumpere Nilum*, of the force of the Nile’s stream), and 10.264 (*erumpere venis*, of primordial waters coming from the earth); Curio’s cavalry are the only instance that does not involve natural phenomena.

unfamiliar to the riders (*ignotisque... campis*).³⁸ The rest of Curio's soldiers, by his command, leave the camp at dawn (*ipse sub aurorae primos excedere motus / signa iubet castris*, 4.734-35).

Curio leads them into the inhospitable and perilous terrain of the hills.

super ardua ducit
saxa, super cautes, abrupto limite signa;
cum procul e summis conspecti collibus hostes
fraude sua cessere parum, dum colle relicto
effusam patulis aciem committeret arvis. (4.739-43)

He leads his troops
over harsh rocks, over crags, on a precipitous path;
when the enemy was sighted from the hilltops far away
they withdrew a little in a feint, until, with the hill left behind,
he would send his battle extended battle line over open fields.

A steep path (*abrupto limite*) and high, rocky hills (*super ardua... saxa, super cautes; e summis collibus*) make this terrain difficult to negotiate. The repetition of *super... super...* with *saxa* and *cautes* emphasizes the vertical dangers of the terrain and the difficulty it poses for the Romans and, moreover, recalls the perilous rocky terrain at Ilerda, itself hostile to the Caesarian soldiers.³⁹ In this Spanish countryside, opposing Caesarian and Pompeian camps were set up on hills (*colles*, 4.159) facing across a valley (*valle cava*, 4.158) that were also characterized by their steep and rocky appearance (*saxea*, 4.157; *ardua*, 4.158). Unlike the parallel camps in Spain, however, the trap devised against Curio's forces pits the Romans against not only a hostile landscape, but also enemy soldiers. This double danger, and Curio's reaction to it, the abandonment of this hill (*colle relicto*), makes the trap a success. When the Romans spread out on the open plain (*effusam patulis aciem committeret arvis*), Juba's forces can surround them and, ultimately, defeat them (4.746-48; 773-83). The Roman formation (*aciem*) spreads out

³⁸ Asso (2010) 269 *ad* 733 demonstrates how the phrase *ignotisque... campis* frames its line and "denotes expansiveness" of the space the cavalry rides in.

³⁹ Cf. *BC* 4.36-45.

(*effusam*) over the plain in the same way that the metaphorical asp moved to strike (*serpentis... effusae*, 4.726-27), harmless against the ichneumon. Likewise, the *effusa acies* does not pose a threat to its enemies. The unfamiliar terrain of Libya has a rich history, but for the Romans it proves to be full of traps, both environmental and military.

II. *Natura vetabat*: Geographic and Environmental Challenges in Libya

The *Bellum Civile*'s most extensive treatment of North African geography and landscape is in book nine, when, after Pompey's death, Cato and the remaining Republican soldiers travel across the desert in Tripolitania from Cyrene to Leptis Magna. Cato and his followers attempt to reach Juba, but it is their trek through the desert and the hardships they experience there that comprises the main portion of Lucan's treatment of Libya. An excursus on the geography of Libya focuses on Tripolitania, the region between Cyrene and Africa Proconsularis, bordered on the north by the Syrtes and on the south by the Sahara; it includes descriptions of the Syrtes, a body of water called Tritonis, the condition of the desert, and the role played in the landscape by winds and storms. Meanwhile Cato and his soldiers, a human element in the desolate landscape of Lucan's Libya, complain about the environment's effects on them and the suffering they endure because of it.

The Libya digression (9.411-44) explores the physical qualities of the region: its extent and location, its material resources, its climate, the possibility of agriculture. The digression, however, is deceptively encyclopedic, focusing on aspects of the region that are more hazardous. Less dangerous and more beneficent landscape elements are suppressed because, as Thomas writes, they "detract from [Lucan's] depiction of the land as a bleak and hostile setting."⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Thomas (1982) 108-9 calls this digression at 9.411-44 the "only complete ethnographic description" in the *BC*, though it is "somewhat abbreviated."

Environmental issues from other parts of the *Bellum Civile* are also part of Lucan's Libya digression, where he touches on the presence or absence of water, the prevalence of dust and sand, the importance of the winds, and the accessibility and livability of the region. The digression begins with an attempt to define Libya geographically and to justify its given location. This first of two options depends on rumor (*si credere famae cuncta velis*, 9.411-12) and calls Libya the third part of the world, putting it on equal ground with Europe and Asia (*tertia pars rerum Libye*, 9.411).⁴¹ This is quickly dismissed and not revisited in the digression, though Lucan's treatment of Libya as a distant place full of exotic dangers does emphasize its separation from Rome and "civilization." The alternative method of defining Libya relies on the natural world, specifically the winds (*si ventos caelumque sequaris*, 9.412), and makes Libya part of Europe. In keeping with his rationalizing tendency in respect to the natural world in book nine, Lucan explores the scientific evidence of Libya's geographic classification.

pars erit Europae. nec enim plus litora Nili
 quam Scythicus Tanais primis a Gadibus absunt,
 unde Europa fugit Libyen et litora flexu
 Oceano fecere locum; sed maior in unam
 orbis abit Asiam. (9.413-17)

... it will be part of Europe, for the shores of the Nile
 are not more removed from Gades than Scythian Tanais is,
 whence Europe flees Libya and the shores with their curve
 made a place for Ocean; but the greater region
 goes to Asia only.

Lucan places Libya alongside Europe (*pars erit Europae*, 9.413) with a verbal map that measures the distance from the Nile in Egypt to the Tanais (the Don River) in Asia and the distance from

⁴¹ Strabo 17.3.1 comments on the tripartite division of the world by continents, noting that this kind of division would imply three parts of equal size and that Libya is small enough (and equally inferior in resources) that even combined with Europe, it would not equal Asia (τοσοῦτο δ' ἀπολείπεται τοῦ τρίτον εἶναι μέρος τῆς οἰκουμένης ἢ Λιβύη ὥστε καὶ συντεθεῖσα μετὰ τῆς Εὐρώπης οὐκ ἂν ἐξισάζειν δόξειε τῇ Ἀσίᾳ). Part of Libya's smallness, in comparison to Europe and Asia is due to its location, overlapping with the torrid zone (πολὺ δὲ καὶ τῆς διακεκαυμένης ἐπιλαμβάνει ζώνης) and because the desert and even parts of the coast like the Syrtes, are uninhabited.

the Nile to Gades in Spain, on the Atlantic side of the straight of Gibraltar. From east and west, the distances are the same: the Nile is located in the middle between the Tanais and the Atlantic.⁴² Thus Libya, west of the Nile, is closer to Europe and classified as a part of it. By rejecting the tripartite division of the world and its continents, Lucan expands his pattern of paired landforms and doubled images in the natural world to a continental level; even the opposition of Europe/Libya to Asia reinforces the dual factions in the *Bellum Civile*. Rivers are common geographical markers, but Lucan's use of the Nile in reference to Libyan geography emphasizes that Libya has no major river of its own by which to measure. The source and direction of the winds also reinforce Libya's placement in the west, as part of Europe.

nam, cum communiter istae
effundant Zephyrum, Boreae latus illa sinistrum
contingens dextrumque Noti discedit in ortus
Eurum sola tenens. (9.417-20)

For, since these together make
Zephyr blow, the former, bordering Boreas' left side
and Notus' right side, departs into the east,
alone holding Eurus.

Each wind corresponds to one of the four cardinal points: Zephyr (west), Boreas (north), Notus (south), and Eurus (east). While Zephyr can be attributed to multiple sources (*communiter istae effundant Zephyrum*, 9.417-18), the other three winds emphasize Asia's location in the east. The north and south winds border it from each side (*Boreae latus illa sinistrum... dextrumque Noti*),

⁴² Strabo 2.4.5 also uses the Tanais to measure the geographic distance. He cites Polybius, who compares the length of Europe to the combined distance from Gibraltar (τὸ... στόμα τὸ κατὰ στήλας) to the Tanais, through Libya and Asia. For the measurement of distance between locations that do not exist on the same axis, it may be useful to compare the style of mapping that imagined coastlines as more linear, as in the Peutinger Table.

but the east wind is sent forth from it (*Eurum sola tenens*).⁴³ Libya, in the west, is thus decidedly distinct from Asia.

Lucan's next topic in this digression is the fertility of the Libyan land. He makes no mention of the desert yet, but directly connects the need for water to the presence of arable land.

Libycae quod fertile terraest
vergit in occasus; sed et haec non fontibus ullis
solvitur: Arctos raris Aquilonibus imbres
accipit et nostris reficit sua rura serenis. (9.420-23)

What part of Libya's land is fertile
is situated in the west; but this, too, is broken up by
no springs: it receives northern rains from rare
Aquilonones and restores its fields during our calm weather.

Fertile land in Libya is a rare commodity.⁴⁴ Its existence in the western part of the region (*Libycae quod fertile terraest vergit in occasus*) implies that the more central and eastern parts of Libya are not fertile, but even this geographically lopsided fertility is not consistent. Only when there is a water source (e.g., a river or an oasis) can the land be fruitful (*sed et haec non fontibus ullis solvitur*), a fact illustrated vividly by the Oracle of Ammon at the Siwa Oasis (9.511-37). Sources of groundwater are rare, and even the water that does not originate from the ground is scarce and originates outside Libya, brought in by storms driven by a north wind (*Arctos raris Aquilonibus imbres*).⁴⁵

Fertile land is not guaranteed, and even precious metals are not present in detectable quantities. There are no mining operations (*in nullas vitiatur opes*, 9.424) because gold and bronze cannot be mined or refined from the land (*non aere nec auro excoquitur*, 9.424-25).

⁴³ Lucan's inspiration for this digression is perhaps visible by his naming of the south wind as *Notus*, rather than *Auster*. Though he does use both terms throughout the *BC*, he does prefer *Auster* (used 26 times) to *Notus* (used 19 times).

⁴⁴ Thomas (1982) 109 associates the infertility of the land with primitiveness: no seasons means no agriculture means no ploughing.

⁴⁵ Raven (1993) 3-4 describes the extent of the desert in North Africa: almost 4 million square miles including the Saharan, Libyan, and Numidian deserts. Oases were few and far between.

Instead, the earth itself is pure (*nullo glaebarum crimine pura*, 9.425) in the sense that the soil that makes up the ground extends to great depths without interruption (*penitus terra est*, 9.426). This evaluation of the land as free of metals and, thus, free from mining, can be interpreted as praise, especially in light of the Stoic moral stance on mining as something that promotes *luxuria* and inverts the natural order of the world.⁴⁶ What resources do exist are only resources because the Romans (and other foreign colonists) could use them; the people of Libya use their trees for shade (*citri contenta comis vivebat et umbra*, 9.428), not to procure timber (*tantum Maurusia genti robora divitiae*, 9.426-27).⁴⁷ In light of the negative moral connotations of mining and, by correlation, the positive portrayal of Libya, the use of trees for shade rather than timber also takes on a moral tone. Given the use of citron wood for expensive furniture in Rome, where members of the elite would pay great prices for it,⁴⁸ the use of citron trees for shade rather than luxury simultaneously condemns Rome and implicitly praises Libya. The land may not offer much in the way of agricultural potential or material resources, but what it does produce is not subject to exploitation by Libya's peoples.

The digression concludes with the harsh desert landscape of eastern Libya and its hinterland, which stands in stark contrast to the partially fertile land in the western part of the

⁴⁶ Seewald (2008) 245 *ad* 424-26 cites Persius 2.66-67 and Seneca, *NQ* 5.15.1-4; in these passages mining is an unnatural act that damages the natural world and, as a result, humanity as well. The mining of iron enabled the production of weapons and thus also warfare; the mining of gold encouraged greed. Williams (2005) 419, examining *NQ* 5.15.1, notes Seneca's development of a moralizing tone in connection to mining; an exploration of an old mine is said to determine whether the greed of the past has left anything for the future (*an aliquid futuris reliquisset vetus avaritia*); cf. Williams (2012) 81-84. Wallace-Hadrill (1990) 85-87 examines the presentation of mining in Pliny's *NH* 33.1-3, where Pliny's moral diatribe against mining presents gold (and other subterranean valuables) as one of the worst examples of *luxuria*, because to obtain it, man must invert the natural order and delve into the underworld. Later, at 33.6, Pliny takes on a tone analogous to modern environmentalism when he portrays the quarrying of mountains as an attack against the structure and framework of the natural world.

⁴⁷ Cf. the Massilian grove (3.399-452). The Romans make it into timber; the Gallic people (and Greek colonists) had let it stand uncut.

⁴⁸ Connors (1998) 109 cites Petronius' *Bellum Civile* 27-32, which portrays a round citron wood table as comparable to the *orbis*, both of which are subject to Rome's appetites. Cf. Pliny, *NH* 13.91-103 for the value of citron wood and its use in Rome.

region (9.420-22). Near the Syrtes, an arid climate characterizes the land, even near the coast (*quaecumque vagam Syrtim conplectitur ora / sub nimio proiecta die, vicina perusti / aetheris*, 9.431-33) where plants cannot live (*exurit messes et pulvere Bacchum / enecat*, 9.433-34) and their roots cannot find any traction in the earth (*nulla putris radice tenetur*, 9.434). The inability to grow grapes, the source of wine production, contrasts with the crops of Italy and Greece, though the dusty infertile land of Libya in *Bellum Civile* 9 may be parallel to the post-apocalyptic images of an overgrown and infertile Italy in book one. The crumbling dust that makes up the ground in the Syrtica will contribute to the struggles Cato must face as he and his soldiers make their trek; loose soil makes the sandstorm a real possibility and hazard (9.445-92).⁴⁹ A closer focus on the unusually arid landscape of the Syrtica, also demonstrates how Libya's climate seems to interrupt the natural order of the world. The heat and sands are so influential in their local climate that nature seems sluggish (*natura deside torpet / orbis*, 9.436-37); even the passing of time, as indicated by the seasons, is not relevant (*inmotis annum non sentis harenis*, 9.437).

All the factors that contribute to the harshness of the Libyan landscape (lack of water and vegetation, heat, sand) create a place that cannot easily sustain life. As a result, some of the people who inhabit these harder regions survive on meager plants (*raras... exercit herbas*, 9.438) and on plunder (*quem mundi barbara damnis / Syrtis alit*, 9.440-41). Though the landscape of Libya in this digression is harsh, it does provide for its own people. The dangers of the Syrtes, so legendary elsewhere, can even turn to the benefit of the Libyans. The shipwrecks that the Nasamones harvest for goods (*cum toto commercia mundo / naufragiis Nasamones habent*, 9.443-44) provide a different, non-Roman, perspective on the Syrtes, making it a place that, like other parts of Libya, provides resources for its inhabitants, despite its disastrous effect on Cato's

⁴⁹ When the sandstorm dies down, Cato and his soldiers are buried under a layer of dust and sand that holds them down (*inmoti terra surgente tenentur*, 9.489). The *putris* land may not be able to be held together by roots (*tenetur*), as stated in the digression, but it can weigh down the Romans.

fleet. This disparity in the way the landscape affects Romans and Libyans reflects the larger narrative in the epic of Roman world collapse, providing, if only briefly, an external perspective.

The Libyan digression is a vehicle for information about the people and their perspective on and use of the land and its resources. The elements of the environment that most directly affect Lucan's characters are given more systematic treatment. Water, for example, is always an important issue in a desert, by either its presence or its absence. In the course of his descriptions of Libya in book nine, Lucan addresses anxiety about water by examining its role in the landscape in places like the Syrtes, Tritonis, and the oasis at the shrine to Jupiter Ammon. The effects of water and, conversely, Cato's thirst and that of his soldiers as they travel through the desert are a direct result of the environment surrounding them.

The Syrtes consist of two areas along the coast of North Africa that have treacherously shallow water and variable depths. The Syrtis Minor, is located west of modern Djerba on the Tunisian coast, and the Syrtis Major, upon which Lucan focuses, is located in the Gulf of Sidra east of modern Tripoli.⁵⁰ Cato decides to travel towards Juba and his forces, but the Syrtes region is in his way: *iter mediis natura vetabat / Syrtibus* (9.301-2). The natural world has made the land impassable or, more literally, has forbidden roads. Cato decides to test his *virtus* in the Syrtes anyway (9.302), but before Lucan narrates his journey and its hardships, he includes information about the Syrtes' geography and origins and on the hazardous storms to which the region is prone.⁵¹ In the first part of this literary detour to the Syrtes, boundary confusion, land

⁵⁰ Wick (2004) 111 calls the Syrtes some of the most feared waters in the ancient world because of the presence of shoals, sandbanks, and the dangerous effects of both tides and topography.

⁵¹ One of Lucan's main sources for the Syrtes was Apollonius' *Argonautica* 4.1232-44. Wick (2004) 16 highlights the differing foci of Apollonius' and Lucan's digressions: the *Argonautica* provides a snapshot of the Syrtes after a storm; the *Bellum Civile* offers insight into the region's deep time and formation. Morford (1967b) 125 includes the Syrtes digression among many others that "overburden" the narrative of Cato's *labores*.

and water, and the power of nature are central issues. Lucan begins with a brief description of the Syrtes' peculiar landscape.

primam mundo natura figuram
cum daret, in dubio pelagi terraeque reliquit (9.303-4)

When nature gave the world its first shape,
[the Syrtes] remained in doubt between sea and land.

There is a fundamental confusion in this place between sea and land (*in dubio pelagi terraeque*), which originates in the natural world (*natura... cum daret*) and has no discernible beginning within the scope of human history. Rather, the conditions of this place are measurable in geologic time, dating back to the origins of the world (*primam mundo... figuram*), a world, moreover, that is governed by natural forces rather than anthropomorphic deities. From its beginnings, the Syrtes has been consistent only in its inconsistency: it is both land *and* sea.⁵²

Lucan proposes two scientific theories about how the land and water in the Syrtes came to be as they are.⁵³ In the first, the land moves and the water fills in its empty spaces.

nam neque subsedit penitus, quo stagna profundi
acciperet, nec se defendit ab aequore tellus,
ambigua sed lege loci iacet in via sedes,
aequora fracta vadis abruptaque terra profundo,
et post multa sonant proiecti litora fluctus:
sic male deseruit nullosque exegit in usus
hanc partem natura sui; (9.305-11)

For the earth neither settled deeply, where it could take in
the waters of the deep, nor defended itself against the sea,
but by the ambiguous law of the place it lies as an impassable spot,
the sea broken by shallows and land interrupted by the depths,
and waves resound, thrown against many shores:
so badly nature deserted this part of herself and did not
demand it for any purposes;

⁵² O’Gorman (1995) 125. Hinkle (1996) 178 sees the Syrtes as *neither land nor sea*, and thus an “other” world. Brinnehl (2010) 77 comments on their transgressive nature.

⁵³ Wick (2004) 16 points out Lucan’s naturwissenschaftliche Spekulationen in the Syrtes digression.

The movement of the land is almost reminiscent of the effects of tectonic activity. In this theory, the shoals are explained either because the land did not sink low enough (*neque subsedit penitus*) to allow for a normal amount of water to flow in (*quo stagna profundi acciperet*), or because the land did not put up enough opposition against the encroaching sea (*nec se defendit ab aequore tellus*). In both cases, the land ends up figuratively at war with the sea.⁵⁴ It does not position itself correctly and share space with water, nor can it be as firm and unaffected by the sea as it should be. However the Syrtes came about, the overlapping regions of land and water cause the region to be without paths or roads (*ambigua sed lege loci iacet invia sedes*), just as Lucan stated before the digression began (9.301-2). There can be no *limes* between elements and no *limites* passing through them. The conflict between land and sea is also conveyed through language of breaking: the waters of the sea break upon the shallows (*aequora fracta vadis*) and the land breaks off abruptly to become deep water (*abruptaque terra profundo*).⁵⁵ The landscape is such a mess that *natura*, the shaping force (9.303-4), abandons the Syrtes as is (*sic male deseruit nullosque exegit in usus / hanc partem natura sui*).

The second theory of the Syrtes' geological origins absolves the land of responsibility, but focuses on the presence or absence of water.

vel plenior alto
olim Syrtis erat pelago penitusque natabat,
sed rapidus Titan ponto sua lumina pascens
aequora subduxit zonae vicina perustae;
et nunc pontus adhuc Phoebosiccante repugnat,
mox, ubi damnosum radios admoverit aevum,
tellus Syrtis erit; nam iam brevis unda superne
innatat et late periturum deficit aequor. (9.311-18)

⁵⁴ Wick (2004) 113 sees the contest between land and water in the Syrtes as symbolic of the civil conflict at Rome, itself caught between two generals. Brinnehl (2010) 78 concludes that “the civil war is being performed by the landscape itself.” Cf. Hinkle (1996) 179.

⁵⁵ Lucan uses *fracta* and *abrupta* in close proximity only once more at *BC* 6.793, to describe the broken chains of Catiline in the depths of the underworld, as witnessed and retold by the reanimated corpse during Erichtho's necromancy.

Or at one time the Syrtis was
more filled with a deep sea and the depths swam,
but greedy Titan, feeding his lights on the sea,
drew up the waters near the torrid zone;
and now the sea still fights back against parching Phoebus,
soon, when destructive time brings his ray near,
the Syrtis will be land; for now the waver floating above
is shallow and water, about to disappear, is running out.

Originally, the waters could have had a primordially great volume (*plenior alto olim... pelago*), a depth (*penitus*) matched, in imagined theory, by the hypothetical movement of the land in Lucan's previous theory (*penitus*, 9.305).⁵⁶ Instead, the sea is in conflict with the sun (*Titan; pontus... Phoebosiccante repugnat*). The water is part of a figurative battle, just as in the previous theory, where water was the aggressor against the land. Here, the sea is a victim of the sun's thirsty heat and cannot hold out against it, especially as the process of evaporation continues over time (*damnosum radios admoverit aevum; late periturum deficit aequor*).⁵⁷ The conflicting elements of water and sun can also, like land and sea, contribute to a symbolic reading of the Syrtes as metonymy for the civil war. Seewald, reading this passage through a philosophical lens, has seen it as a repudiation of Stoic physics, wherein the world should be in harmony with itself and not harmful to man, a trait not present in the Syrtes.⁵⁸ Taking the programmatic *ekpyrosis* metaphor (1.72-80) into consideration, as well as the placement of this episode after the climactic battle of Pharsalus, means that Stoic physics can still be relevant. If

⁵⁶ Cf. *BC* 4.100: *absorpsit penitus rupes*. Also see Strabo 1.3.4, who cites Eratosthenes and Strato on the theoretical presence of primoral water and floods in the Mediterranean, based on the presence of shells and other maritime relics found near the oracle of Ammon.

⁵⁷ Cf. Lucan *BC* 4, where water plays a major role in the suffering at Ilerda, first by its excessive and overwhelming presence during the storm and flood, then by its absence, as access to potable water was restricted by Caesar, during the recovery efforts.

⁵⁸ Seewald (2008) 18-19.

Pharsalus is the moment when the metaphorical cosmic collapse takes place,⁵⁹ then what follows in the narrative exists in a time and place that is not governed by the normal cosmic order. The pathless and boundary-confused land in Libya reflects the cosmos as it regroups from its collapse. Or, perhaps, the dry, hot, and burning land of Libya is meant to represent the fires of *ekpyrosis* or their aftermath.⁶⁰ The traditional depiction of Stoic world-cycle theory (of which *ekpyrosis* is a part), is hopeful in that it portrays a new world rising from the ruins of the old. Lucan deconstructs this principle, writing instead a darker narrative where the ruins of the Republic, made concrete at the battle of Pharsalus, are much more permanent. If the comparison is stretched beyond Pharsalus and into the events of *Bellum Civile* 8-10, more ruins are all that remains for the Romans after the climactic collapse of book seven. In Libya, this is reflected by a harsh landscape where water is scarce, but what water does exist is liminal or dangerous. As Cato forges his own path through the land, his configuration as a new Stoic hero⁶¹ is well tested in a place that lacks the normal governing rules of Stoic order.

When Cato and the soldiers make landfall, one of the first natural features they encounter is a body of water called Tritonis. After the treacherous waters of the Syrtis, the calmer, safer waters of Tritonis still represent the extremes of the Libyan landscape,⁶² but do so primarily through allusions to myth and legend. Geographical descriptions of Tritonis precede and follow a

⁵⁹ Lapidge (2010) 321-23. Masters (1992) 177 also sees Thessaly as “a fulfilment of ... topographical symbolism” that exists in the first six books of the poem.

⁶⁰ Cf. *BC* 2.410-15, the retelling of Phaethon’s story, where poor driving causes the chariot of the sun to scorch the earth, a story that can be connected to *ekpyrosis* in Stoic interpretation. Cf. Ovid, *Met.* 2.227-34 (the scorched world) and 2.237-8 (Libya). Williams (2012) 129 comments on Seneca, *NQ* 3.27.13, where Phaethon’s story is used to compare “cataclysm and conflagration [as] parallel agents of destruction.”

⁶¹ Wick (2004) 6. For Cato as Stoic saint, see Ahl (1976) 268-74, where his Herculean characterization adds to his heroic Stoicism; Leigh (2000) 99-100. Thomas (1982) 112 elaborates on Cato’s Stoic heroism, arguing that he is also associated with “the ideal of primitive barbarism.”

⁶² Grimal (1949) 60 associates Lucan’s African myths (Antaeus, Medusa, and those alluded to by Lake Tritonis) with the expression of the elemental and violent character of Africa. Cf. Phillips (1968) 299.

pair of allusions to Pallas Athena and Hercules. When the Romans arrive, they find a body of water that is still and stagnant (*torpentem Tritonos adit... paludem*, 9.347) and almost seems a refuge in comparison to both the dangerous water offshore (*eiectaque classis / Syrtribus*, 9.369) and the various hazards of the hinterland (*haut ultra Garamantidas attigit undas*, 9.369). Though Tritonis is conventionally called a “lake,” ancient sources and modern scholars mostly agree that it was a saltwater lagoon connected to the sea. Greek authors, including Herdotus, Apollonius, and Strabo, refer to a great λίμνη called Tritonis,⁶³ located near the city of Euhesperides near the border of Cyrenaica and the Syrtica.⁶⁴ In the twentieth century, Jones and Little identified what is now the lagoon Sebka es-Selmani near Benghazi (ancient Berenice) as the location of Tritonis.⁶⁵ Lucan’s language, which calls Tritonis a *torpentem...paludem*, also supports the idea that Tritonis was a lagoon, rather than a distinct inland lake, with *palus* translating the Greek term λίμνη. Wick, in her commentary, has demonstrated that the use of *torpens* indicates still or slow moving water and the synonymous meaning of words like *palus* and *stagnis*, as well as the unrelated adjective *piger*, can describe a lagoon with standing water.⁶⁶

⁶³ Connors and Clendenon (In Progress) have discussed the precise meaning of the Greek word λίμνη in geological terms and in the context of Greek literature, focusing on the portrayal of the Triton λίμνη in Apollonius *Argonautica* 4.

⁶⁴ Herodotus places Tritonis in the hinterland of the Syrtis Minor at 4.178 (ποταμὸν μέγαν τῷ ὄνομα Τρίτων ἔστί, ἐκδιδοῖ δὲ οὗτος ἐς λίμνην μεγάλην Τριτωνίδα). Later, Tritonis is connected to the Argonautic tradition and located near Cyrene and the Syrtis Maior: Pindar, *Pythian* 4.20-22 (Τριτωνίδος... λίμνας); Apollonius, *Argonautica* 4.1620-37; Strabo 17.3.20 (λίμνην τινὰ Τριτωνίδα ... καὶ λίμνη Ἐσπερίδων, καὶ ποταμὸς ἐμβάλλει Λάθων); Diodorus 4.56.6.

⁶⁵ Jones and Little (1971). See also Wick (2004) 129, who concludes that the Roman fleet entered the port of Berenice, and Seewald (2008) 203, who discussed the geology of the region and the connection between limestone karst formations and the natural creation of both lagoons and oases. Goddard (1884) 42-43, citing the fieldwork of M. J. Vattier de Bourville from 1848-49, agrees with the location of Tritonis near modern Benghazi, based on underground research. Leigh (2000) 98, using the Herodotean “map,” located Tritonis near the Syrtis Minor in southern Tunisia.

⁶⁶ Wick (2004) 128 *ad* 347. She cites Seneca, *NH* 3.16.5 (*aquis torpentibus situ*), Lucan 5.452 (*se torpentibus unda excutiat stagnis et sit mare*) and the related passage at 5.434-35 (*aequora lenta iacent, alto torpore ligatae pigrius immotis haesere paludibus undae*). She also compares Vergil, *Aen.* 8.88 (*in morem stagni placidaeque paludis*) to find the similar meaning of *palus* and *stagnis*. See also my second

The two associated myths that follow, the birth of Pallas Athena and the pseudo-Argonautic journey of Hercules to the Garden of the Hesperides, continue to inform the precise location and general character of Tritonis. Lucan introduces each myth with *ut fama* (9.348, 356), which emphasizes the distinction between the historical and mythical material he draws on to construct this passage.⁶⁷ First, Tritonis is defined by its mythical connection to Triton (*deus quem toto litore pontus... ventosa perflantem marmora concha*, 9.348-49) and its geo-mythological prestige as Athena's "birthplace" (*patrio quae vertice nata / terrarum primam Libyen*, 9.350-51). Here, the Triton-connection highlights the windy, watery proximity to the sea; Pallas's involvement gives an alternate explanation of the region's heat – its nearness to the heavens (*nam proxima caelo est, / ut probat ipse calor*, 9.351-52) – and repeats the image of the still water in the lagoon (*stagnique... aqua*, 9.352-53).

The second mythical allusion associated with Tritonis connects the real geography of the region to the legendary Garden of the Hesperides, prompting a pair of stories about Hercules. At Tritonis, the lagoon is fed by a nearby river.

quam iuxta Lethon tacitus praelabatur amnis,
infernus, ut fama, trahens obliviam venis, (9.355-56)

Next to it, the silent river Lethon flows past,
according to rumor, bringing forgetfulness from infernal streams.

Greek historiographical sources originally gave this river a name similar to Tritonis, but Strabo calls the river Λάθων,⁶⁸ etymologically similar to Lucan's *Lethon*. The river flows from underground (*infernus... venis*), and, based on the Lethe's role in the underworld, carries

chapter concerning Lucan, *BC* 4.89 about the connection between the Tiber at 8.88 and the rivers of the underworld at *Aeneid* 6.323.

⁶⁷ Fantham (1992b) 98 calls *ut fama* a "skeptical" phrase and contrasts it with Lucan's note about truth and falsity in epic: *invidus, annoso qui famam derogat aevo, qui vates ad vera vocat* (9.359-60).

⁶⁸ Strabo 17.3.20. Cf. Herodotus 4.178.

forgetfulness with it (*trahens oblivia*).⁶⁹ The *Lethon/Lethe* connection evokes the landscape of Elysium in *Aeneid* 6, a locus amoenus in the underworld.⁷⁰ It is notable, then, that the waters of Lucan's Lethon allow the existence of a similar idyllic landscape, here represented by the Garden of the Hesperides, even in close proximity to the desert.

The mythic geography of Lucan's Libya is shaped by the historical geography of western Cyrenaica. Near Berenice and its lagoon was the city of Euhesperides, a piece of information that makes its way into Strabo and Diodorus.⁷¹ The conflation of the Garden of the Hesperides with the city of Euhesperides is not surprising, given their similar names; a more detailed explanation can be attributed to relative geography, since different perspectives on mythological locations depended on the nationality of the mythographer. While Greek sources, especially those influenced by Cyrene and Alexandria, locate the Garden in the west, this is relative, and probably indicated a place just west of Hellenic territory in North Africa. The Romans' more western location in Italy made the western placement of the Garden even more distant, closer to Mauretania and Gibraltar.⁷² Lucan reverts to the Hellenic perspective and the tradition related by Strabo.⁷³ This Hellenic, rather than Roman, point of view is part of a larger pattern seen in the *Bellum Civile*. In the first book, Lucan prefers *Hesperia* to *Italia*,⁷⁴ perhaps in anticipation of the "end" of Rome during the civil wars and, specifically, at the battle of Pharsalus. In the context of Libya and the area around the Syrtes and Tritonis, a Hellenizing perspective also promotes allusions to previous epic treatments of the region, especially that of Apollonius Rhodius in the

⁶⁹ Seewald (2008) 203 cites the karst formations in the landscape of western Cyrenaica as a potential explanation for underground rivers.

⁷⁰ Vergil, *Aeneid* 6.703-15.

⁷¹ Strabo 17.3.20; Diodorus 4.56.6. See discussion in Wick (2004) 129 and Fantham (1992b) 116.

⁷² Fantham (1992b) 116. For the Roman localization of the Garden of the Hesperides, see Vergil, *Aen.* 4.480-85; Ovid, *Met.* 4.628, 632-34.

⁷³ Ahl (1976) 260 n. 34.

⁷⁴ See Chapter 1.

Argonautica. The Hesperidean Garden in the *Bellum Civile* is identified with Tritonis, but also infused with aspects of the pastoral tradition.

atque, insopiti quondam tutela draconis,
Hesperidum pauper spoliatis frondibus hortus.
invidus, annoso qui famam derogat aevo,
qui vates ad vera vocat. fuit aurea silva
divitiisque graves et fulvo germine rami
virgineusque chorus, nitidi custodia luci,
et numquam somno damnatus lumina serpens
robora complexus rutilo curvata metallo. (9.357-64)

...and, formerly guarded by a sleepless serpent,
the Garden of the Hesperides, poor with its branches robbed.
He is envious, who takes rumor from aged time,
who calls the poet to truth. There was a golden wood
and its branches were heavy with riches and tawny shoots
and a crowd of maidens, guardians of the shining grove,
and a serpent, with eyes condemned never to sleep,
embracing the wood curved by golden metal.

The Garden is already despoiled (*spoliatis frondibus*) by the time the narrator describes it, and its current state of ruin contrasts with a former pastoralism that evokes both the golden age wilderness of Vergilian epic (*aurea silva, fulvo germine rami*)⁷⁵ and the sublime woods of Lucan's Massilia (*serpens robora complexus rutilo curvata metallo*).⁷⁶ Hercules is here the despoiler of the grove, a paradox of a character who completes his *labores* and becomes the archetypal hero, but who is also a plunderer of a sacred grove, like Caesar at Massilia.

abstulit arboribus pretium nemorique laborem
Alcides, passusque inopes sine pondere ramos
rettulit Argolico fulgentia poma tyranno. (9.365-67)

Hercules took the prize from the trees and his labor
from the grove, and letting the branches be poor without weight,
bore the gleaming fruit back to the Argive tyrant.

⁷⁵ Compare both Vergil's description of the Golden Bough (*Aen.* 6.201-4) and the sacred grove near Pallanteum on the future site of Rome (*Aen.* 8.342-50).

⁷⁶ Lucan, *BC* 3.421.

Hercules completes his eleventh labor,⁷⁷ the retrieval of the golden apples from the guardian serpent (*pretium... laborem*), and brings them to the Argive king (*Argolico... tyranno*) who assigned the task. The conclusion of both the Hercules allusion and the brief digression on Tritonis may be another reminder of Caesar's influence. The fruit Hercules takes from the Garden is *fulgentia*, flashing, much like Caesar himself in his introductory comparison to lightning (1.151-57).⁷⁸ Moreover, the Garden of the Hesperides, the river Lethe, and the incarnation of Athena as Tritogenia all combine geographical reality with myth and legend, blurring the line between fact and fiction, and building on the character of Libya as a place without *limites*.

While the Garden of the Hesperides, described in connection to the *palus Tritonos*, has some elements indicative of a bucolic literary place, the oracle of Jupiter Ammon, located at the Oasis of Siwa,⁷⁹ provides the opportunity to combine a *locus amoenus* with a sacred grove and to put them in isolation in the midst of a desert. Despite its metapoetical importance, many scholars have cited the oracle of Ammon as an example of Lucan's geographical or historical inaccuracy, since the actual location of the oracle was most likely in western Egypt or eastern Cyrenaica, well out of Cato's way.⁸⁰ Lucan's geographical modification in this episode is not without purpose: it allows Cato to be a part of the larger Alexander tradition associated with the Libyan

⁷⁷ Gantz (1993) 410-13.

⁷⁸ For Caesar and lightning, see Rosner-Siegel (2010) 186-90.

⁷⁹ For Jupiter or Zeus Ammon, see Wainwright (1930), Parke (1967), Ghazal (1986).

⁸⁰ Pichon (1912) 37 notes the historical inaccuracy and geographical impossibility of Cato's visit. Aumont (1968) 317 attributes Lucan's geographic problems to the provocation of anxiety inherent in the limits or frontiers of the known world. Hinkle (1996) 202 n. 118 examines how Lucan's lack of geographical exactitude is contrary to arguments for his scientific rejection of the irrational. Bexley (2009) 470 sees a connection between "topographic uncertainty" and the oracle's "extreme and marginal location." Brinnehl (2010) 85 sees the oracle as a "fixed point" in an otherwise uncertain landscape.

desert and the oracle of Ammon.⁸¹ On a more elemental level, the oracle of Ammon is, like the Syrtes, another opportunity to explore the mixing of land and water. A description of the oasis precedes Cato's rejection of Ammon's authority.

esse locis superos testatur silva per omnem
sola virens Libyen. nam quidquid pulvere sicco
separat ardentem tepida Berenicida Lepti
ignorat frondes: solus nemus abstulit Hammon.
silvarum fons causa loco, qui putria terrae
alligat et domitas unda conectit harenas.
hic quoque nil obstat Phoebo, cum cardine summo
stat librata dies; truncum vis protegit arbor,
tam brevis in medium radiis compellitur umbra. (9.522-30)

The sole green forest in all Libya proves that the gods
are in these places. For whatever separates burning
Berenice from warm Leptis with its dry sand
knows no leaves: Ammon alone took the grove.
A spring is the cause of the woods there, which binds
crumbling earth and with its water binds the conquered sands.
Here too nothing blocks Phoebus, when the day stands
balanced at its highest point; the tree protects its truck with force,
so short is the shadow driven into the middle by rays.

The fresh vegetation in the oasis differs starkly from the dry heat of the surrounding desert. The forest growing there is alone in Libya (*silva per omnem sola... Libyen*) and the specific part of it sacred to Ammon is also unique (*solus nemus*). The lushness of the vegetation that grows in the oasis is unequalled elsewhere (*ignorat frondes*) in Cyrenaica and Tripolitania, whose largest cities, Berenice and Leptis Magna, can even be characterized by their heat (*ardentem tepida Berenicida Lepti*). Water enables the growth of the forest (*silvarum fons causa loco*), by giving enough moisture to the otherwise parched dust that it can hold together and provide fertile soil.⁸²

⁸¹ Morford (1967b) 124 calls the visit to Ammon "the climax of the book" and an allusion to Alexander. Hinkle (1996) 201-2 examines the Alexandrian background of Cato's visit. Leigh (2000) 96 attributes Lucan's misdirection of Cato to Ammon as an attempt to make him walk "in the footsteps of Alexander." For Alexander and Ammon, see Classen (1959) and Fredericksmeyer (1991).

⁸² Lucan does not describe the quality of the water in the oasis. Raven (1993) 4 in her study of Roman Africa, notes that the water in oases was "often brackish" but could still support some level of habitation.

This harmonious and beneficial collaboration between earth and water contrasts with the warring elements that make the Syrtes so treacherous (9.305-11). Where in the Syrtes, land and sea are at war with each other and the landscape is chaotic, the productive and cooperative elements in the oasis exist in a balanced ratio.⁸³ The water from the *fons* binds together the earth (*putria terrae alligat*) and has control over the united sand (*domitas... conectit harenas*). The verbs of binding that Lucan uses here, *alligare* and *conectere*, are characteristic of Stoic writings about the cohesion of the cosmos.⁸⁴ The oracle of Ammon's oasis, then, is an isolated place where the various elements of the natural world are at harmony with each other, especially in the midst of an unbalanced landscape and, poetically, following the climactic moment of universal collapse at the battle of Pharsalus.⁸⁵ This harmoniously Stoic landscape is therefore an ideal place for Cato to visit and, more significantly, to reject the oracle's wisdom in favor of his own Stoic beliefs.⁸⁶ Unfortunately for Cato, every other part of the Libyan land is not so well suited to philosophical idealism.

The presentation of the forest growing at the Siwa Oasis is comparable to previous Lucanian groves, both incarnations of a *locus amoenus* and inversions of the pastoral image. As a sacred grove, the Ammonian oasis is parallel to the grove at Massilia, but while the Gallic

⁸³ Seewald (2008) 289-90 *ad* 526-27 uses the description of water binding sand particles together as evidence of Lucan acting as "Naturwissenschaftler," using vocabulary that is primarily agricultural or technical.

⁸⁴ Lapidge (2010) 301, 305. Lucan's rare uses of *alligare* and *conectere* elsewhere in his poem are worthy of mention: *Alligare* occurs (among other places) earlier in book nine, when a sandstorm causes particles of sand to pile up into an *agger* (9.488). *Conectere* only appears three other times in the *BC*: of the branches in the Massilian grove (3.400), of the fumes emerging from the shrine of the Delphic oracle (5.96), and of Pompey's *manes* (9.5). Wick (2004) 203 *ad* 527 notes that prior to Lucan, only Seneca used *alligare* in the solidification of loose material (cf. *N.Q.* 2.1.4, 2.52.1, 4.5.4; *Ep.* 55.2); for the combination of *alligare* and *conectere*, cf. Columela 11.3.43 (*radiculas sic inligatas atque conexas*).

⁸⁵ Morford (1967a) 47 cites the programmatic apocalypse simile at 1.72-80 in connection to the "collapse of Rome" at 7.134-8, "the issue of Pharsalia is made universal: the signal for battle has been given, the day of Rome's destiny has come."

⁸⁶ For Cato rejecting the oracle and, therefore, symbolically replacing the oracle, see: Bexley (2010) 471, Dick (1965) 466, Feeney (1991) 290-91, Makowski (1977) 202, Malamud (2003) 40, Morford (1967b) 126, and Sklenář (2003) 91.

grove was a *locus horridus par excellence*, the Libyan grove is more traditionally *amoenum*. Geography and poetry may separate the two groves, but their high proportion of shared language connects them. Lucan introduces both by a simple statement of locality: *esse locis* (9.522) / *lucus erat* (3.399); both are possessed by a god: *superos* (9.522; 3.406); and both exist in the form that they have because of their own cohesive nature: *conectit* (9.527) / *conexis* (3.400). Because groves are made up of trees and other vegetation, both have plenty of related sylvan words: *silva* (9.522, 526; 3.409), *frondes* (9.525; 3.410), *nemus* (9.525; 3.402), *truncum* (9.529; 3.413), *arbor* (9.529; 3.405, 411), and the only two uses in the *Bellum Civile* of words indicating greenness, *virens* (9.523) and *viridis* (3.503). Water is more significant in the oasis, but both Siwa and Massilia have *fons* (9.526; 3.412) and *unda* (9.527; 3.412). Some shared words also highlight the differences between the pleasant oasis in the desert and the horrific grove. Where the trees at Massilia blaze eerily with no flame (*ardentis... silvae*, 3.420), the oasis lacks the blazing heat of Berenice (*ardentem*, 9.524). Likewise, the Massilian grove's decaying trees heighten its ability to terrify (*putrique...robore*, 3.414), while the crumbling earth in the oasis is fertile and good (*putria terrae*, 9.526). Even the darkness of the Massilian grove (3.400-401, 423-24) is reversed in Siwa, where the angle of the sun's light can barely produce shadows (9.528-30). The words describing the two groves are similar, but their use and effect are inverted, producing a *locus amoenus* in the desert, rather than a *locus horridus*. The unpleasant harshness of its surrounding desert also inverts expectations, heightening the qualities of the *locus amoenus* at Siwa by contrast with its surroundings.

Just as the Siwa Oasis, and thus the oracle of Ammon, is surrounded by desert, so descriptions of the heat and thirst the desert provokes precede and follow Cato's visit to the oracle at Ammon. The close connection between thirst and journey to the oracle is part of the

Alexander tradition to which Lucan alludes,⁸⁷ and highlights the anxiety about the scarcity or potability of water in a desert landscape. The danger of thirst has been central in Cato's mind from the beginning of his desert trek, along with snakes and the burning heat (*serpens, sitis, ardor harenae*, 9.402). Two episodes that specifically focus on thirst and drinking frame the visit to the oracle and make up a contrasting diptych of Catonian *virtus* in the face of desert-induced suffering.⁸⁸

The first drinking scene evokes the Alexander tradition.⁸⁹ As Cato and his soldiers cross the desert, the heat causes them to sweat and their mouths burn with thirst (*manant sudoribus artus, arent ora siti*, 9.499-500). When a small source of water is spotted (*conspecta est parva maligna unda procul vena*, 9.500-1), it is scooped up in a helmet (*patulum galeae confudit in orbem*, 9.502) and is offered to Cato (*porrexitque duci*, 9.503). Though the throats of all are rough with thirst (*squalebant pulvere fauces cunctorum*, 9.503-4),⁹⁰ Cato, channeling Alexander, rejects the water and spills it to the ground (*excussit galeam*, 9.509). Everyone receives an equal amount (*suffecitque omnibus unda*, 9.510): none. The repetition of a story connected to Alexander's own journey through the desert to the oracle of Ammon is unmistakable.⁹¹ The biggest modification to the story is Cato's motivation: attaining equality with his soldiers and

⁸⁷ Leigh (2000) 96 cites sources of the divine attribution of rain that falls on Alexander on the way to Ammon: Plutarch, *Alex.* 27.1; Arrian, *Anabasis* 3.3.3-4; Diodorus Siculus 17.49.3-4. Following Lucan's example, later Roman authors also described a hot and thirsty route to Ammon: Statius, *Theb.* 3.476; Martial, *Cap.* 2.192.

⁸⁸ Wick (2004) 237 *ad* 604-18. Ahl (1976) 257 n. 32 sees 9.498-510 and 604-18 standing in "deliberate contrast" to each other.

⁸⁹ Tipping (2012) 231. For Alexander at Ammon, see Arrian, *Anab.* 6.26 (cf. 3.4.1-4); Diodorus Siculus 17.50.1-7; Curtius Rufus 4.7.20-26; Plutarch, *Alexander* 27.4-6. For Cato at Ammon, see Plutarch, *Cato Minor* 56.

⁹⁰ Wick (2004) 192 *ad* 500 finds comparanda for Lucan's description of the symptoms of thirst: Vergil, *Aen.* 5.200; Ovid, *Met.* 6.354, 7.556, 14.277; Seneca, *De Beneficiis* 3.8.3. See also Chapter 2, for a comparison of thirst symptoms during the flood in *BC* 4 and the snake attack in *BC* 9.

⁹¹ Wick (2004) 192 *ad* 498-510 finds parallels with Curtius 7.5.9-12, Arrian, *Anab.* 6.26.1-3, and Plutarch, *Alex.* 42.1-5. Seewald (2008) 275 *ad* 499-500 argues that Lucan's description of the thirsty army may also draw on Livy 44.38.9.

exercising the qualities of the good Stoic.⁹² Moreover, the desert landscape is consistent with the Alexander tradition, but Lucan's mode of description, using anatomical terms as an analogue for the earth (*maligna... vena*), is another demonstration of his tendency toward scientific and technical vocabulary in this book.⁹³

In the second half of the thirst diptych that follows the visit to Ammon, Cato's established practice in water distribution is once more central; he puts himself last to ensure that resources are shared as equally as possible. Cato is the *ultimus haustor aquae* (9.591), who waits to drink until after the soldiers and retinue have done so (*stat dum lixa bibat*, 9.593). *Haustor* and *lixa* rely on Lucan's linguistic innovation and on historiography to solidify Cato's stalwart character: *haustor* could be a Lucanian neologism, while *lixa* is most commonly found in the writings of the historiographers.⁹⁴ This drinking scene inverts previous patterns of water sharing and resource distribution. The Romans come across a large spring of water (*mediis fons unus harenis largus aquae*, 9.607-8), a more bountiful resource than the previous bare helmet-full (9.498-510) and other sparse desert moisture (*unda rarior*, 9.606-7). This water, however, is plagued by a crowd of venomous snakes, a precursor to the later snake attack episode. Cato instructs his soldiers to drink the water (*ne dubita, miles, tutos haurire liquores*, 9.613) despite

⁹² Ahl (1976) 259; he also attributes Alexander's rejection of the water to the desire for "greater devotion from his troops for the furtherance of his personal ambitions."

⁹³ Seewald (2008) 276 *ad* 500-501 notes the similar methodology of Stoic natural science and cites Seneca, *NQ* 3.15.1 (...*et venae sunt et arteriae*). For Lucan's use of anatomical metaphor in conjunction with his theme of civil war, see Dinter (2013).

⁹⁴ Seewald (2008) 325 *ad* 591: the first appearance of *haustor* in the extant corpus of Latin literature. Lewis & Short provides only two other citations for the word: Firmicus, *Matheseos* 8.29, an astrological text written in the 330s CE; cf. Mommsen (1929); and in an inscription naming a person who filled wine casks (*Inscr. Orell.* 5089).

Seewald (2008) 326 *ad* 593 calls Lucan's use of *lixa* prosaic, since it is never used by Lucretius, Propertius, Tibullus, Vergil, Ovid, or Valerius Flaccus. Instead, *lixa* is a word found in – though not commonly used by – historiographers such as Sallust (*BI* 44.5.3, 45.2.3), the author of the *Bellum Africanum* (75.3.3, 84.1.3), Livy (5.8.3, 21.63.9, 23.16.8, 23.16.14, 28.22.3, 31.49.11, 39.1.7, 40.28.3, 41.3.4, *per.* 67.8), Valerius Maximus (2.7.1-2), Q. Curtius Rufus (3.3.25, 6.8.23, 8.4.13, 10.1.15), and others. A notable poetic use of *lixa* is in Seneca's *Phoenissae* 597.

the poisonous snakes, because the poison interacts with blood, not water (*noxia serpentum est admixto sanguine pestis*, 9.614). He insists on drinking first, breaking his previous habit, to direct any effects of the poison onto himself and to lessen the risk to his soldiers.

dixit, dubiumque venenum
hausit; et in tota Libyae fons unus harena
ille fuit de quo primus sibi posceret undam. (9.616-18)

He spoke, and drank the potential poison;
and in the all the sands of Libya, that was the one
spring from which he demanded water from himself first.

The substance Cato drinks is not called water here; it might be venom (*dubiumque venenum*), but the rare value of such abundant liquid outweighs the risk of drinking. Lucan reiterates that this spring is alone (*fons unus*, 9.607 and 617) in the middle of the Libyan sands, a fact illustrated in the syntax of these lines, where the *fons unus* is literally surrounded by sands (*mediis fons unus harenis*, 9.607; *in tota Libyae fons unus harena*, 9.617). While Cato's Stoic *virtus* shapes the outcome of each drinking scene, the implicit message involves the dangers of thirst brought on by the landscape and the corresponding value of water. In the desert, water is a resource to be shared; venom and poison are dangers to be contained.

The availability or scarcity of water is one issue pertaining to the land and its characteristics that is revisited and elaborated upon in book nine. Other environmental dangers are revisited as well: throughout the *Bellum Civile* winds and storms are connected to ideas of cataclysm. In the context of Libyan geography, the winds and their effects are a useful point of exploration. Lucan writes about four different storms in the course of his epic: the storm that causes the flooding near Ilerda (4.48-120), the storm Caesar attempts to sail through (5.504-677), a storm on the Syrtes (9.319-47), and a dust storm in Libya (9.445-92). The Spanish floods and the Adriatic storm are connected to the simile of Stoic cosmic collapse outlined at the beginning

of the poem (1.72-80).⁹⁵ The two African storms can also be indicative of cosmic disaster, especially as challenges met by Cato, the poem's paragon of Stoic *virtus*. Certain common elements appear in both of these African storms – the prevalence of the south wind, destruction caused by whirlwinds, the dissolution of parts of the physical world (indicated by repetition of *solvere*) – and in combination, this process produces a world with worn down or absent boundaries and borders. The results of the cosmic cataclysm, the *ekpyrosis*, play out on the real world stage of Libya's landscape.

The first storm in book nine occurs near the beginning of Cato's journey from Cyrene to Leptis. Lucan's brief digression on the Syrtes (9.303-18) provides the geographical and meteorological background necessary to understand how a storm at sea near the Syrtes can be especially dangerous. Intense winds terrorize the Romans in their ships and make them unable to navigate the shoals near the coast.

ut primum remis actum mare propulit omne
classis onus, densis fremuit niger imbribus Auster.
in sua regna furens temptatum classibus aequor
turbine defendit longeque a Syrtibus undas
egit et inlato confregit litore pontum. (9.319-23)

When first the sea, driven by oars, propelled the entire
burden of the fleet, Auster, dark with thick storms, rumbled.
Raging against his own kingdom, he defended the sea, tested by
ships, with a whirlwind and drove the waves far from the Syrtes
and broke up the sea while the shore interrupts.

Auster, the south wind, is solely responsible for the storm and is named four separate times (9.320, 334, 339; *Notus* at 9.326). It blows so strongly because it is in its own territory (*in sua regna*), an idea that stems from the larger pattern of people, animals, and natural forces from

⁹⁵ Morford (1967a) 47.

Africa or Libya being more suited to their climate and thus more powerful than the Romans.⁹⁶ The wind is the subject of a number of verbs commonly associated with violence (*furens*, *defendit*), putting *Auster* in the position of defending its land against an invading force. The language of this passage is typical of storm descriptions in both Greek and Roman texts, including details about the darkness brought on by the clouds (*densis... niger imbribus*).⁹⁷ The gathering clouds indicated by *densis... imbribus* also recall the conditions in the storm that caused the Spanish floods in book four, where the winds created the massive storm clouds (*iamque polo pressae largos densatur in imbres*, 4.76). On the Syrtes, *Auster* fights against the Roman ships with a whirlwind (*turbine*), a word with both militaristic and meteorologic connotations in Lucan. When not used of storms specifically (5.595, 611; 9.322, 451), the noun *turbo* often describes some action taken during a battle or siege (of the Massilian siege works, 3.465; of Juba's forces, 4.767; of wind and flame at Alexandria, 10.501).⁹⁸ In this storm, the military imagery applied to *Auster* makes the wind and the storm another nature-based enemy for Romans like the landscape near Ilerda and the region around the Bagrada.⁹⁹

The fleet suffers two fates: some ships are destroyed by the wind and the shoals (9.324-29); on other ships, the soldiers destroy their own masts (*arboribus caesis*, 9.332) to weather the storm and remain safer in deeper water (9.330-34). These scenes of shipwreck are a literalization of the simile in book one comparing Rome during Caesar's approach to a ship being abandoned

⁹⁶ Cf. Curio vs. Juba (4.661-824), Antaeus before the arrival of Hercules (4.589-611), the snakes (9.700-838). In conjunction with these, see also the repeated use of *regna* (*Antaei*, 4.590; *Iubae*, 9.301 and 869; *Gorgonos*, 9.668).

⁹⁷ Morford (1967a) 20-36 gives a detailed summary of storms in ancient literature. The recurring elements of a literary storm include winds blowing together or singly, high seas with increasingly large waves, darkness and clouds, thunder and lightning, and, if applicable, the destruction of a ship and at least some of its sailors.

⁹⁸ One other instance of *turbo* is unique in Lucan to Cato's state of mind. At 2.243, *virtus* can never be banished from Cato's heart by means of *turbine* controlled by *fortuna*.

⁹⁹ Cf. the landscape near Ilerda (4.42-43) and in the region of the Bagrada (4.739-43).

and destroyed during its wreck on the Syrtes.¹⁰⁰ In book nine, some of Cato's ships survive to engage with Auster (*obnixum victor detrusit in Austrum*, 9.334), but are soon driven aground and stranded.

has vada destituunt, atque interrupta profundo
terra ferit puppes: dubioque obnoxia fato
pars sedet una ratis, pars altera pendet in undis.
tum magis inpactis brevius mare terraque saepe
obvia consurgens: quamvis elisus ab Austro,
saepe tamen cumulos fluctus non vincit harenae.
eminet in tergo pelagi procul omnibus arvis
inviolatus aqua sicci iam pulveris agger;
stant miseri nautae, terraeque haerente carina
litora nulla vident. (9.335-44)

The shallows deceive these ships, and the land, interrupted
by sea, strikes them: and subject to uncertain fate,
one part of the ship settles, the other part hangs in the water.
Then, for [ships] driven even further, the sea is more shallow and
land often rises up in the way: although struck by Auster,
the wave does not often overcome the masses of sand.
In the midst of the sea, far from every field, rises
a mound of dust, dry now, untouched by water;
the wretched sailors stand still, and though the ship clings
to land, they see no shores.

The dangers presented by the unevenly shallow waters (*vada*) are characteristic of the Syrtes region, where both land and water are uncertain and in combination are even more ambiguous. One ship, partially beached, is victim to both land and sea (*pars sedet... pars... pendet in undis*). Lucan inverts expectations with regards to the land and the sea during the wreck. As the ships run aground, the land strikes them (*terra ferit puppes*) in the same way that waves are often said to strike a ship.¹⁰¹ Then the land swells into the path of the ship (*terraque saepe / obvia consurgens*) as if it were a wave itself. The third repetition of *Auster* (9.339) reinforces the

¹⁰⁰ BC 1.495-504; see my discussion in Chapter 1, section 2. Cf. Seneca, *NQ* 3.28.2: *non potest torrentium aut imbrium aut fluminum iniuria fieri tam grande naufragium*; the *mundus*-ending cataclysm makes the entire world a shipwreck.

¹⁰¹ Wick (2004) 125 *ad* 336. Cf. Vergil, *Aen.* 1.115 (*ingens... pontus in puppim ferit*); Lucan, *BC* 5.570 (*puppim dubius ferit undique pontus*).

influence of the south wind and, by synecdoche, the influence of the natural world in Libya. *Auster* drives the waves (*elusus*), but they cannot overtake the land beyond the shoals of the Syrtes (*tamen cumulos fluctus non vincit harenae*), an idea that adds further complication to the relative power of land and sea in the Syrtes region, which Lucan characterized as a place where water threatened and encroached on the land only thirty lines earlier. This new victorious *harena* looks forward to the fourth and last storm in the *Bellum Civile*: the sandstorm in the desert hinterland (9.445-92). The storm comes to an end with a final paradoxical image of the Syrtic landscape: a sandbar in the shallows that is dry land, described with the language of the desert (*inviolatus aqua sicci iam pulveris agger*), in the midst of the sea with no visible shore (*litora nulla vident*).¹⁰² The militaristic language of the storm continues here, where the sandbar is an *agger*. Though *agger* is not an unusual label for a naturally occurring rise made of earth, the prevalence of military language in the storm description gives the sandbar *agger* a more complex meaning. Since the storm involves *Auster* repelling an invading force (the Romans) and is a literalization of previous metaphors of nature as *hostis*, the natural *agger* can be read as a defensive earthwork against the encroaching civil conflict the Romans bring with them.

The final storm in the *Bellum Civile* is unique in that it substitutes the watery danger of previous storms – both on land and at sea – for the hazards of a sandstorm in the desert. For this reason, it takes the Romans by surprise. Because they are traveling over land and, presumably, because that land is itself so fundamentally dry, the dangers faced at sea seem to be in the past (*secura... ventorum nullasque timens tellure procellas*, 9.445-46). It seems that the mixed elements of the Syrtes (warring land and sea, water and sun) are not confined to the coastline; the storm in the desert is comparable to sea storms (*aequoreos est passa metus*, 9.447).

¹⁰² Compare the dry sandbar in the midst of the waves to the lush oasis in the middle of the desert at Siwa (9.522-30).

nam litore sicco,
 quam pelago, Syrtis violentius excipit Austrum,
 et terrae magis ille nocens. non montibus ortum
 adversis frangit Libye scopulisque repulsum
 dissipat et liquidas e turbine solvit in auras,
 nec ruit in silvas annosaque robora torquens
 lassatur: patet omne solum, liberque meatu
 Aeoliam rabiem totis exercet harenis,
 et non imbriferam contorto pulvere nubem
 in flexum violentus agit: pars plurima terrae
 tollitur et numquam resoluta vertice pendet. (9.447-57)

For on the dry shore,
 rather than the sea, Syrtis receives Auster more harshly,
 and Auster harms the land more. Libya does not break his rise
 with adverse mountain and lessen him with crags
 and break him down from a whirlwind into liquid breezes,
 nor does he rush into the woods and twisting aged trunks,
 weary himself: all the soil is open, and free to move,
 he exercises Aeolian rage on all the sands,
 and harshly drives into a curve a cloud, with dust twisting,
 that bears no rain: the largest part of the earth
 is lifted up and hangs in a whirlwind never resolved.

Auster, the troublesome south wind, is even more dangerous and forceful on land than at sea (*violentius*, 448; *violentus*, 456). The explanation is rational, relying on the geography of the desert. The wind is able to do such damage on land because there is nothing in its way: there are no mountains, cliffs, or forests to act as a windbreak. Instead, the vast open plains (*patet omne solum*) allow the wind to gain velocity and twist itself into whirlwinds (*turbine*; cf. *torquens*, *contorto*). In addition to the repeated language of twisting and torment, this storm description contains vocabulary used elsewhere of Stoic physics, reinforcing yet again the imagery of cosmic dissolution. The description of the sandstorm contains two uses of *solvere* or a cognate (*solvit*, 451; *resoluta*, 457), both of which are counterfactual, referring to what the wind does not do: relax into breezes of lesser strength, and lessen the power of its whirlwinds.¹⁰³ They can also indicate the effects of the wind, especially in a land covered in loose sand, where the wind

¹⁰³ Cf. BC 9.498: *utque calor solvit quem torserat aera ventus*.

literally takes the earth apart grain by grain. The resulting cloud of dust and sand mirrors the rain-bearing clouds of previous storms, but again, inverts the model (*non imbriferam... nubem*).

The wind and the debris this storm carries are dangerous to the Romans, but also pose a hazard to the region's peoples. The sandstorm destroys the homes of the Nasamones and Garamantes by tearing them apart and carrying them off (9.458-60). While on the Syrtes, *Auster's* militaristic violence was seemingly directed against the Romans alone, repelling foreign invaders from Libyan territory. In the desert hinterland, however, both Romans and native inhabitants are tortured by the wind and its storms. The extent of the sandstorm is expressed in a simile, comparing the growing cloud of dust to smoke rising from a fire, before the narrative turns to its effects on the land and the Romans.

non altius ignis
rapta vehit; quantumque licet consurgere fumo
et violare diem, tantus tenet aera pulvis.
tum quoque Romanum solito violentior agmen
adgreditur, nullisque potest consistere miles
instabilis, raptis etiam quas calcat, harenis. (9.460-65)

The fire bears what it seizes
no higher; and however much smoke can rise
and darken the day, so much dust holds the air.
Then more violently than usual [the wind] also attacks
the Roman line, and the unstable soldier is not able to stand
on any sands, which he treads on even as they are snatched away.

The rising dust is at least equal in scale to smoke put off by a fire (*non altius ignis rapta vehit*). Like smoke, the sand blocks the light of the sun (*violare diem*) and rises (*consurgere*), much as the sandbank did from the shallows of the Syrtes (*terraque saepe obvia consurgens*, 9.338-39). The wind's terrestrial strength and velocity is again mentioned (*violentior*, cf. 9.448 and 456) and is directed against the Romans in an attack (*Romanum... agmen adgreditur*). This is not a "battle" that the Romans can win or even fight with an even chance; to build its dusty cloud, the

sandstorm tears the ground apart at the soldiers' feet and makes their steps unstable (*nullisque potest consistere miles instabilis... harenis*).

Lucan returns to his scientifically influenced rationalizing about nature to theorize on the geologic stability of this region and how the winds affect it. This brief inquiry into the interaction between the wind and the ground depends on the Roman understanding of winds, caverns, and earthquakes.

concuteret terras orbemque a sede moveret,
si solida Libye conpage et pondere duro
clauderet exesis Austrum scopulosa cavernis;
sed, quia mobilibus facilis turbatur harenis,
nusquam luctando stabilis manet, imaque tellus
stat, quia summa fugit. (9.466-71)

It would shake the lands and move the world from its seat,
if a rocky Libya with a solid frame and strong bulk
enclosed Auster in hollowed out caverns;
but, because it is easily disturbed with moving sands,
it remains stable by struggling nowhere, and the deepest
earth is steady, because the top part flees.

If, Lucan suggests, Libya confined the wind within caverns underground (*clauderet exesis Austrum... cavernis*), the force of the wind's movement would cause severe earthquakes (*concuteret terras orbemque a sede moveret*). In reality, the shifting sands are mobile earth in another sense (*mobilibus... harenis*). The wind can move and can shift the topsoil (*nusquam luctando stabilis manet*), but the bedrock is stable (*imaque tellus stat*).¹⁰⁴ The rationalizing tendency found here is comparable to that in *Naturales Quaestiones* 6, where Seneca explores the causes of earthquakes. In order to alleviate fear, Seneca offers a rational explanation,¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ For the prevalence of *sta-* verbs and adjectives to describe the ships during the naval battle near Massilia, especially for description as new man-made land, see my discussion of *BC* 3.556-57 in Chapter 2.

¹⁰⁵ Williams (2006) 126-27 compares Seneca *NQ* 6 to Lucretius *De Rerum Natura* 6.535-607. Both poets sought rational explanations for natural phenomena and used similar analogies (e.g., the wagon, *DRN*

sorting through the theories of previous natural philosophers and suggesting that the accumulation of air under the earth caused tremors with its movement (*NQ* 6.24-26).¹⁰⁶ Lucan alluded to this theory in his ecphrasis of the Massilian grove, where part of the grove's legend involves subterranean hollows that cause earthquakes (*cavas motu terrae mugire cavernas*, 3.418). The earthquakes contribute to the mythical aura of the grove, though they are discussed in terms of rationalizing natural philosophic theory. In Libya, the subterranean caverns are hypothetical and the explanation is, at first glance, entirely rationalizing. Yet Lucan's nod to the mythical qualities of Libya is an indirect allusion to Aeolus and the cave of the winds.¹⁰⁷ Aeolus' name is absent from this inquiry into the region's geology, but stands out as a description of the wind's power during the sandstorm (*liberque meatu / Aeoliam rabiem totis exercet harenis*, 9.453-54) and relates Lucan's sandstorm to the Aeolian storm in *Aeneid* 1, which occurred at the Syrtes. Ultimately, Lucan's reliance on scientific theory to explain the sandstorm makes it more threatening than if such a natural phenomenon were an inexplicable vagary of mythology. The reference to Aeolus does, however, recall the foundational role of the storm in Aeneas' journey to found Rome; in the post-Pharsalus world of the *Bellum Civile*, refoundation is Caesar's task and the Aeolian winds of the sandstorm, like Caesar, are hostile to the old world and those, like Cato, who represent it.

The wind drives the sand against the Romans and eventually buries them under its weight (485-87). Even though the storm dies down and the Romans are no longer at the mercy of the

6.548-51, *NQ* 6.22.1) to "domesticate" earthquakes by "reducing them to everyday proportions." Seneca adds the "(Stoic) cosmic perspective." Cf. Williams (2012) 220.

¹⁰⁶ Williams (2006) 135 addresses Stoic anatomical analogies: "air and water function within the earth as blood and air within a healthy body. Any disruption to the regular flow of these properties in the earth or body leads to equivalent kinds of tremor." Cf. Williams (2012) 242.

¹⁰⁷ Aeolus's cavern of winds is usually thought to be located elsewhere in the Mediterranean. Strabo 6.2.1 follows a tradition that puts the Aeolian islands north of Sicily. Vergil, *Aen.* 1.50-91 connects Aeolus and his winds to Africa: the south wind (Auster or Notus) is especially violent during the storm that causes Aeneas to make landfall near Carthage. Cf. Homer, *Odyssey* 10.1-79.

winds, they must still contend with the new landscape that was shaped by the winds as it was deposited partially on top of them.

alligat et stantis adfusae magnus harenae
agger, et inmoti terra surgente tenentur.
saxa tulit penitus discussis proruta muris
effuditque procul miranda sorte malorum:
qui nullas videre domos videre ruinas. (9.488-92)

A great ridge of deposited sand binds even those
standing, and they are held immobile by the rising earth.
It carried stones broken from deep in shaken walls
and deposited them far off, in a marvellous stroke of bad luck:
those who saw no houses saw their ruins.

As the confusion of the sandstorm dissipates, the earth becomes concrete and more stable once again (*alligat*).¹⁰⁸ The new dune formed by the storm is an *agger*, much like the sandbar in the Syrtes. Both *aggeres* stop the Romans and keep them immobile, whether acting on the ship (*stant miseri nautae*, 9.343) or directly on their bodies (*inmoti terra surgente tenentur*, 9.489). Moreover, if *Auster*, figured as a *hostis*, forms another militaristic *agger* that is built on top of the Romans, this *agger* acts as a fortification against them by making them part of the fortification.¹⁰⁹ The ruins made by the storm also indicate its power. Whereas literary descriptions of storms at sea typically include the destruction of a ship,¹¹⁰ the homes of the previously mentioned Nasamones and Garamantes are torn to pieces (cf. 9.458-60). In the desert with its open spaces and lack of shelter, any structure is vulnerable: stones are torn from walls and dropped far away (*saxa tulit... proruta muris effuditque procul*) and homes are obliterated (*qui nullas videre domos videre ruinas*), appearing in fragments so far from their whole that ruins

¹⁰⁸ Cf. *BC* 9.527: *alligat*, of the soil in the oasis of Jupiter Ammon.

¹⁰⁹ For landscapes partially composed of the bodies of the conquered, see 7.789-90: *cernit propula cruore / flumina et excelsos cumulis aequantia colles / corpora*. After the battle of Pharsalus, the Thessalian landscape is both corrupted by and partially composed of bodies.

¹¹⁰ Morford (1967a) 21.

are the only visible part of the house.¹¹¹ Most damaging to Cato and the Romans is the effect of *Auster*'s landscape engineering on their journey: they have lost all landmarks and pathways.

In a desert landscape, anxiety about the availability, potability, sources and results of water, and changes to the landscape wrought by storms and wind are fundamentally tied to the climate and land. Water's absence leads to the formation of sand dunes and other desert features that make the identification and differentiation of places difficult. Due to the confusion this kind of landscape can produce in an observer, it can be argued that desert landscapes provoke anxiety about *limites*, as well. This anxiety takes two forms: it concerns the idea of a *limes* as boundary, as seen in the dangers of the Syrtes with its indeterminate border between land and sea (9.303-18), or in the geographical ambiguity that led Cato and his soldiers to find the oracle of Ammon in an unexpected place (9.511-14);¹¹² anxiety about the idea of a *limes* is also evident in the text when Lucan writes about roads and paths in the desert or, more accurately, their absence.¹¹³

The absence of proper *limites* or *viae* in the desert made travel more difficult for the Romans, yet Lucan's use of terms for paths and roads is more strongly concentrated in book nine than anywhere else in the poem, totaling roughly one quarter of all instances of *iter* and *via*, respectively.¹¹⁴ The only uses of the related adjective *invia* are all in the context of the Libyan

¹¹¹ Cf. *BC* 9.968-69, *tota teguntur / Pergama dumetis: etiam periire ruinae*. Compare also the image of Italian towns: *at nunc pendent quod moenia tectis*, 1.24.

¹¹² Lucan locates the temple of Jupiter Ammon in Garamantian territory (now identified with the Fezzan in west-central Libya), far from its more famously known location in the desert of western Egypt or eastern Cyrenaica.

¹¹³ Goodchild (1949) 81-82 discusses the *Limes Tripolitanus* and its vague chronological origins. Though there was some road construction that took place as early as the reign of Tiberius, most road and fortification building took place later, in the second and third centuries CE. During Cato's time in the desert in 48 BCE there was no Roman road to use in the Syrtica.

¹¹⁴ Lucan uses *iter* 24 times in the *BC*, of which 6 occur during the Libyan desert march: 9.301, 385, 493, 685, 721, and 735. *Via* appears 29 times; 8 of these are also connected to the Libyan desert: 9.376, 394, 408, 495, 551, 711, 846, and 875.

desert.¹¹⁵ This pathless land requires different methods of orientation and navigation: the Romans resort to using the stars as a guide, much as they would if there were aboard a ship at sea.¹¹⁶ The vast sandy stretches of earth that require celestial navigation, can be read as a land turned sea, a metaphorical substitution of sand and water reminiscent of the Syrtes' battling elements.¹¹⁷ The difficulty of pathless travel is a recurring issue throughout book nine.

As Cato and his soldiers prepare to depart from Cyrene, the challenges posed by the desert sands and their lack of landmarks or roads are not yet evident. The journey has a clear beginning, Cyrene, and a clear destination, Juba's kingdom near Carthage. Despite the dangers of the desert, Cato's most reliable personal resource is his *virtus*.

proximus in muros et moenia Cyrenarum
 est labor: exclusus nulla se vindicat ira,
 poenaeque de victis sola est vicisse Catoni.
 inde peti placuit Libyci contermina Mauris
 regna Iubae, sed iter mediis natura vetabat
 Syrtibus: hanc audax sperat sibi cedere virtus. (9.297-302)

The next task is against the walls and defenses
 of Cyrene: shut out, he avenges himself with no anger,
 and the sole punishment for the conquered was to be conquered by Cato.
 From there it pleased him to seek Libyan Juba's kingdom,
 neighboring the Mauri, but nature blocked his path with
 the Syrtes: his bold *virtus* hopes the Syrtes will yield to him.

¹¹⁵ *Invia* at 9.307 and 386 is directly applied to the land in which the action is set; at 8.163-64, Libya is *invia mundi / arva super nimios soles Austrumque iacentis* in Pompey's mind.

¹¹⁶ Not a new issue for foreign travelers in the Libyan desert; Jason and the Argonauts encountered similar challenges at Apollonius, *Argonautica* 4.1245-49, οἱ δ' ἀπὸ νηὸς ὄρουσαν, ἄχος δ' ἔλεν εισορόωντας | ἡέρα καὶ μεγάλης νῶτα χθονὸς ἠέρι ἴσα | τηλοῦ ὑπερτείνοντα διηνεκές· οὐδέ τιν' ἄρδμόν, | οὐ πάτον, οὐκ ἀπάνευθε κατηυγάσαντο βοτήρων | αὔλιον, εὐκίλῳ δὲ κατείχετο πάντα γαλήνῃ (They leapt off the ship, and sorrow gripped them when they looked at the sky and the expanse of vast land stretching just like the sky into the distance without a break. No watering place, no trail, no herdsman's steading did they see in the distance, but everything was wrapped in a dead calm; trans. W. H. Race). See Thalmann (2011) 78-79 for the similarity of the Libyan desert in the *Argonautica* to "a pristine and pre-cultural place" that is disorienting due to its lack of spatial markers. Cf. Pliny, *NH* 5.26 on the Syrtis Minor: it can be accessed by land, but only when using the stars as a guide (*et terra autem siderum observatione ad eam per deserta... harenis serpentes iter est*).

¹¹⁷ Thalmann (2011) 86 notes similar conflation of land and sea in Apollonius, where a term usually applied to the sea (νῶτα) is instead used of the desert (νῶτα χθονός, 4.1246).

Initially, Cato plans to travel from Cyrene to the area closer to Carthage (*regna Iubae*)¹¹⁸ by sea, guided by Cato's *virtus*. Cato is depicted as a good Stoic leader in book nine, as the figurehead of the Republican forces that survived the battle of Pharsalus. From his perspective as a Roman, there is a contrast between the civilized, constructed city of Cyrene, fortified with *muros et moenia*,¹¹⁹ and the hazards of the western lands (*Libyci contermina Mauris regna Iubae*). Various parts of the Libyan landscape, especially those present in the Syrtes, make his path dangerous at best and impassable at worst (*iter mediis natura vetabat Syrtibus*). The Syrtes in particular are *invia* (9.307) because of their hidden shallows and depths and their unpredictable distribution of water and land.

After suffering shipwreck in the Syrtes and passing Lake Tritonis, Cato has no choice but to travel over land and to attempt the path the land forbids (9.301-2).¹²⁰ He identifies Libya and its lack of roads as hazards of the journey to his soldiers: *per mediam Libyen veniant atque invia temptent* (9.386). Like the Syrtes, the land is also *invia*; and as before, the Romans travel directly into its midst (*mediam*; cf. *mediis... Syrtibus*, 9.301-2). The pathless land (*invia*) is the cause of the challenging path they take (*durus iter*, 9.385).¹²¹ After encountering the sandstorm, a danger characteristic of the desert, the issue of a journey without roads comes to its crisis.

iamque iter omne latet nec sunt discrimina terrae:
sideribus novere viam; nec sidera tota
ostendit Libycae finitor circulus orae,

¹¹⁸ Cf. *BC* 4.590, *Antaei... regna*; 670-86, the catalogue of Juba's lands and allies.

¹¹⁹ Wick (2004) 109 *ad* 297 compares Lucan's *muros et moenia* to Vergil, *Aen.* 2.234, 6.549, 9.196, and 9.782; Livy 10.10.2; and Pliny, *NH* 29.9. Seewald (2008) 172 *ad* 297-98 notes that the two kinds of walls are antithetical to *harena*, and compares *BC* 10.545-46.

¹²⁰ Wick (2004) 110 *ad* 301 calls this an act of *hybris* against nature.

¹²¹ Wick (2004) 148 *ad* 385 cites Vergil, *Aen.* 6.688, when Anchises tells Aeneas, "*vicit iter durum pietas*," a sentiment relevant to Cato, as he pits his *virtus* against his own *durus iter*. Wick, *ibid.*, *ad* 386 credits the substantive use of *invia* to Livy (cf. 21.33.4, 38.21.1). Seewald (2008) 224 *ad* 386 makes the same comparison, but also find comparable uses of *invia* in Seneca at *Ep.* 73.4, *Phaedra* 939, and *Dial.* 11.7.2 and 5.20.2 (which mentions the desert march of Cambyses).

multaque devexo terrarum margine celat. (9.493-97)¹²²

And now the entire path is hidden and there are no landmarks:
so they recognize the road by the stars; but the horizon encircling
the Libyan region does not show whole constellations,
and hides many with the sloping edge of the land.

Displaced sand completely hides the path the Romans had been using (*iter omne latet*), and conceals any distinguishing landmarks that could help them orient themselves (*nec sunt discrimina terrae*). Celestial navigation provides a direction for their travel (*sideribus novere viam*).¹²³ The stars seem to be a more reliable guide, based on the language Lucan uses to describe their path: landmarks only provide an *iter*, whereas the stars give the Romans a *via*. Even the stars cannot make the journey entirely clear, though. Due to the southern location of the desert, familiar constellations from further north are partially hidden by the horizon (*nec sidera tota ostendit Libycae finitor circulus orae*). Even this mode of guidance is not completely reliable; the *viae* are not concrete.

Later in book nine, following the excursus on Medusa, the origin of Libya's snakes, and the snake attack episode itself, Cato and his remaining soldiers continue to use the stars to orient themselves in the desert and to guide their way. They cannot measure the distance they have travelled or their direction: *nec, quae mensura viarum / quisve modus, norunt caelo duce* (9.846-47). While using the stars to navigate may work while at sea, the location of the soldiers and the hazards offered by the land negate the stars' efficacy as guides. After a rescue from the local

¹²² The *ap. crit.* for Housman's 1926 edition notes that MS Ω omits 9.494, *ulla nisi aetheriae medio velut aequore flammae*.

¹²³ Wick (2004) 188 *ad* 495 notes that the use of celestial navigation when traversing difficult territory is common; cf. Strabo 17.1.45, Diodorus 2.54.2, Curtius 7.4.28, Arrian *Anab.* 3.3.4 and 6.23.1, Pliny *NH* 5.26 and 6.166, and Silius 3.662-65. Seewald (2008) 273 *ad* 493-95 is more specific, attributing navigation by the stars to desert descriptions, and adds that Lucan uses this as a rationalizing move in a narrative more closely tied to myth than other parts of his poem. He also touches on the antiquity of celestial navigation, from its invention by the Phoenicians, including its mention in Homer (*Od.* 5.272), to Lucan's character – Pompey's pilot – expounding on the subject at *BC* 8.159-86.

Psylli, who are immune to the worst effects of the snakes (9.890-937), the desert march narrative quickly comes to an end. Cato and his soldiers have not yet reached their destination near Carthage, but arrive in Leptis Magna where they will spend the winter (9.948-49). Cato, here granted the epithet *harenivagus* (9.941)¹²⁴ is defined by his time in the desert when he dealt with the sands without a defined road or path. Closer to the coast, the land becomes more stable; the dust solidifies into earth (*magis atque magis durescere pulvis / coepit et in terram Libye spissata redire*, 9.942-43) and allows the presence of vegetation (*rarae nemorum se tollere frondes*, 9.944) and animals (*saevos... leones*, 9.947). The ocean of sand is left behind and urban construction rises up again. Leptis does not have *muri et moenia* to match Cyrene, but does furnish a structure eminently suited to Roman soldiers, a *statio* (9.948).

Every aspect of Lucan's descriptions of the landscape and natural world in the Libya of the *Bellum Civile* supports his characterization of the region as harsh, remote, and dangerous. The people and creatures native to Libya have an advantage over those such as Hercules or the Romans who come in as foreigners, but even Libya's inhabitants are vulnerable to sandstorms and other environmental hazards. Lucan's treatment of the various parts of the landscape – the presence or absence of water; confused boundaries between land, sea, and sky; the prevalence of winds and storms; the lack of easily traversible paths – creates a solid narrative that deals with the danger inherent in the Libyan land, the anxieties it creates, and the allegorical aspect of the desert journey.

III: Myth and Landscape Incarnate: Antaeus, Medusa, and Libya's Snakes

Lengthy mythological digressions are rare in the *Bellum Civile*, but the two most famous occur in Libya: the fight between Hercules and Antaeus (4.593-660) and the story of Medusa,

¹²⁴ Wick (2004) 398 *ad* 941: *harenivagus* is a *hapax*. For a more detailed analysis, see Gagliardi (1975).

Perseus, and the origin of Libya's snakes (9.619-99). Lowe has seen the location of these myths as a way to contrast "history-filled Rome" with "myth-filled Libya,"¹²⁵ emphasizing the uncertain boundary between myth and reality, legend and history, which are associated with Libya. The geographic connection between the Antaeus and Medusa digressions also leads Bexley to find a pattern in battles between a "civilizing mythic hero and a monstrous native inhabitant."¹²⁶ Within each narrative, beyond the balance of myth and history, or civilization and monstrous nature, is the fundamental connection each monster has to the land in which it lives. The allegorical treatment of Libya that Lucan employs, especially in book nine, allows for the interpretation of Antaeus and Medusa as living embodiments of the landscape and all the hazards it presents to Curio, Cato, and the Romans.

The first of these major mythological digressions occurs in book four, between Curio's arrival in Africa and his battle with Juba. Upon encountering an unfamiliar and hostile landscape (4.589-90), Curio is unrealistically uninformed about both the mythological and historical significance of the site. A local person, characterized as *rudis incola*, teaches Curio about the mythical encounter between Hercules and Antaeus.¹²⁷ From the beginning, Antaeus is defined by his size, monstrosity, and fundamental connection to the earth.

nondum post genitos Tellus ecfeta gigantas
 terribilem Libycis partum concepit in antris.
 nec tam iusta fuit terrarum gloria Typhon
 aut Tityos Briareusque ferox; caeloque pepercit

¹²⁵ Lowe (2010) 121.

¹²⁶ Bexley (2010) 135.

¹²⁷ Asso (2010) 223-24 *ad* 590 argues for Lucan's knowledge of early texts that name two separate Antaei. In *Pythian* 9.185, Pindar names Antaeus as the king of Isara, a city in Africa; in *Isthmian* 4.87, Antaeus is the Giant defeated by Hercules. Other early sources include Herodotus 4.158 and Pherekydes of Athens. Gantz (1993) 416-18 cites a vase painting of Antaeus dating from the 6th century BCE as another early source and mentions Hercules' slaying of Antaeus in Diodorus Siculus (4.17.4, 4.27.3), but notes that the idea of Antaeus drawing strength from earth originated later. The first extant source for this is Ovid (*Ibis* 393-95, *Met.* 9.183), but the story is repeated in Lucan, Statius (*Theb.* 6.893), and Juvenal (3.86).

quod non Phlegraeis Antaeum sustulit arvis.
hoc quoque tam vastas cumulavit munere vires
Terra sui fetus, quod, cum tetigere parentem,
iam defecta vigent renovato robore membra. (4.593-600)

After the Giants' births, the earth, not yet exhausted,
conceived a terrible offspring in Libyan caves.
And not so justly was Typhon the glory of earth
or Tityos or fierce Briareus; she spared heaven
because she did not bring Antaeus up on Phlegraeon fields.
With this gift, Earth also increased her child's strength,
so vast, that when they touched their mother,
his weary limbs were refreshed with renewed strength.

Antaeus is born from the earth and has a specific connection to the land of Libya (*terribilem Libycis partum concepit in antris*). Though he is younger than the other giants (*post genitor Tellus ecfeta gigantes*), he is comparable in savagery to Typhon, Tityos, and Briareus. According to this version of the story, the other giants were defeated in their war on heaven at least in part because Antaeus was held back from the battle (*quod non Phlegraeis Antaeum sustulit arvis*). Here, in the story of Antaeus, the theme of Gigantomachy that runs throughout Lucan's epic is directly addressed and given names, if only as part of a recounted fable.¹²⁸ Comparison with other giants and reference to the Gigantomachy are the most detailed description of Antaeus' physical form that Lucan provides;¹²⁹ the image of Antaeus is blurred, almost amorphous. His most detailed physical illustration comes from his association with Libya, his parent, but because

¹²⁸ Cf. e.g., *BC* 1.1, *bella per Emathios plus quam civilia campos*. On Lucan's allusions to the Gigantomachy, see Masters (1992) 39 for general treatment, and 154-55 for Gigantomachy in relation to Pelion and Ossa, some of the mountains of Thessaly. For his treatment of Gigantomachy, Lucan draws on the example provided by Vergil's *Aeneid*. Hardie (1986) 110-18 explores "elemental quality of the struggle" between Hercules and Cacus in *Aeneid* 8, a Gigantomachic fight. Lucan reworks the gigantomachic and elemental aspects of Hercules and Cacus in his depiction of Hercules and Antaeus.

¹²⁹ Asso (2002) 64 notes the lack of details in Antaeus' physical description, but compares him to the Giants Porphyrion and Alcyoneus, who also drew strength from the ground. Cf. Apollodorus 1.6.1; Pindar *Nemean* 4.25-30, *Isthmian* 6.33.

of Libya's position as a "hypostasis" of Earth,¹³⁰ Antaeus becomes a physical incarnation of that elemental force of nature. Beyond the identification of land with monster, Antaeus is also distinguished by his source of strength: contact with the earth. The verb *vigēt*, used to describe the invigoration of Antaeus' limbs by touching the ground, occurs only here in the *Bellum Civile*, but may allude to episodes in previous Roman epics. Vergil uses *vigere* for another monstrous child of Earth, *Fama*.¹³¹ Though both Antaeus and *Fama* are located in Libya, *Fama* gains strength through motion (*mobilitate viget*, *Aen.* 4.175), while Antaeus must have solid, stable contact with the ground. By comparison, this makes Antaeus seem almost cold-blooded, reptilian and snake-like, drawing energy from the heated earth of Libya. Ovid also uses *vigere* in a related episode, the apotheosis of Hercules, characterizing Antaeus' foe by his rejuvenation as a metaphorical snake shedding its skin.¹³²

Antaeus's savagery is outlined in his daily habits. He makes his home in a cave (*haec illi spelunca domus*, 4.601), lurks in the shadow of the rocky cliffs (*latuisse sub alta rupe ferunt*, 4.601-2), and eats lions for dinner (*epulas raptos habuisse leones*, 4.602). His cavernous home not only puts him in contact with the earth, but locates him within and beneath the earth, recalling his birth (*Libycis... concepit in antris*, 4.594). Eating lions, predators that are particularly Libyan and traditionally epic, puts Antaeus at the top of the food chain and

¹³⁰ Asso (2002) 58, for Libya = Tellus = *Gē*. See also 60, where Asso argues that Antaeus is a "symbol for the whole of the Libyan land," a place known for its strangeness and wonders.

¹³¹ Vergil, *Aeneid* 4.178-80: *illam Terra parens, ira inritata deorum, / extramam (ut perhibent) Coeo Enceladoque sororem / progenuit*. Vergil calls Rumor the last sister born from Earth after the other giants, then Lucan adds Antaeus to the family as well. This is one of only two uses of *vigere* in the *Aeneid*; cf. 2.88. Austin (1955) 71 *ad* 4.175 sees an echo of Lucretius' description of a falling lightning bolt (*DRN* 6.340-42) in Vergil's *Fama*, though "Lucretius' scientific picture has become a moral fantasy."

¹³² Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 9.266-70: *utque novus serpens posita cum pelle senecta / luxuriare solet squamaque nitere recenti, / sic, ubi mortales Tirynthius exuit artus, / parte sui meliore viget maiorque videri / coepit et augusta fieri gravitate verendus*. Ovid's use of *vigere* is also sparing, occurring only three times in the *Met.*; cf. 7.58 and 8.848. Commentaries on Ovid, *Met.* 9 do not pay much attention to *viget*, but Anderson (1972) 435 *ad* 9.266-67 does argue that Ovid's snake simile is deliberately ambiguous, dealing with the image of the revered snake (e.g., the snake at the Sicilian altar, *Aeneid* 5.84) and also with the ophidian connotation of destruction and treachery. Cf. Knox (1950).

reinforces his bestial nature. Any strength that he uses up, he regains from the ground, as Lucan and the *rudis incola* narrator reiterate (*viresque resumit / in nuda tellure iacens*, 4.604-5). But Antaeus' destructive power extends beyond rocks and lions. Any people to come into his territory, whether settlers in the fields (*periere coloni / arborum Libyae*, 4.605-6) or sailors (*pereunt quos appulit aequor*, 4.606), perish at his hand, prompting the narrator to label Antaeus with the traditionally Herculean epithet, *invictus* (4.608).¹³³ Rumor of the ongoing death and destruction (*cruenti / fama mali*, 4.609-10) summons Hercules, who, opposite *invictus Antaeus*, is *magnanimus* (4.611).¹³⁴

The fight between Antaeus and Hercules is modeled literarily on Hercules' defeat of Cacus in *Aeneid* 8,¹³⁵ but the language of the fight also recalls specifically gladiatorial conflict. As Ahl has argued, "the *sangre y arena* of the gladiatorial *munus* could find no better natural landscape than the desert of Libya."¹³⁶ The use of athletic images and language is well placed; moreover, the antagonists, Hercules and Antaeus, have such huge mythological status that the scope of this fight is inflated to a cosmic scale.¹³⁷ The two fighters, clothed in similar garb and making similar motions, appear evenly matched.

ille Cleonaei proiecit terga leonis,
 Antaeus Libyci; perfudit membra liquore
 hospes Olympiacae servato more palaestrae,
 ille parum fidens pedibus contingere matrem

¹³³ *Invictus* only occurs five times in the course of the *BC*: 3.334 (of Rome), 4.608 (of Antaeus), 5.324 (of Caesar, by Caesar), 9.18 (of Cato, following the death of Pompey), and 10.346 (of Caesar, again). Asso (2010) 230-32 has a detailed note about the traditional cult application of the epithet to Hercules and its misappropriation here by Antaeus. For the history of the epithets *victor* and *invictus* in Rome, see Weinstock (1957).

¹³⁴ Lucan also uses *magnanimus* five times: 2.234 (of Brutus), 4.475 (of Vulteius' *vox*), 4.611 (of Hercules), 9.133 (of Pompey), and 9.807 (of Tullus, Cato's follower and admirer, killed by the Haemorrhoids). By comparison, Statius later uses the epithet for Achilles, *magnanimus Aeaciden*, *Achilleid* 1.1; Dilke (1954) 79 *ad* 1.1 compares earlier epithets for Aeneas (*Aen.* 1.260, 5.17 and 407, 9.204) and Achilles (Ovid, *Met.* 13.298).

¹³⁵ Galinsky (1966).

¹³⁶ Ahl (1976) 99.

¹³⁷ Asso (2002) 58.

auxilium membris calidas infudit harenas. (4.612-16)

[Hercules] threw off the skin of the Cleonaeon lion,
Antaeus, that of a Libyan lion; the stranger soaked his limbs
with liquid, in the custom kept in the Olympic palaestra;
[Antaeus], trusting too little in touching his mother with his feet,
poured hot sand over his limbs as assistance.

Both Hercules and Antaeus throw down the lion skins they had been wearing. Despite this mirrored image, their lion skins still mark their fundamental differences.¹³⁸ Hercules' skin comes from the lion of Cleonae, also known as the Nemean lion, and marks his success in the first of his labors (*Cleonaei... terga leonis*). Antaeus' lion skin is not extraordinary, except that it is from a Libyan lion, a proverbially savage beast (*Libyci [terga leonis]*). Hercules' lion skin marks him as a hero; Antaeus' marks him as a predator. At this point, the athletic contest metaphor solidifies. Hercules pours liquid over himself (*perfundit membra liquore*) in the style of a wrestler competing in the Olympic games (*hospes Olympiacae servato more palaestrae*). Antaeus augments the strength drawn from the earth through his feet as he stands (*parum fidens pedibus contingere matrem*), and substitutes liquid for hot sand (*membris calidas infudit harenas*).¹³⁹ Thus the conflict has its antagonists and these fighters also represent two warring elements, water and earth. The fight is eminently suited to its location, a place where land and sea are at war in the Syrtes (9.303-47) and sand can flow and storm like water (9.445-510).

The subsequent fight (4.617-53) pits Hercules' heroic strength against the anthropomorphized power of the land of Libya (*Telluris viribus ille*, 4.636). They are so evenly matched (*confluxere pares*, 4.636) that Hercules fears the strength of his opponent (*constitit Alcides stupefactus robore tanto*, 4.633). Antaeus' earth-drawn power is depicted in a material

¹³⁸ Ahl (1976) 95, exploring the various savage aspects of Antaeus' character, recounts another instance of his barbarity, "his building of a temple to his father Poseidon from the skulls of his human victims." Cf. Plato, *Theaetetus* 169b; Pindar, *Isthmian* 4.56; Apollodorus 2.5; Diodorus Siculus 4.17.4 and 27.3.

¹³⁹ Ahl (1976) 96 calls this scene the "victory of Greek athletics over the crude natural strength of the barbarian."

way, as an exchange of substances. The earth takes in his sweat (*rapit arida tellus / sudorem*, 4.629-30) and in turn, fills him up with hot blood (*calido conplentur sanguine venae*, 4.630), a reinvigoration described in pseudo-medical terms.¹⁴⁰ As the fight continues, the connection between Antaeus and the earth is central.

utque iterum fessis iniecit bracchia membris
 non expectatis Antaeus viribus hostis
 sponte cadit maiorque accepto robore surgit.
 quisquis inest terris in fessos spiritus artus
 egeritur, Tellusque viro luctante laborat. (4.640-44)

And when he again grappled with tired limbs,
 Antaeus, not waiting for his enemy's strength,
 fell willingly and rose, greater with added strength.
 Whatever life is in the land is poured into
 his tired limbs, and Tellus labors while her hero struggles.

Contact with the ground restores any strength expended in the fight and allows Antaeus to keep fighting, and also to maintain an equal force against Hercules. Lucan revisits his tendency toward the literalization of metaphor, as well. Where, in other parts of the *Bellum Civile*, the landscape is depicted as an enemy to be fought by the Romans (*hoste relicto*, 4.43-44), here Antaeus, a synecdochic representation and extension of the land, is labeled as *hostis*. Moreover, the earlier exchange of fluids between Antaeus and the earth (sweat for blood, 4.629-30) is repeated, though with a more metaphysical significance. Libya pours its power into his tired limbs (*quisquis inest terris in fessos spiritus artus*), wherein *spiritus* can be read as equivalent to the Stoic πνεῦμα.¹⁴¹ Because *spiritus* is shared between Libya and Antaeus, they are united on the most basic level and, even when the boundlessness and shifting sands of Libya make the rest of the world seem to

¹⁴⁰ Asso (2010) 240 *ad* 630-1 cites other instances from the *BC* that illustrate Lucan's knowledge of medical theories involving blood, its circulation, and its relation to strength.

¹⁴¹ Ahl (1976) 100 calls this a merging of "primitive animism and Stoic physics," where "no line can be drawn between man and his universe. Both are alive." Asso (2010) 242 *ad* 643-44 suggests, "solve the hyperbaton." See Chapter 3 for a comparison of *spiritus* as πνεῦμα in the Antaeus episode to a similar translation of philosophical terms in *BC* 5, at Delphi.

be in a state of dissolution, Libya and its creatures are still a united force against the encroaching Herculean figure. But while Hercules was often seen as a civilizing hero held in great esteem by the Romans and by Caesar especially, it is Antaeus who here is more Caesarian in epithet (*invictus*) and in action.¹⁴²

The fight ends when Hercules finally realizes the source of Antaeus' strength (4.645-49) and holds him high off the ground until Antaeus grows weak (*morientis in artus / non potuit nati Tellus permittere vires*, 4.650-51) and dies (*Alcides medio tenuit iam pectora pigro / stricta gelu*, 4.652-53). Without contact with Tellus-Libya, Antaeus cannot receive any more warm, energizing blood (*calido... sanguine*, 4.630) and like a cold-blooded creature, cools down until he cannot move or survive. The physical connection is broken, but a linguistic and memory-based connection remains, as the land that gave life to Antaeus bears his name after his defeat (*signavit nomine terras*, 4.655).¹⁴³

The next major mythological digression related to Libya is the story of Medusa, Perseus, and the origins of Libya's snakes. The Medusa digression is not merely framed by snakes but is intended to explain them. Leading into her story, Cato and his soldiers arrive at a rare pool of fresh water that, to their dismay, is infested by a brood of snakes (9.604-18).¹⁴⁴ The presence of potable water contrasts with the vast stretches of sand surrounding it (*mediis fons unus harenis /*

¹⁴² Thompson and Bruère (1968) 16 note the similarity between Antaeus' reinvigoration when in contact with the earth and "the effect of Caesar's touching earth" at 5.676-77, when he makes landfall again after the storm in the Adriatic.

¹⁴³ Cf. 4.590: *Antaei... regna*. The connection between names and power is visited in other parts of the epic as well, most notably of Pompey at 1.135 (*stat magni nominis umbra*). For one part of a landscape giving its name to a greater part, compare also the dominant river system near Ilerda: *nam gurgite mixto / qui praestat terris aufert tibi nomen Hiberus* (4.22-23).

¹⁴⁴ Malamud (2003) 43 argues that Lucretius' visit to the Pierian spring (*DRN* 1.921-50, 4.1-25) is a model for Lucan's spring full of serpents: "Cato – a philosophical wanderer on the edges of the world like Epicurus and like Lucretius himself – finds in the midst of the desert a spring contaminated by Medusa's snakes, filled not with *integros fontes* but with venom. Lucretius, through his mastery of Pierian song, will lead his readers to *ratio*, but Lucan's narrator uses the *locus* of the spring to lament the fact that all his *cura* and *labor* will never lead to knowledge."

largus aquae, 9.607-8), but Libya's dangers remain present in the form of the snakes, whose venom has infused the water (*in mediis sitiabant dipsades undis*, 9.610). Because their venom is only dangerous when in contact with blood (*noxia serpentum est admixto sanguine pestis*, 9.614), the water is safe to drink, though Cato drinks first to take on the greatest hazard himself (*primus sibi posceret undam*, 9.618).¹⁴⁵ The entire desert journey is prone to allegorical interpretation, but the "battle" with the snakes is even more so. As Leigh argues, "if the featureless and empty terrain of Libya is that of the Stoic pilgrim's progress, the impact of the remarkable serpents lurking in the region incarnates the opposite principle of colour and profusion."¹⁴⁶ Because the snakes infesting the pool are a *serpentum turba* (9.608), they can be interpreted by means of Stoic terminology. The good Stoic, of which Cato is allegedly a prime example, lives by his *virtus* and avoids the *turba* and its disruptive influence.¹⁴⁷ The *serpentum turba*, therefore, stands in automatic opposition to Cato's moral virtue, though the effects of this conflict are delayed until after the Medusa digression, which focuses on the snakes' origins.

While the Antaeus and Hercules myth (*fama*, 4.610) and the brief treatment of Tritonis (*fama*, 9.348 and 356) are rumors, the Medusan origin of Libya's snakes is presented as a *fabula* (9.623). The "scientific investigation" that characterizes much of Lucan's treatment of Libya is put on hold,¹⁴⁸ if only because the real origins of the snakes are obscured (*pro vera deceptit saecula causa*, 9.623) by his reliance on mythological *aitia*. The result is a blending of myth and reality that, in the context of Lucan's historical subject matter, is significant in its rarity. In the case of Medusa and the snakes, the blurred lines between myth and history are reminiscent of the breakdown of order on a cosmic level seen throughout the poem. This contributes to the

¹⁴⁵ Malamud (2003) 42 sees Cato's drinking as Cause, while the later deaths by snakebite are the Effect.

¹⁴⁶ Leigh (2000) 102-3.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Seneca, *Ep.* 8.1. See below for further discussion.

¹⁴⁸ Fantham (1992b) 98.

allegorical landscape of Lucan's Libya, in which the challenges to Cato's Stoic *virtus* have bodies and fangs, an issue I will discuss further at the end of this chapter.

Medusa's geographical location and the way she shapes the landscape around her introduces Lucan's account, which draws some language and narrative details from the model provided by Ovid at *Metamorphoses* 4.610-5.250.¹⁴⁹ The landscape in which Medusa lives is already marginal, geographically, but her presence and powers make it utterly uninhabitable.

finibus extremis Libyes, ubi fervida tellus
accipit Oceanum demisso sole calentem,
squalebant late Phorcynidos arva Medusae,
non nemorum protecta coma, non mollia sulco,
sed dominae voltu conspectis aspera saxis.
hoc primum natura nocens in corpore saevas
eduxit pestes; illis e faucibus angues
stridula fuderunt vibratis sibila linguis. (9.624-31)

In the furthest limits of Libya, where the burning earth
receives Ocean warmed by the setting sun,
the fields of Medusa, daughter of Phorcys, are lie wasted far and wide,
not protected by the leaves of a grove, nor softened by furrow,
but harsh with stones gazed upon by its mistress' face.
In this body noxious nature first brought forth savage
destruction; from those throats, snakes
pour strident hisses with flashing tongues.

Compared to the other parts of Libya seen or described thus far in the *Bellum Civile*, Medusa lives even further west near the far borders (*finibus extremis Libyes*).¹⁵⁰ The land there is hot (*fervida tellus*) as is the Ocean, due to its proximity to the sun as it sinks in the sky (*accipit Oceanum demisso sole calentem*). This description is reminiscent of the land of Atlas, as described by Ovid, as *ultima tellus... qui solis anhelis aequora subdit aquis* (*Met.* 4.632-33). It is “untilled and untillable,” with scaly fields (*squalebant... arva*) that recall the abandoned Italy in

¹⁴⁹ Fantham (1992b) 112.

¹⁵⁰ Wick (2004) 250 *ad* 9.624 cites the Hesiodic origin of Medusa's geographic location (*Th.* 274-75), but locates Lucan's more recent poetic models in Vergil, *Aen.* 4.480 and Ovid, *Met.* 4.632-34.

Vergil's *Georgics* 1.507.¹⁵¹ Anything that could make the place pleasant is missing: shady groves (*non nemorum protecta coma*) and tilled earth (*non mollia sulco*) are lacking in a landscape defined by its harsh stones (*aspera saxis*). Even without Medusa's influence, the land is not friendly, though Medusa's presence and her powers of petrification make the land harsher. The natural world is itself harmful in this part of Libya (*natura nocens*). The land and natural world make Medusa all the more dangerous, producing the hazardous snaky parts of her (*in corpore saevas eduxit pestes*). Moreover, Medusa, like the snakes later, is a vessel for the poison, the actual source of which is *natura* itself.¹⁵² More generally, this view of *natura* characterizes both monster and landscape, as a similar phrase describes this distant western part of Libya (*secreta nocenti / miscuerit natura solo*, 9.620-21). In this region, the entire landscape is infused with fatal dangers; even the air itself seems to flow with airborne plague (*tantis exundet pestibus aer / fertilis in mortes*, 9.619-20).¹⁵³ Monster and land are both polluted, introducing a narrative of toxicity to the Libyan episode.¹⁵⁴ As in the case of Antaeus, there is fundamental connection between monster and landscape, and the nature of this connection is harmful to those, like Hercules and Perseus, who enter into that landscape. This snaky connection between land and Medusa is also the aetiological introduction of the snakes and their toxicity.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ Fantham (1992b) 99. For abandoned fields, see also Lucan's Italy (1.24-29) and Massilia (3.450-52).

¹⁵² Wick (2004) 252 *ad* 9.629.

¹⁵³ *Exundet* (9.619) draws a connection between the humid (?) air in Libya and the water in the pool of snakes. Fantham (1992b) 99 sees in this watery depiction of air the revelation of the "airborne nature of the Libyan serpents." Other Lucanian uses of *exundare* describe the prester snake's attack on Nasidius (9.798) and the Nile (10.256).

Wick (2004) 248 *ad* 9.619 succinctly notes, "Libyens Klima quillt förmlich von Plagen über," and cites similar uses of *exundare*: Columella 9.9.1; Calpurnius Siculus, *Ecl.* 4.104 (of sheep's wool); Ovid, *Ep.* 9.95 (of snakes in Cerberos' fur). Columella 9.9.1 writes *exundant novis fetibus*, citing a watchful *custos* and the character and actions of bees; perhaps relevant is Lucan's comparison of Cato and his soldiers before they set out into the desert as a *pastor* recalling his bees to their duty (9.285-92).

¹⁵⁴ Buell (1998).

¹⁵⁵ Fantham (1992b) 100 cites Ovid's *Met.* 4.614-20 as both a retelling of the familiar Alexandrian story and the *aition* of the snakes that Lucan uses as a model.

Medusa's primary power and, simultaneously, the thing that makes her most hazardous, is her ability to turn things to stone. The process of petrification is swift and permanent. Unlike deaths caused by other means, Medusan deaths can kill the body, while the spirit remains trapped within: *anima periere retenta / membra, nec emissae riguere sub ossibus umbrae* (9.640-41). The movement – or prevention of movement – of the spirit shows how Medusa's victims differ from other high profile deaths in the poem. By contrast, while Medusa's petrification traps the *umbra*, Pompey's *manes* and *umbra* are free to move throughout the cosmos, traveling up to the heavens and back down into the breasts of Brutus and Cato (9.1-18).¹⁵⁶ More parallel to the *anima* trapped within a petrified body by Medusa is the shade unwillingly returned to its corpse by the Thessalian necromancer Erichtho (6.714, 732). Also relevant may be the connection between Antaeus and Libya-Tellus, where contact with the ground prompts an infusion of *spiritus* into his limbs (4.643). Ahl's argument that this *spiritus* can be understood as the Stoic *πνεῦμα* – as well as the demonstration of the pervasive presence and power of *spiritus* in Lucan's Delphi – makes the paradox presented by *anima periere retenta membra* relevant to the Stoic definition of death.¹⁵⁷ Chrysippus had used the Platonic idea that the soul separated from the body after death to argue for its corporeality, and thus established the Stoic teaching on what happens to the soul when the body dies.¹⁵⁸ Seneca maintains the Chrysippean position on the separation of body and soul. In his *Naturales Quaestiones*, he uses both *animus* and *spiritus* in this context;¹⁵⁹ he also refers to the act of body-soul separation with the same kind word Lucan repeatedly uses of cosmic dissolution and collapse (*...ut corpus ab animo resolvant*, 2.59.4). So

¹⁵⁶ Pompey's *anima* (9.9); his *umbra* (9.2).

¹⁵⁷ Ahl (1976) 100. Wick (2004) 256 *ad* 639, *passa...mori est*: the Stoic definition of death corresponds to the separation of body and soul. Cf. *SVF* 2.790: ὁ θάνατός ἐστι ψηχῆς χωρισμὸς ἀπὸ σώματος.

¹⁵⁸ Hahm (1977) 15. For Chrysippus, see *SVF* 2.790, 791; for Plato, see *Phaedrus* 64c, 67c-d, *Republic* 10.609d, and *Timaeus* 81d.

¹⁵⁹ Seneca, *NQ* 2.59.4 (*animus*), 6.1.9 (*spiritus*).

when Medusa's toxic gaze freezes the *anima* inside a petrified body, it is a disruption of the natural order, a kind of stasis rather than proper death.

The specifics of Medusa's monstrous nature are conveyed by comparison with other mythological beings, all of which have some serpentine aspect to them. She is more fearsome than the Eumenides, chthonic creatures who have also been portrayed with snaky hair (*Eumenidem crines solos movere furores*, 9.642).¹⁶⁰ She is also worse than Cerberos, the three-headed guardian of the underworld who, in Lucan's description, makes a hissing sound (*Cerberos Orpheo lenivit sibila cantu*, 9.643).¹⁶¹ Finally, in comparison to the many-headed hydra (*Amphitryoniades vidit... hydram*, 9.644), she also wins the monstrous contest. There is a corollary to these comparisons as well: if Medusa is a more hazardous mythical monster than all these creatures, then the hero that eventually defeats her must be superior in some way to the heroes – Orestes, Orpheus, and Hercules – who tamed or defeated the Eumenides, Cerberos, and the hydra.¹⁶² Her destructive power is even demonstrated by the reaction of her mythological parents, Phorcys and Ceto.

hoc monstrum timuit genitor numenque secundum
Phorcys aquis Cetoque parens ipsaeque sorores
Gorgones; hoc potuit caelo pelagoque minari
torporem insolitum mundoque obducere terram. (9.645-48)

This monster her father Phorcys, the second god in
the waters, feared and her mother Ceto, and her own sister
Gorgons; she could project unaccustomed torpor on
the sky and sea, and draw the earth over the universe.

Lucan's inclusion of Phorcys and Ceto in his digression on Medusa strengthens her connection to the land and to the elemental aspects of the world prominent in creation narratives. According to

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Allecto and the other furies in *Aen.* 7.323-29.

¹⁶¹ For Cerberos' serpentine aspect, cf. Ovid, *Ep.* 9.93-96: *inque canes totidem trunco digestus ab uno / Cerberos implicitis angue minante comis; / quaeque redundabat fecundo vulnere serpens / fertilis et damnis dives ab ipsa suis.*

¹⁶² Fantham (1992b) 103.

Hesiod, Phorcys and Ceto were children of Gaia and Pontos, the earth and the sea.¹⁶³ Medusa, the granddaughter of Gaia and Pontos, is a threat to both their realms (*potuit caelo pelagoque minari*). The scope of the threat she presents is global, encompassing sky, sea, and land: the entirety of the *mundus*.

As the digression continues, Lucan provides the details of Medusa's powers of petrification and the way they change and shape the world around her. Already demonstrated is the way her gaze solidifies the bodies of her victims while the spirit remains trapped (9.640-41). The living beings who inhabit the land near Medusa are subject to her power.

e caelo volucres subito cum pondere lapsae,
in scopulis haesere ferae, vicina colentes
Aethiopum totae riguerunt marmore gentes. (9.649-51)

Birds fell from the sky with sudden weight,
beasts were stuck to the rocks, whole tribes
of Ethiopians, living nearby, stiffened into marble.

These are the local effects of Medusa's toxicity: birds, turned to stone mid-flight, fall from the sky; animals on the ground become new rock formations; even neighboring people, including some of the Ethiopians, turn to stone, appearing as marble statues (*marmore*). By creating new stone in the midst of the natural landscape, Medusa contributes new parts to the natural world, constructing and shaping, willingly or not, her surroundings.¹⁶⁴ But while these new features of the landscape are stone, not so different from their surroundings except in shape and origin, they are a result of Medusa's toxic effect on the world around her. Even the snakes that make up her coiffure cannot withstand her gaze and must turn away in order to remain avoid petrification (9.652-53).

¹⁶³ Hesiod, *Theogony* 237-39. Later, at *Th.* 333-36, Phorcys and Ceto are also parents to the serpent that guarded the apples of the Hesperides, who was later defeated by Hercules. Through Phorcys and Ceto, in this mythical combination of land and sea, the offspring are always serpentine in some way.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. Caesar's landscape engineering at Brundisium and Massilia.

The toxicity of Medusa's petrification and its effects on the landscape occur on a cosmic scale as well. The chronology of these events is anachronistic: Medusa's destructive power was used by the Olympians against the Giants, but Perseus, who decapitated her, was part of a later mythological generation.

illa sub Hesperiiis stantem Titana columnis
in cautes Atlanta dedit; caeloque timente
olim Phlegraeo stantis serpente gigantas
erexit montes, bellumque inmane deorum
Pallados e medio confecit pectore Gorgon. (9.654-58)

She turned Atlas, the Titan standing under the pillars
of the West, into stone; and once long ago when heaven feared
the Giants, supported by the Phlegraean serpent,
she raised them up as mountains, and the Gorgon in the middle
of Pallas' breast ended the savage battle of the gods.

The use of Medusa's gaze to defeat both Atlas and the Giants happened after Perseus decapitated her, though these victories are listed among her powers while alive, located in the far western portion of Libya. Moreover, her posthumous defeat of Atlas and the Giants would take place mythologically several generations before Perseus would even go up against her, a paradox that Fantham calls a "dislocation of narrative time," and which depends on the word *olim*.¹⁶⁵ Turning Atlas to stone has the effect of creating the "pillars" of Gibraltar that separate the Mediterranean from the Atlantic (*sub Hesperiiis stantem Titana columnis*), another transformation of landscape, but one that is particularly world-defining.¹⁶⁶ In the Gigantomachy, Medusa's face on Athena's aegis (*Pallados e medio confecit pectore Gorgon*) stopped the Giants by turning them into mountains (*Phlegraeo stantis serpente gigantas / erexit montes*), a reinterpretation of previous interpretations of the Gigantomachy, where the Giants piled Thessalian mountains on top of each

¹⁶⁵ Fantham (1992b) 104.

¹⁶⁶ Wick (2004) 260 *ad* 9.654 notes the Greek mythological context for the pillars of Hercules, citing Homer, *Od.* 1.53-54 and Aeschylus, *Prom.* 349-52; she also provides ancient geographical notes on the pillars: Strabo 3.5.5 and Mela 1.27, whose reference to *Calpe* is echoed by Lucan at 1.555.

other to reach Olympus.¹⁶⁷ Medusa's role in the Gigantomachy also contrasts with Antaeus' non-participation; Medusa, though dead, ended the war by stopping the Giants, while Antaeus would have enabled the Giants' victory, had he participated (4.596-97).

When Perseus, with the help of Pallas Athena, succeeds in slaying Medusa by cutting off her head, her fatal power in the land of Libya does not cease. The narrative of Medusae toxicity is renewed. In Perseus' destruction of Medusa, there is also a further connection to the contest between Antaeus and Hercules in book 4: the Greek hero (Hercules or Perseus) confronts and conquers the African monster (Antaeus or Medusa). Both Hercules and Perseus are compared to athletes in the *palaestra* (4.614, 9.661); both monsters rule over the lands in their vicinity (4.590, 9.668). For Medusa more than Antaeus, though, Libya is remote (*terraeque in fine Libyssae*, 9.666), a place separate from the rest of the world where the "normal" order of categories and boundaries breaks down. Living creatures become stone, spirits are trapped between life and death (*anima... retenta*, 9.640), and narratological time is thrown into confusion. Libya is also the place where a narrative of toxicity continues to play a defining role, especially at the moment of Medusa's death and during Perseus' journey back to civilization.

quos habuit voltus hamati volnere ferri
caesa caput Gorgon! quanto spirare veneno
ora rear quantumque oculos effundere mortis! (9.678-80)

What an expression the Gorgon had, her head cut off
by the wound of a hooked weapon! How much poison I believe
her mouth exhaled and how much death her eyes poured forth!

At the moment of Medusa's death, Lucan describes her face and its expression, but focuses on the poison she puts forth instead of Medusa herself. Her mouth exhales venom (*spirare veneno*

¹⁶⁷ For example: Ovid, *Fasti* 5.35-42. Fantham (1992b) 104 notes that "Lucan has deliberately changed the giants' fate from the customary death by thunderbolt, so that he can make their downfall the climatic achievement of his supermonster." This also has the effect of removing Caesar (in all his thunderbolty glory, cf. 1.151-57) from the gigantomachy, at least in this reference to it.

ora)¹⁶⁸ and her eyes pour out death (*oculos effundere mortis*). Especially in death, she is toxic and, by means of the deadly substances and effects she gives off, pollutes the world around her. Her head reintroduces two prominent themes from earlier in the *Bellum Civile*: the nexus of severed head imagery and its relation to Pompey, and the tendency of Lucanian liquids to be dangerous, corrupted, poisonous, or generally indicative of a larger conflict. A number of scholars have argued that Medusa's head and Pompey's head are parallel images,¹⁶⁹ and Lucan's use of *effundere* also supports this idea. Twice, tears are shed (*effundere*) over Pompey after his decapitation, by Cordus who weeps over Pompey's body (8.727), and by Caesar who sheds crocodile tears over Pompey's head (9.1039).¹⁷⁰ Moreover, Lucan uses *effundere* to indicate grief, by depicting women's hair disheveled in mourning (Marcia, 2.335; Roman matrons, 7.370; Cornelia, 9.172; *imago Romae*, 1.188). As to the other issue, linguistically it is no surprise that *effundere* is used to describe the movement of water or other liquids. Lucan's concentration on blood and venom is what helps characterize *effundere* as a more complicated word that can indicate danger or toxicity.¹⁷¹ From the water in rivers (Sicoris, 4.19), floods (4.119), and rains (even in Libya, 3.70), Lucan moves to pouring and flowing blood. The crimes of Marius and Sulla are described with *effundere* (Scaevola's blood at the shrine of Vesta, 2.129; rivers of blood flowing into the Tiber, 2.215), and tied to Caesar's actions during the current conflict (description of blood spilled during battle, 4.354). Venom pours out of a metaphorical snake's mouth in the ichneumon simile describing the confrontation between Juba and Curio (4.272), and

¹⁶⁸ Wick (2004) 269 *ad* 679 cites Lucretius' use of *spirare* for breathing flame at 2.705 for the Chimaera and at 5.30 for the mares of Diomedes; Vergil also describes flame-exhaling horses at *Aen.* 7.281, and uses the same language for Cacus at 8.304. Lucan appears to be the first to combine *spirare* and *venenum*.

¹⁶⁹ Fantham (1992) 110; Malamud (2003) 37; Brinnehl (2010) 88-89.

¹⁷⁰ For the connection of Pompey and *effundere*, see also 1.140, when the metaphorical Pompeian oak tree casts a shadow (*umbram*) with its bulky trunk, not with leafy branches.

¹⁷¹ For the use of *effundere* the context of pollution and spreading danger, cf. 2.535-36, wherein the *Gallica... rabies* pours over the Alps and the resulting devastation in Italy sees *pollutos Caesaris enses*.

the image of snakes pouring out toxicity is revisited in greater detail in book nine. Twice, Medusa's appearance and power are described by *effundere*: alive, even her own snakes avoid her face (9.653); dead, she pours out death from her eyes (*effundere mortis*, 9.680).¹⁷² In the catalogue of snakes that follows the Medusa digression, the basilisk has a similar effect. Like Medusa, it is so toxic that it can poison without having physical contact with its victims (*ante venena nocens*, 9.725) and the other serpents flee its hissing (9.724). Snakes are the ultimate symbol of poison in the *Bellum Civile*, but both the basilisk and Medusa are toxic even beyond the level of other serpents.

Medusa's ultra-toxicity determines the direction of Perseus' return journey. His path, from west to east, is reminiscent of Cato's journey across the desert from east to west, but in reverse. And, while Cato's path is difficult for the same reasons that he encounters few people (the hazardous conditions in the desert) Perseus' path is determined by the same absence of people.

ille quidem pensabat iter propiusque secabat
 aera, si medias Europae scinderet urbes:
 Pallas frugiferas iussit non laedere terras
 et parci populis. (9.685-88)

[Perseus] was considering his path and traversing a closer
 course, if he cut through the middle of Europe's cities:
 Pallas ordered him not to damage the fruitful lands
 and to spare their peoples.

Pegasus, offspring of Medusa from her severed neck, is not mentioned by name in the *Bellum Civile*, but is implicit in Perseus' journey through the air (*secabat aera*). The toxicity of Medusa's head means that travel through inhabited areas would be too dangerous because people would be exposed to her poison. The land of Libya, however, is not fertile like other lands

¹⁷² The phrase *effundere mortis* can also be found in Seneca. Cf. *Phoenissae* 142, *De Clementia* 1.19.5.

(*frugiferas... terras*), and, by correlation, has fewer inhabitants (*parci populis*).¹⁷³ Despite the infertility of the Libyan land, Medusa's toxic blood causes something to grow.

illa tamen sterilis tellus fecundaque nulli
arva bono virus stillantis tabe Medusae
conciunt dirosque fero de sanguine rores,
quos calor adiuvit putrique incoxit harenae.
hic quae prima caput movit de pulvere tabes
aspida somniferam tumida cervice levavit. (9.696-701)

Still that barren land and the fields producing nothing
good take in the poison of dripping Medusa's
gore and the horrible dew from her wild blood,
which heat supports and cooks in the crumbling sand.
Here the rotten blood, which first moved a head from the dust,
raised up the asp, bearing sleep with its swollen neck.

This is the origin of the snakes.¹⁷⁴ When Medusa's poisonous blood (*dirosque fero de sanguine rores*) drips onto the infertile ground (*sterilis tellus fecundaque nulli arva*),¹⁷⁵ the combination produces a living embodiment of Medusa's toxicity imminently suited for life in the harsh desert. Like Antaeus, the first Libyan monster in the poem, the snakes are born from the earth, but since they grow from the drops of Medusa's blood, her poison breeds theirs. The snakes, then, are an incarnation of Libya and a living demonstration of the kind of poison that thrives in such a harsh landscape.

Lucan has already established the land as a hostile force against people (e.g., at Ilerda) and against the Romans in particular (e.g., the Syrtes storm and later sandstorm). Because the serpents are born from the combination of Medusa's blood and the Libyan dust, they are living

¹⁷³ Fantham (1992b) 107 cites as a comparison the coastal tribes like the Nasamones mentioned earlier at 9.431-44. The issue of Libya's fertility is even debatable within Lucan's own work; at 9.420-23, he describes the increasingly fertile lands of western Libya, which enjoy water brought by rains from the north.

¹⁷⁴ While Lucan's *aition* of Libya's snakes is quite famous, the earliest extant author to link Medusa with Libya's snakes is Apollonius Rhodes, at *Argonautica* 4.1513-17. Fantham (1992b) 113-18 notes that Nicander, whose account of the snakes focuses on their venomous nature, follows a rival tradition, wherein the snakes were born from the Titans' blood.

¹⁷⁵ Manilius also uses the phrase *sterilis tellus*, at *Astr.* 4.419.

extensions of the earth and, in line with previous earthly hostility, also take on the role of enemy combatants against which Cato and his Romans must fight. After the worst and most graphic deaths, the soldiers complain that the snakes have replaced Caesar as their primary foe (*pro Caesare pugnant / dipsades et peragunt civilia bella cerastae*, 9.851-52). Considering Caesar's overall characterization as a force of nature and threat to the established order, these complaints demonstrate both the power and the threat the snakes pose. The snakes are a vital part of Lucan's Libyan allegory and are, in fact, the ultimate representation of it. The construction of the serpentine portion of the allegory includes aspects of Stoic philosophy, historical allusion,¹⁷⁶ and the influence of the Hellenistic or Alexandrian scientific and didactic tradition.¹⁷⁷ In connecting the snakes to various historical, mythical, and philosophical sources, Lucan makes them consistent with the preceding parts of the Libyan episode. In his hyperbolic and unprecedented treatment of the snake attacks, this final chapter in the story of Cato's journey through the desert is of more value symbolically than as a piece of bizarre, but creative, entertainment.¹⁷⁸

Lucan's treatment of the snakes, though it takes place in one general location in the desert, is divisible into three main sections: the pool infested with serpents (9.604-18), the catalogue of Libyan snakes (9.700-33), and the series of attacks against individual soldiers (9.734-838). The confrontation begins in connection to the soldier's search for water in the midst of the desert. They come across an oasis with the only source of potable water in that area (*mediis fons unus harenis / largus aquae*, 9.607-8), but find to their dismay that the spring's

¹⁷⁶ Ahl (1976) 270-71 compares Cato's encounter with the snakes to accounts of the giant serpent dispatched by Regulus near the Bagra River during the Punic Wars.

¹⁷⁷ On Nicander's scientific and didactic methodology, see Clauss (2006); for Nicander's treatment of snakes and their poison, see Scarborough (1977).

¹⁷⁸ Morford (1967b) 128 calls the deaths of Cato's men "brilliant and bizarre," but dismisses them as having "no obvious value as Stoic allegory" and little correlation to natural philosophy. Brinnehl (2010) 186 argues the opposite, that the entire episode "must be read allegorically," and calls the "baffling parade of snakes" a series of scenes "designed to explicate Stoic doctrine."

banks are infested by asps (*stabant in margine siccae / aspides*, 9.609-10) and its water populated by dipsades (*in mediis sitiabant dipsades undis*, 9.610).¹⁷⁹ Each species' location suits the nature of its poison: the snake whose venom causes blood to solidify is on dry land, while the snake whose venom causes intense thirst is juxtaposed, tantalizingly, with a large quantity of water.¹⁸⁰ Regardless of their placement, the snakes at the spring are significant for the threat they pose, specifically, the poison of their venom. The soldiers must confront the *noxia serpentum* (9.614) as the narrative of water anxiety becomes a narrative of toxicity. In the subsequent explanation of the snake's poison – the Medusa digression – this ophidian toxicity is representative of the danger of Libya more generally (*natura nocens*, 9.629). These spring-infesting snakes also introduce the idea that they are the living opponent for Cato in his Stoic struggle in the name of *virtus*.¹⁸¹ A verbal clue indicating that the snakes in the spring are meant to represent an obstacle to Cato's Stoic *virtus* is their description as *serpentum turba* (9.618). Though a primary tenet of Roman Stoicism was participation in civic life for the benefit of the state and its people, Seneca had advised caution toward the influence and opinions of the *turba*. In *Epistulae Morales* 8, he begins with the hypothetical question, *tu me... vitare turbam iubes...?*¹⁸² In explaining the reasoning for avoiding the crowd, he associates things of which the *turba* approves with gifts of chance, and suggests suspicion and alarm as the appropriate reaction

¹⁷⁹ Structurally, the *dipsades* are located in the midst of the spring (*mediis fons unus harenis*) in the same way the spring is itself situated in the desert sands (*mediis... dipsades undis*).

¹⁸⁰ Leigh (2000) 101-2 analyzes the evocation of the Tantalus myth by the dipsas snake and the symptoms of thirst it provokes. Cf. Brinnehl (2010) 186.

¹⁸¹ Lucan sets up *virtus* as Cato's driving force and his mode of combating the difficulties he faces in Libya. At 9.402-3, *serpens, sitis, ardor harenae / dulcia virtuti*; later, at 578-79, *estque dei sedes nisi terra et pontus et aer / et caelum et virtus?* For Cato, as for the Stoics more generally, the cosmos is essentially equivalent to nature, and *virtus* allows the good Stoic to live in accordance to it. For the prevalence of *virtus* in Cato's Libyan adventure, see also: 9.302, 371, 381, 407, 445, 506, 562-63, 570, 595, and 882.

¹⁸² Seneca, *Ep.* 8.1.

to both.¹⁸³ An oasis of potable water in the midst of a desert is just such a stroke of good fortune; the snakes are the reminder of danger and the necessity of caution.

The Medusa digression follows the snakes in the spring and, after providing a mythological *aition* for the snakes,¹⁸⁴ leads into the catalogue of the various species that lived in Libya. In the course of thirty-three lines, Lucan lists fifteen different kinds of serpents and the basic information about their appearance and habitats. The most lengthy description belongs to the asp (9.700-7) and establishes it as the Ur-snake in Lucan's Medusa mythology. Lucan goes on to mention the *haemorrhoids* (9.709), the *chersydros* (9.711), the *chelydros* (9.711), the *chenchris* (9.712), the *hammodytes* (9.716), the *cerastes* (9.716), the *scytale* (9.717), the *dipsas* (9.718), the *amphisbaena* (9.719), the *natrix* (9.720), the *prester* (9.722), the *seps* (9.723), the *basilisk* (9.726), and the more vaguely labeled *dracones* which are known for their wings and ability to prey on large animals like bulls and elephants (9.727-33).¹⁸⁵ This list draws on military catalogues from the epic tradition as well as from didactic catalogues from Hellenistic sources. Nicander's *Theriaca*, with its descriptions of snakes, their venom, and potential medicines to treat it, is often cited as one of Lucan's sources for his snakes, though Kebric also considers

¹⁸³ Seneca, *Ep.* 8.3: *Clamo: 'vitare quaecumque vulgo placent, quae casus adtribuit; ad omne fortuitum bonum suspiciosi pavidique subsistite: et fera et piscis spe aliqua oblectante decipitur. Munera ista fortunae putatis? insidiae sunt. Quisquis vestrum tutam agere vitam volet, quantum plurimum potest ista viscata beneficia devitet in quibus hoc quoque miserrimi fallimur: habere nos putamus, haeremus...'* ('Avoid,' I cry, 'whatever is approved of by the mob, and things that are the gift of chance. Whenever circumstance brings some welcome thing your way, stop in suspicion and alarm: wild animals and fish alike are taken in by this or that inviting prospect. Do you look on them as presents given you by fortune? They are snares. Anyone among you who wishes to lead a secure life will do his very best to steer well wide of these baited bounties, which comprise yet another instance of the errors we miserable creatures fall into: we think these things are ours when in fact it is we who are caught...' trans. Campbell).

¹⁸⁴ Ahl (1976) 270 addresses the intrusion of folktales into Lucan's scientific Libyan episode: because the origins of the snakes were still unknown in Lucan's time, they are "the province of myth."

¹⁸⁵ Kebric (1976) 381 cites potential models for snakes attacking oxen (Aristotle, *Historia animalium* 606b 9-14) and elephants (Diodorus 3.10.1-6).

Diodorus' account of Ophellas to be a possible model for Lucan's serpents.¹⁸⁶ Because the snakes play a role in the larger allegorical treatment of Libya, their symbolic meaning on an individual level – that is, how Lucan uses them in his poem – is just as important as their species designation and zoological categorization.

Out of the fifteen kinds of serpents listed in the catalogue, Lucan recounts the attacks of seven to make a pseudo-*aristeia* seven “battles” long.¹⁸⁷ Moreover, six of these snakes taken from the catalog (all except the *iaculus*) somehow evoke during their attacks on one of the Romans the intersecting themes of liquid and toxicity so prevalent in this book. In the same way that the snakes are the land given life and form, the effects of their venom, as seen during their attacks, are grotesque and hyperbolic physical manifestations of anxieties about water and poison. The focus of the attacks is also noteworthy: though the “battle” can be interpreted as a series of bizarre obstacles against which Cato must pit his *virtus*, it is Cato's men who suffer and die. Their bodies are twisted into inhuman forms and all semblance of natural order is lost. Ultimately, the snake attacks are about the breakdown of the universe, a process Cato's *virtus* cannot stop. And, because the metaphor of cosmic breakdown for the fall of the Republic has been established as a programmatic concept, this is a depiction of Cato's *virtus* being ineffective against the collapse and death of the Republic itself.

¹⁸⁶ Kebric (1976) 380-82 notes that much research on Lucan's snakes focused on identifying the ancient sources from which Lucan drew his information, usually citing both Nicander and Aemilius Macer. Kebric, however, focuses more closely on Diodorus and the story of Ophellas. Lucan's source for the Ophellas story was probably Duris of Samos, but Kebric sees similarities between the story (as told in Diodorus' extant account) and Lucan's depiction of the geographical area, shortages of water and food, climatic conditions, and the length of the journey. For more information about the identification of individual snake species, Seewald (2008) *ad* 700-33 goes into great detail.

¹⁸⁷ The most obvious model for a battle involving seven sets of combatants is the story of the Seven Against Thebes, as told either by Aeschylus or later by Statius. The Theban story is also a civil war narrative, but the origins of Thebes may also hold an interesting point of comparison, as regards Cadmus and the serpents.

The first pair of combatants are Aulus, Cato's standard-bearer, and a *dipsas* snake (9.737-60). Aulus is a good symbolic person to begin with because, as standard-bearer (*signiferum*, 9.737), he can stand as representative of the Republic or of Cato himself. The *dipsas* bites Aulus on the ankle and, although the bite itself causes little pain (*vix dolor aut sensus dentis fuit*, 9.739), the effects of the venom are immense. A sensation of desperate thirst is the primary effect of the venom, hence the name of the snake. The scope of Aulus' thirst is conveyed by a list of physical symptoms, both realistic and exaggerated: there is a burning sensation in his bones and guts (*carpitque medullas / ignis edax calidaque incendit viscere tabe*, 9.741-42), he dries up (*ebibit umorem cirum vitalia fusum / pestis*, 9.743-44) and has a parched mouth (*in sicco linguam torrere palato*, 9.744), he does not sweat (*sudor in artus / non fuit*, 9.745-46), and tears seem to be sucked back towards his eyes (*oculos lacrimarum vena refugit*, 9.746). These symptoms are consistent with Lucan's depiction of a victim of severe thirst;¹⁸⁸ similar language describes the Pompeian soldiers, so desperate for water they would have imbibed poison after the Spanish floods in book four, aligning in both episodes thirst, those suffering, and those causing the suffering. Moreover, traces of water at Ilerda and during Aulus' search for relief are all *venae* (underground streams, 4.302; Aulus' tear tracks, 9.746; streams in the desert, 9.755), part of the larger analogy between bodies and the earth that Lucan employs throughout his poem.¹⁸⁹ The desperation with which Aulus seeks water introduces a hypothetical comparison of the volume of the world's greatest rivers to the amount of water needed to quench his thirst. Neither the Tanais,

¹⁸⁸ Wick (2004) 312 cites these symptoms as part of a standard poetic description of thirst, especially in Hellenistic scientific and medical texts. Cf. Nicander, *Theriaca* 338-42.

¹⁸⁹ Lucan uses *vena* of water at three other places in the *BC*: 9.356 (of Lethe), 10.264 (of streams of water and their connection to earthquakes), and 10.325 (of the Nile). Williams (2012) 190 cites Seneca *NQ* 3.15.1 for a description of the earth-body analogy: *in terra quoque sunt alia itinera per quae aqua, alia per quae spiritus currit; adeoque ad similitudinem illa humanorum corporum natura formavit ut maiores quoque nostri aquarum appellaverit venas*. Connors and Clendenon (In Progress) also note the similarity of the circulation of air and water in the earth to Plato's model of circulation concerning souls.

the Rhone, the Po, nor the Nile could suffice (9.751-52),¹⁹⁰ and the absence of a great river from Libya serves to emphasize Aulus' plight. The Syrtes, despite their salinity, are still a source of liquid and are Aulus' next attempt for relief (*nunc redit ad Syrtes et fluctus accipit ore*, 9.756). Though the Romans are on land and not at risk from the shoals and storms of the Syrtes, it still poses a danger to Aulus, offering relief but instead exacerbating the problem (*aequoreusque placet, sed non et sufficit, umor*, 9.757). Finally, Aulus' thirst becomes so great and all-consuming that he resorts to drinking his own blood (*ferroque aperire tumentis / sustinuit venas atque os inplere cruore*, 9.759-60), dying in the process. Cato's reaction to Aulus' thirst is not emotional, befitting his Stoicism, but he hastens to ensure that the other soldiers cannot see the power of thirst (*discere nulli / permissum est noc posse sitim*, 9.761-62). For Aulus, thirst overtook him entirely; with no room for *virtus* or Rome, this would be unacceptable for Cato's mission.¹⁹¹

The second battle, between Sabellus and a *seps*, depicts one of the most horrific deaths in the snake episode and is one of the most allegorically significant. The *seps*' bite leads to liquifaction, which, when described with Lucan's penchant for exaggeration, is completely literal. After the bite, the skin ruptures (*plagae proxima circum / fugit rupta cutis*, 9.767-68) and the wound becomes the primary feature of Sabellus' body (*sinu laxo nudum sine corpore vulnus*, 9.669). His limbs flow with pus (*membra natant sanie*, 9.770), his calves melt (*surae fluxere*, 9.770), his knees lose their skin (*sine ullo / tegmine poples erat*, 9.770-71), his leg muscles

¹⁹⁰ Cf. BC 4.134-36: *sic Venetus stagnante Pado fusoque Britannus / navigat Oceano; sic, cum tenet omnia Nilus, conseritur bibula Memphitis cumba papyro*. Following the flood at Ilerda, the Romans under Caesar's command begin to reestablish transportation infrastructure and, in doing so, make the Sicoris comparable to the Po, the English Channel, or the Nile.

¹⁹¹ Leigh (1997) 267-72 discusses the moral implications of Aulus' struggle with thirst within the larger allegory of the Libyan episode. Though Cato, with his *virtus*, is a model of Stoic wisdom, his leadership ability – or at least his moral lessons – cannot be counted as successful. Aulus and the other Romans who perish by snake are evidence of this.

liquify (*femorum quoque musculus omnis / liquitur*, 9.771-72), and his groin drips with putrefaction (*nigra destillant inguina tæbe*, 9.772). Even the skin and organs of his torso are melted by the poison (*dissiluit stringens uterum membrana, fluuntque / viscera*, 9.773-74). After he dies, the venom still continues to liquify him, until even his arms, shoulders, neck, and head melt away (*manant umeri fortesque lacerti, / colla caputque fluunt*, 9.780-81). Ultimately, his body is completely destroyed, turned to liquid that soaks into the desert sands (*effluit in terras*, 9.775).¹⁹² Venom begets venom (*in minimum mors contrahit omnia virus*, 9.776): the remains of Sabellus' body are completely toxic, becoming the same poison that had destroyed them.¹⁹³

The key to the allegory present in Sabellus' death is connected to the anatomical metaphors Lucan uses elsewhere in the poem. The comparison of the body to the state is not new to Lucan or the Romans,¹⁹⁴ but in combination with the metaphor of cosmos for state, a parallel can be drawn by syllogism between Sabellus' body, the Roman state, and the cosmos in general. In fact, Lucan uses the same language of dissolution and collapse to describe Sabellus' liquifaction as he does to describe the universal dissolution during the process of *ekpyrosis*. Much as the cosmos, Sabellus' body *dissiluit* (9.773) and the bonds (*vincula*, 9.777) that held him in his natural order break.¹⁹⁵ In previous chapters, I have discussed the significance of the verb *solvere* to the *ekpyrotic* metaphor and its use to this purpose in the *Bellum Civile*. It appears again in connection to Sabellus: his body melts like snow under a warm breeze (*calido... Austro /*

¹⁹² Cf. Medusa's toxicity and the effect of her blood mingling with the sands. For a linguistic parallel, compare *decoquit* (9.776) to *incoxit* (9.699).

¹⁹³ Wick (2004) 323 calls the *seps'* venom the real protagonist of the scene.

¹⁹⁴ Bartsch (1997) 12 provides a list of examples for the body as metaphor for the state: "changes wrought on the body can stand as performative attempts to alter social hierarchies, reactive responses to changes already at work in the political or psychic world, or in turn part of a still larger metaphor in which body and society together reflect the alteration of old ways of looking at the meaning of human existence." Cf. Dinter (2013) 16-21.

¹⁹⁵ Lapidge (2010) 296 compares Cicero's use of *vinculum* in *De Natura Deorum* 2.115 in the context of cosmic stability to the Greek term δεσμός.

nix resoluta, 9.781-82) or like wax in the sun (*solem cera sequetur*, 9.782). His body, then, comes apart in the same way as the snowmelt that caused floods in Ilerda¹⁹⁶ or increased the Rubicon's flow.¹⁹⁷ It dissolves like hot wax, such as the wax and pitch that hastened the shipboard fires during the Massilian naval battle.¹⁹⁸ The suggestive connection between flame and *ekpyrosis* comes into play again at the end of Sabellus' section. The venom's ability to destroy a body is compared to a funeral pyre (*hoc et flamma potest*, 9.784), but exceeds it in efficacy, as the fire, unlike the venom, still leaves the bones behind (*sed quis rogos abstulit ossa?*, 9.784). Sabellus' fate within the Libyan allegory, then, mirrors that of the Roman state and, in Lucan's poem, the entire world.

There is no reaction from Cato between Sabellus' death by *seps* and the attack of a *prester* on Nasidius. The *prester*'s venom causes swelling – the contained version of liquifaction (*facies leto diversa fluenti*, 9.789). In this attack, Lucan renews the theme of boundary confusion and transgression that has been part of the Libya episode, but in this case, the transgressed limits are those of the body. Nasidius swells beyond the normal appearance of his features (*pereunte figura / miscens cuncta tumor*, 9.792-93) and the bounds of his body (*toto iam corpore maior / humanumque egressa modum*, 9.793-94). This process is so dehumanizing, that Nasidius is dissociated from his own body and swallowed up by it (*ipse latet penitus congesto corpore mersus*, 9.796), just as the lands and creatures were swallowed by the Spanish floods (*vastaque voragine mersit, / absorpsit penitus rupes*, 4.99-100) and later, soldiers digging for water were swallowed by the earth (*non se tam penitus, tam longe luce relicta / merserit Astyrisci scrutator*

¹⁹⁶ BC 4.83-85: *iamque Pyrenaeae, quas numquam solvere Titan / evaluit, fluxere nives, fractoque madescunt / saxa gelu.*

¹⁹⁷ BC 1.219: *et madidis Euri resolutae flatibus Alpes.*

¹⁹⁸ BC 3684: *nunc liquida rapuere incendia cera.*

pallidus auri, 4.297-98).¹⁹⁹ By comparison, not even a foaming cauldron can measure up to Nasidius' overflowing shape (*spumeus accenso non sic exundat aeno / undarum cumulus*, 9.797-98).²⁰⁰ The other soldiers do not stay to see Nasidius' ultimate end, but flee his continually swelling body (*crescens fugere cadaver*, 9.804). The final effect of the *prester*'s poison is the toxicification of the body – no birds or animals dare to touch it (9.802-3) – and the ongoing transgression of its form (*nondum stante modo*, 9.804).

Tullus' run-in with a *haemorrhoid* is framed as a *spectaculum* (9.805), to what Leigh called “devastating effect.”²⁰¹ True to its name, the *haemorrhoid* causes excessive and fatal bleeding with its bite and venom. Tullus himself is noteworthy in his epithet, *magnanimus* (9.807), which recalls the characterization of Hercules in his fight against the Libyan monster Antaeus (4.611), and in his admiration of Cato (*miratorique Catonis*, 9.807). Unlike in the cases of Sabellus and the *seps* or Nasidius and the *prester*, Tullus' body is not subject to transformation or toxicification. His body is, however, entirely taken over by blood, which flows from every possible orifice (*quaecumque foramina novit / umor, ab his largus manat cruor*, 9.811-12). Blood flows from his eyes (9.811), his mouth (9.812), his nose (9.813), and it even replaces his sweat (9.813). It streams over his limbs (*membra fluunt venis*, 9.814) as if his veins are open to the air, a turn of phrase reminiscent of the non-existent streams of water in the desert

¹⁹⁹ We can see another application of the world-body metaphor here, though perhaps in reverse, as Nasidius' body and the suffering it undergoes, is clarified by comparison to a previous natural disaster. Most (1992) 406 discusses the Stoic theory of body and soul, citing the soul's central position, but its connection with all parts of the body that allows movement; in his study of dismemberment in Lucan, he debates how much damage a body must undergo before it loses personal identity. Cf. Wick (2004) 257 *ad* 9.640 notes the paradox of Medusa's victims' spirits remaining trapped in their petrified bodies, highlighting the Stoic idea that death occurred at the separation of body and soul.

²⁰⁰ For *exundare*, compare the *aer* in the *regna Gorgonos* (9.619). The image of the boiling cauldron foaming over, especially when used in a simile, recalls Vergil's description of Turnus when he is roused to anger by Allecto, cf. *Aeneid* 7.462-66.

²⁰¹ Leigh (1997) 279 points out a disturbing aspect of these encounters between snakes and soldiers, their “terrifying truthfulness to the mentality of the spectator” and the amphitheater's “power to invade and corrupt” that is implicit in the sandy *spectacula* of book nine.

that could not satisfy Aulus's thirst (*venas... squalentis harenae*, 9.755). The systematic conflation of land, body, monster, and hero continues in the Libyan allegory.

When Laevus encounters an asp (*Niliaca serpente*, 9.816), its venom has a well-known effect, freezing the blood by coagulation and stopping the heart (*fixus praecordia pressit / ...cruor*, 9.815-16). At this point in the parade of snake-induced suffering and death, a pattern emerges. Following the *dipsas*, which induces thirst in the midst of the desert, the following snakes are described in opposing pairs according to the effects of their venom. The *seps* and *prester* liquify and cause swelling: an uncontained reaction paired with a contained one. The *haemorrhoidis* causes blood to flow excessively, matched by the opposite effect caused by the asp: fatal coagulation. Lucan spends less time on the asp and its poison, perhaps because he described it more thoroughly at the beginning of the catalogue (9.700-7), but does note the swiftness of the venom in comparison to a poison consumed in a drink (9.819-20). In this comparison, Lucan does emphasize the venom's poisonous nature, despite skipping a lengthy description of the symptoms it causes. Only in connection to the asp's venom, when it is compared to a plant-based poison, does Lucan use the adjective *toxica* (9.821).

The penultimate soldier-snake pair of antagonists are Paulus and the *iaculus*. Lucan describes the *iaculus* twined around the trunk of a tree and only gives it a name in passing, citing local knowledge (*iaculum vocat Africa*, 9.823) rather than providing a Greek name. This snake also differs from the others listed in the catalogue and described during their attacks on Cato's soldiers in that it does not kill by means of venom. Instead, it uses its body as a weapon (hence its name) and shoots Paulus through the head (*perque caput Pauli transactaque tempora fugit*, 9.824). While it may not have the direct connection with the soil of Libya and the poison of Medusa, it gives the appearance that snakes grow on trees in this region.

The final individual “battle” between a snake and a soldier is the only one of the seven confrontations that does not end in a human death. Because the basilisk is known for its toxicity – something Lucan himself notes during the catalogue (9.724-26) – Murrus preempts its bite and stabs it with his spear (9.828-29). Murrus’ proactive approach is not enough, however, as the venom runs up his spear and infects his hand (*velox currit per tela venenum / invaditque manum*, 9.829-30). The basilisk venom’s seems sentient in its hostility, comparable to the invasive actions made by Caesar against the inhabitants of Ariminum (*vicinumque minax invadit Ariminum*, 1.231) or of Cleopatra during the battle in Alexandria (*invasit Cleopatra domum*, 10.355). Lucan’s rather sparing use of *invadere*²⁰² also has dire implications for Cato: while speaking to Brutus he puts himself before the hypothetical sword for the cause of peace (*me solum invadite ferro*, 2.315); later, Lucan alludes to Cato’s death in Libya (*et sacrum parvo nomen clausura sepulchro / invasit Libye securi fata Catonis*, 9.409-10). So when the basilisk venom *invadit* Murrus’ hand, its hostility has greater allegorical significance beyond its bizarre and unrealistic behavior. In order to survive, Murrus cuts off his own arm (*totoque semel demittit ab armo, / exemplarque sui spectans miserabile leti / stat tutus pereunte manu*, 9.831-33), saving his body and his life by the sacrifice of his limb, a suggestive image in light of the anatomical metaphor for state and cosmos prevalent in this episode.²⁰³ Murrus’ sacrifice of a part for the sake of the whole also recalls the way some of the ships in Cato’s fleet managed to survive during the storm in the Syrtes, by cutting of their masts to keep the wind from snapping them and destroying the entire vessels.²⁰⁴

²⁰² It appears only seven times in the *BC*: 1.231, 1.242, 2.315, 9.198, 9.410, 9.830, and 10.355.

²⁰³ The disembodied hand also renews the theme of *spectacula*. Leigh (1997) 279-81 emphasizes the Stoic aspects of Murrus’ actions, citing Seneca’s *Ep.* 24.5, wherein Mucius Scaevola (a favorite model of Stoicism) watched his right hand melt in hostile fire: *spectator destillant in hostili foculo dexteræ stetit*.

²⁰⁴ Lucan, *BC* 9.330-34.

As the confrontation between the snakes and Cato's soldiers comes to an end, Lucan concludes it with a final comparison between the basilisk's poisonous qualities and poisons of similar power: of the scorpion that killed Orion (9.833-36) and of venomous ants (*salpuga*, 9.837-38).²⁰⁵ Because this final note in the series of snake attacks cites both mythology and natural history, Lucan wraps up what is arguably one of the more unusual episodes in his epic with a nod to his literary models. The snakes, like the Libya as a whole, are part of a larger allegory about the state of the cosmos and the condition of the Roman republic.

Through myth and natural philosophy, Lucan creates a narrative of hazard and toxicity in his descriptions of the land, its hardships, and the various monstrous creatures that inhabit Libya. The lack of boundaries – or, alternatively, the transgression of boundaries – that occurs in the Libyan episodes is the key to their part in the macrocosmic metaphor of the poem. Though the Curio episode and the retelling of Hercules' wrestling match with Antaeus certainly conform to these patterns, Cato's desert trek and the portrait of Libya that follows the battle of Pharsalus in book seven demonstrate them even more clearly. Since Pharsalus is the ultimate ekpyrotic occasion in the poem, what follows is the return to chaos predicted in the poem's first simile (*antiquum repetens iterum chaos*, 1.73). Thus, Libya is a land where things are in a state of chaotic flux: physically and geographically, land and sea are confused and conflated (at the Syrtes, in the sea of sand, and in the sandstorm); expectations are inverted (the best representation of a *locus amoenus* occurs in the middle of the desert at the Ammonium);

²⁰⁵ For Orion: Leigh (1997) 277-78 notes the gladiatorial connection in the reference to the scorpion and Orion: hunters and hunting were represented by the *venatio*. Wick (2004) 356 *ad* 834 mentions Nicander as a potential source for the scorpion in Lucan (*Theriaca* 13-20), but also provides evidence that it was known in Rome and associated with the dangers of Libya by Pliny (*NH* 5.42, *dirum animal Africae*), though Lucan's inclusion of the scorpion in the snake episode may have influenced Pliny. Clauss (2006) 174-76 cites Nicander on the constellation of Orion (*Theriaca* 13-20) and finds evidence for Aratus' influence.

For *salpuga*, cf. Pliny, *NH* 29.29, where the name *salpuga* comes from Baetica (though Cicero calls them *solipuga*, in a work that is not extant) and the suggested remedy is a bat's heart.

mythical places and creatures are associated with and become real places and creatures (Antaeus and Regulus' serpent at the *castra Cornelia*; Medusa and the snakes that attack Cato and his soldiers). In a land that, to the Romans, is chaotic and dangerous, in an episode following the figurative end of the world at Pharsalus, there is not place for any remnant of the old world; Cato and the other republicans will be destroyed.

Conclusion

In undertaking this project, I set out to analyze Lucan's portrayal of the natural world – from landscapes and natural processes to the interaction between nature and humanity – in order to demonstrate how attention to this aspect of the *Bellum Civile* leads to a richer reading of the text. Lucan's long-acknowledged pattern of modification and inversion of the models left by his poetic predecessors can also be found in his landscapes. Because these particular changes occur in nature and thus on a level both fundamental and universal to the events of the narrative, they have far-reaching implications. Like the ripples caused by a stone dropped into a pool of water, the disturbance of poetic modification or inversion expands into every corner of the natural world of the *Bellum Civile*.

The title of my dissertation is intended to reflect three major poetic venues in which Lucan's take on landscape and the world of nature is most evident and, accordingly, a threefold research agenda with which to explore this topic: through Lucan's use of geographic knowledge and sources, his employment of ecphrasis and other poetic techniques, and his interpretation of Stoic physics in the construction of his poetic world.

Lucan's use of ecphraseis focusing on the natural world makes discussion of landscape in his poem possible; the literary representation of spectator – impersonal or specific – and object of observation is key. The result of this detailed literary exploration of landscape is an array of linguistic and thematic ways of conveying the horror of civil conflict. Earlier literary models of pastoral scenes become gloomier and more sinister in Lucan's text, where the *locus amoenus* of previous bucolic literature is often replaced by the *locus horridus*. A related process and image, *ruina*, also appears repeatedly in Lucan's landscapes and descriptions of geology, as well as in

architectural and even socio-political contexts. In combination with linguistic choices that dislocate the power and influence of Rome (*Hesperia* instead of *Italia*, the centrality of Delphi), the immediacy of horror and destruction in the world of Lucan's poem are inseparable from depictions of nature.

Lucan's view of the natural world is also shaped by what knowledge was available in the mid first century CE about the shape of the world – its geography – and by theoretical explanations for natural processes and phenomena such as weather, earthquakes, the veracity of portents. By incorporating ancient geographic knowledge, known to modern readers from the works of authors such as Strabo, Lucan often seems to create a literary map of the Mediterranean and the surrounding lands including Italy, western settlements like Massilia and Ilerda, Greece, North Africa from its border with Egypt to the Atlantic coast, and parts of Egypt itself as well. Geographic inaccuracies, noted by many scholars and originally cited as evidence of Lucan's youth and inexperience, if interpreted as deliberate,¹ are another way for Lucan to transform the models from which he works and better emphasize his own poetic priorities.

Lucan was not precisely a geographer or a Stoic philosopher, but he utilized elements of both knowledge systems in the composition of the world in his poem. In my study, I have shown how elements of Stoic physics and cosmology – the materialistic, deterministic world occurring in cycles that begin and end in cataclysm – are well suited to Lucan's universal theme, the destructive force of civil war. The result, an epic poem where the traditional pantheon of gods is replaced by the force and presence of nature, is a poetic world infinitely resonant with itself and reactive against disturbances to the natural order. The adopted principles of Stoic physics that govern the world depicted in the *Bellum Civile* even seem to suggest the same terminology used

¹ As argued by Masters (1992) 154.

for scientific theories in the modern era: we, as readers, can relate to Lucan's poetry in terms of the space-time continuum, action and reaction, and the butterfly effect, to name a few examples.

The content of the first simile, comparing the fall of the Republic – equivalent to the fall of Rome itself in Lucan's world – to the end of the world as it occurs during the process of *ekpyrosis*, is the overarching image repeated throughout the first seven books of the poem. It is implicit to varying degrees in the story of Phaethon in book one, as well as in the fiery destruction of siege works and ships at Massilia in book three. The extension of apocalyptic imagery from conflagration to cataclysm by deluge and flood, as represented in Seneca's *Naturales Quaestiones*,² allows the interpretation of floods and storms in the *Bellum Civile* to be interpreted in the same way. These occur with frequency: the Rubicon's stream increases in book one, the Massilian sea battle puts conflagration on water in book three, the Spanish floods in book four, and the prehistoric floods in the vicinity of Delphi and on the Thessalian plain. Considered together, these natural disasters make up the program of the poem's first simile. Lucan appropriated Stoic principles in a very deliberate way. While *ekpyrosis* traditionally marked the transition between world-cycles, a beginning in an end, the cataclysmic message of this poem proves to be a mutation of that optimistic philosophy. The patterns of inversion for which Lucan is so well known operate here as well: the transition from one world to another marked by the civil war is, for Lucan, imbued with despair for the future.

Ultimately, what I hope to have demonstrated in the course of this dissertation is that the natural world in Lucan is rich, allusive, interconnected, and that it is also an important aspect of understanding Lucan's characterization of Caesar. In the *Bellum Civile*, this Caesar is a force of nature and a world builder; he is dangerous, driven, and, from Pharsalus onward, the architect of

² Seneca, *NQ* 3.27-30. Cf. Lapidge (2010).

a new *mundus* built on the ruins and corpses of the old. We have seen evidence of Caesar's engineering since the early books of the poem, where new construction is always paired with modification or destruction of the previous landscape. In book two Caesar attempts to fill in and then blockade the harbor at Brundisium; he presides over the felling of the sacred grove and subsequent construction of siege towers at Massilia in book three; at Ilerda in book four, he redirects the streams of the Sicoris as the flood recedes; in book seven at Pharsalus, the landscape following the battle is made from the bodies of the fallen, soldiers who fell in a battle that was, according to Lucan, fought because of Caesar's actions. While none of these episodes depict a particularly unusual military strategem or result, in the context of the Stoicized world of Lucan's poem, they are significant for vastly different reasons.

This new Caesarian world is built on ruins and corpses;³ it is mutated and wrong. The Stoic dogma from which the physics of Lucan's world are drawn does not apply here. It seems that even the philosophy itself lies in ruin. The optimism attached to *ekpyrosis*, a cathartic end and a new beginning, is absent. The new world – that is, the new Roman state – that emerges from the ruins of the old is not balanced nor governed by reason. In this inverted cosmological system, ruin begets ruin: the Rome that ends at Pharsalus has Troy's end in its own past, and the rise of the principate in its future.⁴ For Lucan's poem, moreover, it is Caesar who is the *artifex* of the new world embodied by the principate. His vow, given during his visit to the ruins of Troy after his victory at Pharsalus, says as much:

“...date felices in cetera cursus,
restituam populos; grata vice moenia reddent
Ausonidae Phrygibus, Romanaque Pergama surgent.” (9.997-99)

³ *BC* 7.786-95. Cf. Spencer (2005) 52.

⁴ On the similarity of the Trojan ruins in book nine to the Italian countryside in book one, see Stover (2012) 40 and Rossi (2005) 325.

“Grant fortunate courses in other matters,
I will restore your peoples; beloved city, the Ausonians will give
walls back to the Phrygians, and a Roman Pergamum will rise.”

For Caesar, this is an opportunity to rebuild Troy and reestablish its grandeur in Rome (again), never mind the intervening monarchy and Republic. Lucan’s text is in conversation with the end of the *Aeneid* at this point. The story of the refoundation of Troy in Italy and the rise of Rome has already been told and, in its concluding verses, has presented a new society founded by conquest. James has explored Vergil’s use of *condere* in the *Aeneid*, the expansion of its definition to include “burying” swords in the bodies of the Trojans’ opponents, and the dubious morality of Rome’s founding implied therein.⁵ Vergil’s poem looks forward to the glories of Rome, culminating in Augustus, but establishes the simultaneous violent destruction of the old regime in the rise of the new. Lucan weaves this thread of violence into his own poem. He identifies the principate, embodied by Caesar but looking forward to the line of Julio-Claudian emperors and to Nero in particular, as author and locus of moral corruption. The encomiastic address to Nero in the poem’s first book, with its attention to the emperor’s *pondus* and the balance of the *mundus*, becomes more clearly critical in light of Lucan’s negative characterization of Caesar and the increasing horror that accompanies the gradual defeat of the Republican forces under Pompey and, later, Cato.

By reading the first simile of the *Bellum Civile* as programmatic, the despair and horror contained in the subsequent books of the poem conform to the pattern set by the image of worldwide collapse and ruin. Expressed through landscape, weather, and a range of nature-based phenomena, Lucan’s grim cosmology contributes to the narrative of corrupting and destructive civil conflict.

⁵ James (1995). Cf. Vergil, *Aen.* 12.950-52: *hoc dicens ferrum adverso sub pectore condit / fervidus; ast illi solvuntur frigore membra / vitaeque cum gemitu fugit indignata sub umbras.*

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