

LUCAN AND THE HISTORY OF THE CIVIL WAR *

FROM a purely historical point of view Lucan's epic is important, because it represents an intermediate stage between the contemporary account by Caesar of his defeat of the Pompeians and the later versions in Plutarch, Appian, and Cassius Dio. However, it does not merely show us the development of the historical tradition about the war, in particular that part of it which did not stem ultimately from Caesar himself. It is a milestone in the development of Roman ideas about the fall of the Republic. For, while we can only tentatively deduce the attitude which Augustan writers, especially Pollio and Livy, adopted towards this war, Lucan represents the views of those who had not only lived under the monarchy which was the final product of the conflict begun in 49 B.C., but had experienced its less agreeable consequences under the later Julio-Claudians.

Lucan's work must in the end be judged as an epic poem, which it was surely meant to be, not a history in verse.¹ Even in its incomplete state,² a poetic unity of theme can be discerned, the suicide of the old Rome, with *libertas* its single and vital surviving legacy. However, the literary critic should not consider Lucan's treatment of history as a side-issue, which may be interesting because it shows his method but is irrelevant to a final judgement on the poem. Gomme pointed out in his Sather lectures on 'The Greek Attitude to Poetry and History'³ that Aristotle's distinction between the aims of poetry and history is too rigid. Although poetry, seeking a universal theme, represents *καθόλου*, *οἷα ἂν γένοιτο* rather than *τὰ γεγόμενα*, certain kinds of epic and dramatic poetry are nevertheless closely tied to the actual events that are their foundation. Indeed, for the Greeks and Romans epic, tragedy, and history shared the same subject-matter; it was simply the approach that was different.⁴ An epic poet who fixes his story firmly in the time, space, and circumstances in which it really occurred, sometimes employing what at first sight seems unnecessary detail to achieve this, makes his narrative vivid and controls his account of motivation and character by the events of which he treats.⁵ The truth which is valid for all time is created from the facts of the time in question.

THE HISTORICITY OF LUCAN'S NARRATIVE⁶

If one reads Lucan with a background knowledge derived merely from

* References to passages of Lucan omit the author's name. References to Caesar's *Bellum Civile* and to Appian's *Emphyilia* omit the title of the work. The following modern works will be referred to by the author's name alone: R. Pichon, *Les Sources de Lucain*, Paris, 1912; H. P. Syndikus, *Lucans Gedicht vom Bürgerkrieg*, Diss. Munich, 1958; O. S. Due, 'An Essay on Lucan', *Class. et Med.* xxiii (1962), 68 ff.; J. Brisset, *Les Idées politiques de Lucain*, Paris, 1964.

¹ As suggested by R. J. Getty, *Lucan de*

Bello Civili I (Cambridge, 1940/55), pp. xxvii and xxx.

² See, against H. Hafter's recent view (*Mus. Helv.* xiv (1957), 118 ff.) that the poem was complete, W. Rutz, *Lustrum* ix (1964), 243 ff., esp. 268.

³ (California, 1954), 1 ff., discussing *Poetics* 9. 1451^{a-b}.

⁴ Cf. F. W. Walbank, *Historia*, ix (1960), 216 ff.

⁵ Cf. Pichon, 157 ff.

⁶ I have not the space here to discuss fully the sources of Lucan's narrative.

Caesar's commentaries or a simplified account by a modern historian, his narrative appears full not only of omissions but of entertaining but unhistorical additions. But in fact many episodes which at first sight seem poetic fiction, e.g. Caesar's attempt to cross the Adriatic in a small boat (5. 504 ff.), Appius Claudius' visit to Delphi (5. 67 ff.), the prodigies in 49 and 48 (1. 522 ff.; 7. 151 ff.), have an independent basis in the historical tradition. We should not be comparing the epic with Polybian pragmatic history, but rather the sensational so-called tragic style of history with its emphasis on *πάθος, τερατεία*, and *ψυχαγωγία*,¹ whose influence was apparent in Cicero's time.² There are, it is true, examples of pure fiction—Sextus Pompeius' visit to the Thessalian sorceress (6. 419 ff.); Cicero's presence at Pharsalia (7. 62 ff.); the heroic death of L. Domitius Ahenobarbus (7. 599 ff. *contra* Caes. 3. 99. 5); Caesar's conducted tour of Troy (9. 961 ff.);³ the strange deaths in the sea-battle off Massilia and on Cato's desert march (3. 583 ff.; 9. 737 ff.).⁴ On the whole, however, Lucan's distortion of history arises from omissions and biased interpretation, largely in order to sustain his portrait of Caesar as a devil incarnate, of superhuman energy but addicted to cruelty. All this was fully discussed by Pichon.⁵ The

The *communis opinio* since Pichon is that Lucan's only source for facts was Livy. Certain passages show that Lucan used him: 1. 299 ff., cf. Oros. 6. 15 (quoting Livy), *contra* Caes. 1. 7, App. 2. 33, Plut. Caes. 31. 3; 3. 181–3, cf. *Commentum Bernense* ad loc.; 4. 402 ff., cf. Livy, *Ep. CX* and *Comm. Bern.* 4. 462; 7. 151 ff., cf. Obsequens 65a, Plut. Caes. 47. 3–6, *contra* Caes. 3. 105. 3–6 (the portents here are also mentioned by Obsequens but not by Lucan); 8. 88 ff., cf. *Comm. Bern.* ad loc., Plut. *Pomp.* 74. 3. Pichon's argument otherwise depends on two hypotheses: (a) any similarity between Lucan and other post-Augustan authors must be the result of common dependence on Livy, (b) Lucan himself was likely to have used a single source. Recently other scholars have suggested additional sources—Caesar and Cicero (E. Malcovati, *M. Anneo Lucano* [Milan, 1940], 36 ff.; *Athenaeum* xxxi [1953], 288 ff.); Asinius Pollio (Syndikus, 1 ff.); the three foregoing authors and the elder Seneca (Brisset, 35 ff.); a handbook of rhetorical *exempla* like that of Valerius Maximus (M. P. O. Morford, *The Poet Lucan* [Oxford, Blackwell, 1967], 65, comparing 5. 67 ff. and Val. Max. 1. 8. 10). Furthermore Haffter, op. cit. (p. 488 n. 2) has pointed out that Lucan's poem and Caesar's *Bellum Civile* break off at almost the same point and argued that there was deliberate imitation, while M. Rambaud (*L'Information littéraire*, xii [1960], 155 ff.) believes that Lucan was deliberately creating a counter to Caesar's propaganda. Though there is little firm evidence for Lucan's using other sources (he may have been influenced by Caesar and Cicero via Livy), there is no reason to suppose that Lucan followed Livy alone in as

strict a way as, e.g., Diodorus followed Poseidonius. Lucan must have learnt the basic story of the civil war and particular topics for declamation in childhood. He could have written much of the work out of his own head and only needed to refer to a historical work to get material for detailed descriptions. He need not always have referred to the same work.

¹ On this see Walbank, *Bull. Inst. Class. Stud.* ii (1955), 4 ff.

² Cic. *Fam.* 5. 12. 4–5; *Leg.* 1. 7 (Cleitar-chus and Sisenna).

³ Presumably a parody of accounts of Alexander's visit (Plut. *Alex.* 15. 4–5; Arr. *Anab.* 1. 12. 1; Cic. *Fam.* 5. 12. 7—perhaps derived from Callisthenes). According to Strabo (13. 1. 27) Julius Caesar favoured Ilium in imitation of Alexander. Cf. L. Pearson, *Lost Histories of Alexander the Great*, 40 ff.

⁴ In 1. 526 ff. there are portents otherwise unattested (cf. Dio 41. 12. 2–4) and in 1. 550 the *feriae Latinae* are misdated (see Pichon, 134 f.). Other probable supplements by Lucan: Julia's appearance to Pompey in a dream (3. 9 ff.), though Pompey's dream before Pharsalia is based on one feature of a probably common account (7. 7 ff., cf. Obseq. 65a; Plut. *Pomp.* 68. 2); the alleged sacrilege in the forest at Massilia (3. 399 f.)—conceivably already in some anti-Caesarian source; the meeting of Brutus and Cato (2. 234 ff.); Caesar's grisly post-Pharsalia breakfast (7. 786 ff.). See in general Pichon, 133 ff.

⁵ See 1. 143 ff.; 2. 439 ff., 511 ff.; 3. 360 ff.; 5. 300 ff., 340 ff.; 7. 557 ff., 786 ff.; 9. 1035 ff. for Caesar's cruelty. Other anti-

point that I would like to make is that Lucan does from time to time give an adequate account of military operations, without an excessive sacrifice of truth to poetic treatment. These, in my view, are occasions when he must have consulted a historical source in order to discover detailed information.

My examples are taken from Books 4-6, where Lucan is more concerned with military history in its own right. In describing the Ilerda campaign (4. 11 ff.) Lucan follows closely the main sequence of events, as it is known to us through Caesar (1. 40 ff.), and we have a good illustration of his method of giving but a single instance of similar actions while preserving the general shape of the campaign.¹ On this occasion he compresses into one account two attacks by the Caesarians up a slope (Caes. 1. 44-6). The first had occurred on a hill some way in front of Ilerda, the second on Ilerda itself. Yet in the details of Lucan's narrative it is possible to pick out references to the fuller descriptions which Caesar himself had originally given.² Caesar's assault on Ilerda was followed by a spell of bad weather which brought the rivers down in spate and almost cut him off from his food supplies (Caes. 1. 48 ff.). Lucan uses this opportunity for rhetorical amplification with mythical and astronomical allusions (4. 48 ff.). However, at the point when the storms abated and the Pompeian generals, short of supplies themselves, left Ilerda, Lucan returns to his previous episodic style, picking out the most striking events³ and compressing a wealth of detail into a small compass so that each incident has individuality. Lucan does full justice to the attempted reconciliation between the Pompeian and Caesarian troops (4. 169 ff., cf. Caes. 1. 74 ff.). For once Caesar and Lucan agree in their interpretation of events as well as their reporting. The overtures for peace are praised and Petreius' violent interruption of the colloquy is denounced by both. In Caesar's view, it was his own person that Petreius refused to desert and his slaughtering of Caesarian soldiers was *crudelitas* (1. 75. 2, 76. 5). For Lucan the renewed fighting was *scelus* and *rabies* (4. 207, 236, 240). At the end of the episode he pays Caesar a genuine tribute: 'Tu, Caesar, quamvis spoliatus milite multo, agnoscis superos.' Caesar was never more fortunate during the course of the civil war since as a result of this crime he will be the leader of the better cause (4. 254-9). Lucan introduces one significant variation, but in the interest of irony. According to Caesar (1. 76. 1), Petreius appealed to his troops not to surrender Pompey to his enemies 'ad supplicium'. In Lucan (4. 232 ff.) we find: 'Now you, ignorant of the fates, are preparing armies throughout the world, Magnus, and stir to action the kings who hold the ends of the earth, whilst perhaps by our compact you have already been promised safety.' In general Lucan was cynical about Caesar's vaunted leniency.⁴ However, later in this book he considers it the proper end to the struggle, when Afranius surrenders and receives pardon (4. 337 ff.). This account is evidence of Lucan's attention to the history books and suggests to me that he referred to Caesar's commentaries. Of this there can be no proof. Livy may have reproduced both the facts and

Caesarian distortions are Lucan's picture of an Italy hostile to Caesar in 49 (*contra* Cic. *Att.* 8. 13. 1, 16. 1), and the omission of Domitius' use of Massilia as a base and of Massilia's breach of a truce. Cf. Pichon, 123 ff.; Brisset, 91 ff.; Rambaud (*op. cit.* pp. 488-9 n. 6), 157 ff., although I cannot accept his view that Lucan also tried to correct

an unfavourable picture of Pompey in Caesar and elsewhere.

¹ Cf. Pichon, 130 ff.

² 4. 28-32 = Caes. 1. 41. 3-6; 33-5 = Caes. 1. 43; 46-7 = Caes. 1. 46. 2-3.

³ e.g. 4. 148 ff. = Caes. 1. 64. 2 ff.; 157 ff. = Caes. 1. 70. ⁴ Cf. 2. 519 ff.; 9. 1059 ff.

tone of Caesar's account.¹ Yet it may be noted that Dio's version of this campaign deprived Caesar of most of the credit for the victory and suppressed the ruthlessness of Petreius. Dio treats the early operations before Ilerda as a victory for the Pompeians (41. 20. 4-6), omits the bravery of the Caesarian troops in swimming across the Sicoris, and only mentions in passing the attempted reconciliation and its sequel (41. 22 and 23. 1). Certainly it is difficult to believe that both Lucan and Dio are following the Livian version.

Lucan's account of Curio's African campaign (4. 581 ff.) is exceedingly compressed, the more so by comparison with his digression on Hercules' fight with Antaeus. Curio is allowed one success only before his defeat, and his siege of Utica is eliminated. Yet the most important factors governing the course of the campaign are brought to light—the doubts over the loyalty of Curio's legions, which had been taken from L. Domitius at Corfinium (4. 698 ff.; *Caes.* 2. 28-9); the personal antipathy of Juba to Curio (arising from Curio's proposal in 50 to turn Numidia into a province), which made Juba such a determined opponent (4. 687 ff.; *Caes.* 2. 25. 4); above all Curio's overconfidence and self-deception on account of his initial success (4. 710 ff.; *Caes.* 2. 37. 1, 38. 2). Interestingly, in spite of their inevitable difference of bias, the general impression given by Lucan and Caesar is the same. A young and impetuous Roman noble falls victim to the wiles of a Numidian. Caesar is charitable to Curio although he was foolhardy, presumably through personal affection and gratitude for his past services. Lucan, in spite of his stern assessment of Curio as a paradigm of the moral decadence of the late Republic, is also charitable, because his opponent was a spiritual descendant of Hannibal and Jugurtha (736 ff., 788 ff.), because of his nobility and natural talents (809 ff.), and because, if young men like him had followed the right course, the dynasts could not have succeeded (815 ff.).²

In Lucan's next book there is little detailed description of military operations. One passage, however, whose inaccuracy has been simply attributed to Lucan's ignorance of geography, is rather, I believe, an example of Lucan's attempts to reconcile historical exactitude with poetic effect. Caesar (3. 26) describes how in spring 48 M. Antonius set sail with a relief fleet from Brundisium under a moderate southerly wind, which carried them across the Adriatic but past Apollonia and also past the Pompeian base at Dyrrhachium. The fleet was pursued by the Pompeians but saved by the breeze's freshening. Fearing the consequences of the breeze's dying, Antonius put in at Nymphaeum near Lissus, which was open to the south wind (*Auster*) but protected from the south-west (*Africus*). However, fortunately for him, as soon as he arrived here, the breeze veered to south-west.³ Lucan (5. 703 ff.) makes the fleet sail under *Boreas*, which would not have allowed the ships to reach the neighbourhood of Apollonia in the first place, still less have blown them past it northwards. Then, when the fleet reached Nymphaeum, Lucan says: '*nudas Aquilonibus undas / succedens Boreae iam portus fecerat Auster.*' Nymphaeum was, on his interpretation, protected from the south and the wind shifted 180 degrees. Lucan's knowledge of the details of the voyage shows that he consulted a

¹ Cf. Pichon, 131f.

² Notice Lucan's approval of Curio's attempt in 50 to make both Caesar and Pompey lay down their proconsular commands, '*vox quondam populi libertatemque*

tueri / ausus et armatos plebi miscere potentes' (1. 270-1).

³ A useful map can be found in *JRS* xxxvi (1946), 55.

historical source here. Even if this was Livy, Livy would hardly have altered Caesar's meteorological information. Lucan himself seems to have been uncertain about the general direction of Dyrrhachium from Brundisium, but this does not explain why he distorted the detailed information that he clearly had found in his source.¹ It seems more likely that Lucan deliberately introduced the distortion in order to emphasize the wind-shift. In poetic vocabulary Auster and Africus are often synonymous and the point might have been lost. So Lucan created the largest wind-shift possible. In the end it was not the details of navigation that mattered but, once again, the *fortuna Caesaris*.

Although Lucan passed over in Book 5 the early indecisive manoeuvres of the Illyricum campaign, the rest of the operations are treated in some detail in Book 6. Lucan describes first Caesar's dash to cut Pompey off from Dyrrhachium (6. 11 ff.; Caes. 3. 42) and then his ambitious project to besiege him (6. 29 ff.; Caes. 3. 43 ff.).² Lucan exults in this stupendous operation, but his rhetorical elaborations are based on historical facts. He quotes accurately the extent of the Pompeian inner ring of fortifications (73 ff., cf. Caes. 3. 44. 3) and includes in his description Caesar's diversion and obstruction of streams (45 ff.; Caes. 3. 49. 3), the deterioration of the Pompeian cavalry through lack of fodder and grass (81 ff.; Caes. 3. 49. 2, 58. 3), the infection which spread among the Pompeians from the corpses of animals (88 ff.; Caes. 3. 49. 2), and the hunger which drove the Caesarians to eat meat (109 ff.; Caes. 3. 47. 6). The first Pompeian sortie is frustrated by Scaeva in an episode of macabre and bizarre heroism (118–262). This seems to be mainly the product of Lucan's own imagination, but even Caesar had noted that Scaeva had 120 holes in his shield (3. 53. 4).³ Finally Lucan deals more succinctly with Pompey's successful break-out along the coast and Caesar's disastrous counter-attack (263 ff.; Caes. 3. 62 ff.), which confirmed the Pompeian success but could also have led to the destruction of Caesar's army (Caes. 3. 70. 1). However, there are still signs of the careful study of sources—the smoke-signal which brought Caesar news of the Pompeian escape (279; Caes. 3. 65. 2) and the second fortification inside the camp which Caesar attacked (288; Caes. 3. 66. 4–5). Lucan stresses the opportunity that the Pompeians had to destroy Caesar's forces (296 ff.), and ironically attributes Pompey's restraint to his feeling for his father-in-law. Although Caesar in *Bellum Civile* made allowance for Pompey's caution in the confusion, Plutarch and Appian attribute to him the *mot* that victory would have been with the enemy if they had had a victor in command.⁴ This failure to achieve complete victory was the turning-point in Pompey's fortunes and for Lucan it was a turning-point in his epic. Military matters cease now to

¹ Lucan at first seems to have thought that the whole coast of Illyria and Epirus was south-east of Brundisium (2. 645–6) but later he was better informed (3. 1). I do not find convincing Pichon's argument (120–1) that Lucan believed that Antonius was making for Palaeste on the Acroceraunian peninsula, where Caesar first landed (5. 460; Caes. 3. 6). Contrast with Lucan's version that of Plutarch (*Ant.* 7. 3–4), who relates the same wind-shift as Caesar but gives it an entirely different significance.

² Pichon notes (p. 132) that Pompey (6.

15 ff.) is supposed to have encamped at Petra before Caesar could stop him, whereas in fact Caesar reached Dyrrhachium first and forced Pompey to occupy Petra. However, the discrepancy is not so great as to suggest that Lucan has conflated two operations, as Pichon thinks.

³ Florus (2. 13. 40) says the same. Plutarch (*Caes.* 16. 3) makes them 130, while Appian attributes 120 holes to the shield of Minucius (2. 60).

⁴ Caes. 3. 70. 1; Plut. *Pomp.* 65. 5, *Caes.* 38. 9; App. 2. 62. Cf. Suet. *Jul.* 36.

provide the continuum in his narrative; the emphasis shifts to the study of the characters of the protagonists in their varying fortunes.

Even in the period before *Pharsalia* it is difficult to comprehend the course of the civil war from Lucan's account alone. On the other hand Lucan's work was never meant to be a primary source or indeed a history in our sense of the word. His method is to present epic scenes or episodes, speeches in character, and his own personal statements linked together by compressed pieces of narrative¹—a sort of oratorio technique. Moreover he is often allusive rather than explicit when describing the action.² He seems to have expected the reader either to be content with a vague impression or to recognize the allusions through familiarity with the history. This technique is clearly not that of a historian, but nevertheless shows respect for the facts of history.

LUCAN'S VIEW OF THE ORIGINS OF THE CIVIL WAR

Lucan's opening phrase, 'bella per Emathios plus quam civilia campos', as Due³ has excellently suggested, means that the war was intensively worse than civil war. It was more than the destruction of one party in the state, as the war between the Marians and Sullans had been, it was the state destroying itself, since those who won in effect committed suicide ('populumque potentem in sua victrici conversum viscera dextra'—1. 2–3). Florus seems almost to gloss the first line of Lucan when he says that the war spread so far through the empire 'ut non recte tantum civile dicatur, ac ne sociale quidem (i.e. involving Rome's *socii*), sed nec externum, sed potius commune quoddam ex omnibus et plus quam bellum' (2. 13. 4). However, this prosaic interpretation seems to be Florus' own. The tortuous amplification looks most un-Livian and there is no reason to suppose that Livy said that the war was 'plus quam civile'.⁴ In the same way that Lucan interpreted the civil war as the suicide of Rome, so he considered the cause of the civil war to be the self-imposed collapse of an overburdened society, 'invida fatorum series summisque negatum / stare diu, nimioque graves sub pondere lapsus / nec se Roma ferens' (1. 70–2). This was Livy's view in his preface (4): '... haec nova, quibus iam pridem praevaleantis populi vires se conficiunt.' There is also an echo of Horace's sentiment: 'suis et ipsa Roma viribus ruit' (*Epod.* 16. 2). Although Lucan amplifies his reference to 'invida fatorum series' by a comparison with the Stoic concept of the final dissolution of the world into chaos (72 ff.), the basic idea is a commonplace and resembles the Herodotean doctrine of *τὸ θεῖον* and *νέμεσις*.

More specifically Lucan attributes the war to the compact of the three *domini* (1. 84 ff.) and their *concordia discors* (1. 98, cf. 87). Cicero claimed

¹ Cf. Syndikus, 30 ff.

² Examples are the smoke-signal and the inner fortification of the Pompeian camp (6. 279, 288) mentioned above. Nor is the episode of Antonius' crossing of the Adriatic (he is not even named by Lucan) placed properly in context and explained (5. 703 ff.). To someone ignorant of Republican history the description of Curio (1. 270–1) would be as baffling as an obscure mythological reference.

³ p. 117.

⁴ The view that Florus was influenced by Lucan, which was put forward by Jahn (*Praef.* xlvii f. of 1852 edn.) and developed

by Westerburg (*RhMus* xxxvii (1882), 35 ff.), was rejected by Pichon (70 ff.) in spite of the striking resemblances in language as well as thought between the two authors. Apart from this instance and two others which I shall discuss in the text, the following are the most significant: 1. 109–11 and Flor. 2. 13. 14; 3. 157 and Flor. 2. 13. 21 (an unusual use of *census*); 4. 402–3 and Flor. 2. 13. 30 (*fortuna aliquid ausa est* in both authors); 7. 51–2 and Flor. 2. 13. 43 (*praecipitare fata / praecipitantibus fati*). For other evidence see Westerburg's article. See also p. 501 n. 14, p. 502 n. 3.

afterwards that many knew of the warning he gave to Pompey at the time of the coalition in 60–59 B.C. and maintained that the formation of the coalition was as dangerous as its breach.¹ Cato, we are told, gave Pompey similar warnings about the dangers of elevating Caesar through this alliance.² It seems to have been the standard view in the Augustan period that the coalition of 59 should take the blame for the fall of the Republic. It was probably for this reason that Pollio took 60 B.C. as the starting-point for his histories.³ The jealousy which endangered the compact was noted by Caelius: 'Sic illi amores et invidiosa coniunctio non ad occultam recidit obtrectationem, sed ad bellum se erupit' (Cic. *Fam.* 8. 14. 2). *Obtrectatio* essentially sprang from *invidia*.⁴ So it seems that *invidiosa* refers to the jealousy created among the partners in the coalition as well as among others affected by it. Certainly later tradition was inclined to treat the alliance as uneasy from the start. Plutarch says that the marriage between Julia and Pompey was a deceitful and suspect pledge of an alliance of convenience which had no true friendship in it.⁵

The famous epigram, 'nec quemquam iam ferre potest Caesarve priorem / Pompeiusve parem' (1. 125–6), has a parallel in Florus (2. 13. 14): 'iam Pompeio suspectae Caesaris opes et Caesari Pompeiana dignitas gravis. nec ille ferebat parem, nec hic superiorem.' Pichon (p. 70) assumed that Livy had produced the epigram first. Eduard Meyer⁶ held the same view, arguing that the paraphrase of the epigram in Dio (41. 54. 1) suggested that they both had a Livian origin. In fact Dio has reversed the meaning of the epigram, either carelessly or because this corresponded to his view of the two personalities: 'Pompey wanted to be second to no man, while Caesar wanted to be first of all men.'⁷ Nor is he necessarily good evidence for Livy's interpretation of events. Moreover, the genesis of the epigram can be documented in a different way. Caesar himself provided one half: 'ipse Pompeius . . . quod neminem dignitate secum exaequari volebat' (1. 4. 4). This sentiment was repeated by Velleius (2. 33. 1) and later by Seneca (*ad Marc. de Cons.* 14. 3), who maintained that Pompey could not bear anyone else to be *magnus* and would check successful careers which were galling to him, even if they were for the public good. The first parallel we have to the other half of the epigram is again in Seneca (*Ep.* 94. 65): 'unum ante se ferre non potuit [sc. Caesar], cum res publica supra se duos ferret.' Just before this passage Seneca discusses Pompey's perpetual dissatisfaction with his own *magnitudo*, though his jealousy of possible contenders is not mentioned. In my view, there is a strong *ex silentio* argument from the two Seneca passages that the two halves of the epigram had not yet been put together.

Lucan crowned this epigram with another equally striking: 'quis iustius induit arma / scire nefas; magno se iudice quisque tuetur; / victrix causa deis placuit, sed victa Catoni.' Though destiny gave its verdict to the Caesarians, Cato's preference justified the losing cause. The debate which Lucan subsequently stages between Brutus and Cato (2. 234 ff.) shows that he thought that Cato was forced to choose the lesser evil. Brutus argues here that it is not for Cato to comfort either side by his support and to undertake gratuitously

¹ *Phil.* 2. 24; *Fam.* 6. 6. 4. Cf. *Att.* 7. 3. 4, 7. 6.

² Plut. *Cato mi.* 43. 9.

³ Hor. *Od.* 2. 1. Cf. Syme, *A Roman Post-Mortem*, Tod Memorial Lecture 3 (1950).

⁴ Cf., e.g., Cic. *Tusc.* 4. 17–18; *Inv.* 1. 16.

⁵ *Pomp.* 70. 4.

⁶ *Caesars Monarchie*, 314 n. 3.

⁷ For this view cf. Plut. *Ant.* 6. 1; Suet. *Jul.* 30. 5 (citing Cic. *Off.* 3. 82–3).

a criminal civil war, since, even if Cato joins the Pompeians, this will merely convince Caesar that no Roman has been left uncorrupted by the vicious passions of society. 'Nimium placet ipse [sc. Caesar] Catoni, / si bellum civile placet' (2. 276-7). The participants, according to Brutus, seek to gratify private interest, to escape from the consequences of crimes, debts and poverty. 'Nullum furor egit in arma; / castra petunt magna victi mercede' (254-5).¹ Cato replies that, although civil war is evil, he cannot stand aside from Rome's death-throes and seek his own safety (286 ff.) Even if he cannot keep Rome free, he wishes to offer his life in *devotio* for the lives of those who would otherwise have died in a struggle to become slaves (306 ff.). He will therefore follow Pompey and the standards of the Republic, though he knows well that Pompey plans to rule the whole world. Perhaps this will make Pompey realize that he is not fighting for himself (319 ff.). Lucan does not simply denounce both sides because civil war is *furor* and *nefas* (2. 249, 286, 292) in which a wise man has no part; he also impartially attributes to both sides the worst motives, the love of money and of domination.² The same views can be found in Seneca. According to him it would have been a blessing for Cato if the sea had swallowed him up when it swallowed the money he was bringing back from Cyprus: then he would have never seen the crime of civil war.³ Seneca also questioned whether a *sapiens* like Cato should have been involved in public life at that time and in particular in the struggle between Caesar and Pompey. 'Dominus eligitur: quid tua, uter vincat? potest melior vincere, non potest non peior esse qui vicerit.'⁴ However, he later argued that Cato stood against them both and showed that there was a third party, that of the *res publica*⁵—a view which Lucan seems to develop in Cato's speech here and in Book 9.⁶

In Book 1, after dealing with the ambitions of the leaders, Lucan returns to the theme of Rome's collapse under her own greatness and analyses the social causes of the war. 'Hae ducibus causae; suberant sed publica belli / semina, quae populos semper mersere potentis' (158-9). Foreign conquest brought the corruption of morals through wealth and led to luxury, gluttony, and effeminate dress (160-5). Plain living and a high birth-rate which produced soldiers were abandoned and in their place the fatal vices of all the world were welcomed. There arose vast estates and land which had been owned by peasant soldiers was developed into enormous properties let to tenants whose masters did not know them (165-70). Such a people could not enjoy peace and individual liberty (171-2). As a result they were swift to resentment ('inde irae faciles'), thought lightly of any crime which their poverty demanded, and believed that to have more power than their country was a great distinction worth seeking by arms, 'mensuraque iuris / vis erat' (173-6). From this stemmed

¹ Lucan's strictures, in so far as they apply to the leading men who joined each side, are confirmed by Caesar's comments on Lentulus Crus and Metellus Scipio (1. 4. 2-3) and Cicero's on those in the Pompeian camp (*Att.* 11. 6. 6; *Fam.* 4. 9. 3; 6. 6. 6; 7. 3. 2). See also *Fam.* 8. 14. 3; *Att.* 7. 3. 5 for Caelius and Cicero's comments on the future Caesarians.

² Cf. 2. 60-3.

³ *De Cons. ad Marc.* 20. 6.

⁴ *Ep.* 14. 12-13. Cf. *Cic. Att.* 8. 11. 2 ('dominatio quaesita ab utroque est'); *Fam.*

4. 9. 3 ('sed miserius nihil quam ipsa victoria; quae, etiam si ad meliores venit, tamen eos ipsos ferociore impotentioresque reddit'). The idea that the victor in civil war was automatically the worse for it was taken up by Lucan later (7. 122-3): 'omne malum victi, quod sors feret ultima rerum, / omne nefas victoris erit.' Tacitus too was clearly under the influence of Seneca when he wrote: 'quorum bello solum id scires, deteriore fore qui vicisset' (*Hist.* 1. 50).

⁵ *Ep.* 95. 70, 104. 29 ff.

⁶ 9. 18 ff.; 256 ff.

laws passed by violence ('hinc leges et plebis scita coactae') and constitutional disorder engineered by consuls and tribunes (176-7); bribery too ('hinc rapti fasces pretio'), which in its turn increased money-lending, brought the collapse of credit and made war for many the best solution (177-82). To this fatal nexus of causes one might add Lucan's later comment on the importance of corn-doles (3. 55 ff.): 'For hunger alone liberates cities, and as long as potentates feed the inert mob, they buy submission: *nescit plebes ieiuna timere*.'¹

The corrupting effect of foreign conquest and wealth had become a common theme since the strictures of Cato the Censor and Scipio Aemilianus in the second century B.C.² It had been repeated by Sallust in the *Catiline* and the *Histories*, and Sallust believed that the proletariat had been as adversely affected as the upper classes.³ In a more sympathetic tone Sallust had related the message of Manlius in 63, which told of the misfortunes of the rural population, and in his own person described the desperation and desire for revolution bred by poverty.⁴ Lucan is most concerned here with the poverty produced by foreign wealth. The peasants who lost their independence became as dangerous as their superiors who wished to extend their wealth and power. For Rome there were sellers as well as buyers and both were ready to use violence to attain their ends. However, for Lucan the crisis in all classes of society, though it has economic causes, is essentially a moral one. The poor helped to destroy Rome, not because they were poor, but because they were used to pursuing wealth illegally and with violence.

Florus' account of the causes of the violence of the late Republic provides an interesting parallel.⁵ Examples of his imitation of Lucan have already been discussed.⁶ In this case his explanation is more detailed than Lucan's, but its tone is similar and so is the pointed manner in which it is presented. He begins by describing the two-way effect of imported wealth. It brought luxury to the wealthy and hence greed and a desire for higher profit. It brought starvation to the poor and hence demands for grain-distributions and agrarian laws. For Florus the increase of wealth led to particular crises of violence; for Lucan it led to a moral degeneration where violence was only to be expected. Yet both authors build up their nexus of causes in a similar fashion. In Lucan we find 'inde irae faciles', 'hinc leges et plebis scita coactae', 'hinc rapti fasces pretio'; in Florus 'unde enim populus a tribunis agros et cibaria flagitaret nisi per famem quam luxur fecerat? hinc ergo Gracchana prima et secunda et illa tertia Appuleiana seditio. Unde iudiciariis legibus divulsus ab senatu eques nisi ex avaritia . . . ? Hinc Drusus et promissa civitas Latio et per hoc arma sociorum.' Florus continues to use *unde* and *inde* when dealing with the slave wars and the *ambitus honorum* which led to the civil wars between Sulla and the Marians.

Florus, however, was not the only author whom Lucan may have influenced by this passage. Tacitus in his discussion of the parallel increase in legislation and moral corruption⁷ says of the laws which followed the Twelve Tables: 'etsi aliquando in maleficos ex delicto, saepius tamen dissensione ordinum et apiscendi illicitos honores aut pellendi claros viros aliaque ob prava per vim

¹ Cf. Sen. *Brev. Vit.* 18. 5 (from the opposite point of view): 'nec rationem patitur, nec aequitate mitigatur, nec ulla prece flectitur populus esuriens.'

² Cf., e.g., *ORF*, pp. 70-1 (frr. 173-4); 82

(fr. 203); 127 (fr. 17); 133 (fr. 30).

³ *Cat.* 10-13 (esp. 11. 5 for the corruption of the Roman army); *Hist.* 1, fr. 12, 16.

⁴ *Cat.* 33, 37.

⁶ Above, pp. 493-4.

⁵ 1. 47. 8 ff.

⁷ *Ann.* 3. 27.

latae sunt. hinc Gracchi et Saturnini turbatores plebis, nec minor largitor nomine senatus Drusus . . .¹ The legislation referred to seems to comprise typical instances of late Republican legislation—the conferment of extraordinary commands and *privilegia*, the laws establishing *quaestiones*, and those which led to the exile of men like Popillius Laenas and Cicero.¹ *Hinc* therefore seems to mark a logical rather than a temporal development ('from this corrupt society sprang the Gracchi and Saturnini') and should also be taken closely with *per vim*. Tacitus may well have remembered 'mensuraque iuris vis erat: / hinc leges et plebis scita coactae et cum consulibus turbantes iura tribuni'.² It is still possible that Lucan, Florus, and Tacitus derived their presentation of these ideas from an earlier common source. However, this is unlikely to be Livy in view of the pointed and emphatic style, and one can do no more than speculate about unknown passages in Sallust, Pollio, or the elder Seneca. It is at any rate clear that Lucan's views about the fall of the Roman Republic are in the mainstream of the Roman historical tradition on this topic, and he may have played a greater part than is often supposed in preserving this tradition for posterity.

Lucan moves straight from his discussion of social and moral decadence to Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon, which he treats as an inevitable consequence of the breach between the dynasts and of Caesar's own ambition. He passes over Caesar's constitutional position and the negotiations between him, Pompey, and the rest of the senate. However, the immediate causes of the war are not entirely neglected. When Caesar reaches Ariminum, Lucan describes the arrival of the fugitive tribunes and Curio under the heading, 'iustos Fortuna laborat / esse ducis motus et causas invenit armis' (1. 264–5). Caesar's heaven-sent pretext is the expulsion of the tribunes by a truculent senate contrary to law. 'Expulit ancipiti discordes urbe tribunos / victo iure minax iactatis curia Gracchis' (266–7).³ An oblique reference is also made to Curio's proposal that both Caesar and Pompey should give up their proconsular commands ('ausus et armatos plebi miscere potentes').⁴ Curio in his speech talks of 'livor edax' denying Caesar the fruits of his Gallic victories, and he seems to attribute this envy to Pompey above all.⁵ In the harangue that follows (299 ff.), Caesar attacks Pompey's use of troops in Rome at the time and the intimidation of the court that tried Milo in 52—both charges were in fact made by Caesar in *Bellum Civile*⁶ and reflected Caesar's fears that he would

¹ Cf. Koestermann, *Cornelius Tacitus Annalen*, i. 467–8, who believes that Tacitus jumped from the Twelve Tables to the revolutionary period (though he may have had in mind too the commands of Camillus and Scipio Africanus), and that *hinc* marks a logical consequence. It is difficult to find examples of such legislation during the struggle of the orders after the Twelve Tables. *Contra* Furneaux (*Annals of Tacitus*, i, p. 382), it is hard to believe that Tacitus thought it wrong for plebeians to become consuls and priests.

² Some further possible examples of Lucan's influence on Tacitus are considered in Additional Note A, p. 504.

³ It is uncertain where Lucan discovered

that the names of the Gracchi had been bandied about in the senate; possibly in a Livian speech. Caesar (1. 7. 6) used the Gracchi as examples to prove the inappropriateness of the *senatus consultum ultimum*.

⁴ 1. 271. 'Vox quondam populi' (270) suggests not only that he was tribune but that he represented public opinion (rightly, cf. App. 2. 27; Plut. *Caes.* 30. 2).

⁵ 'Livor edax tibi cuncta negat, gentesque subactas / vix impune feres. socerum depellere regno / decretum genero est; partiri non potes orbem, / solus habere potes' (288–90, cf. *Caes.* 1. 4. 4; Suet. *Jul.* 30. 5—'tantis rebus gestis').

⁶ *Caes.* 1. 3. 3; 3. 1. 4.

go the same way as Milo if he returned to Rome a private citizen.¹ Later in the speech Caesar calls Pompey a pupil of Sulla, who had acquired from his tutor a thirst for civil war.² This charge may derive from the suspicions voiced by Cicero in his letters of early 49, but more damaging comparisons were probably made by historians later and the students of rhetoric could read invectives by Republican orators against Pompey's early career.³

Lucan's treatment of the immediate causes of the war is sparse and allusive. However, complex and devious negotiations and political manoeuvres do not make for inspiring poetry. Moreover, Lucan believed that from 59 onwards the Republic was tyrannized by an ill-assorted junta, whose two surviving members could not work together. For this reason and because he believed that law and morality had collapsed absolutely he introduced the political preliminaries to the war almost as an afterthought, to characterize the participants and to remind his readers of the political atmosphere of 49. His belief that the coalition of 59 made civil war inevitable was the standard view in antiquity⁴ and still is today, and he expounded it brilliantly. His treatment of the origin of the civil war avoids much historical detail but is clearly based on knowledge of the facts and assumes that the reader has the same knowledge.

LUCAN'S INTERPRETATION OF THE CIVIL WAR

If Lucan, after stating his views on the origin of the civil war and the failure of the Republic, had merely related certain episodes of the war on the basis of the existing accounts, nothing more would need to be said about his attitude to history. However, he was a poet who saw that a general truth could be extracted from the course of the war itself. The scheme in which he portrayed the war and its relation to history are therefore as important for judging his historical insight as for criticizing his poetry. Although the poem is unfinished, there is sufficient evidence about Lucan's values and interpretation of events to do this. Lucan's scheme was largely determined by the emphasis and colour assigned to the three major characters, Caesar, Pompey, and Cato. Of these Caesar and Cato were painted as antitheses in simple primary colours, which preclude any great subtlety of portraiture and *ipso facto* are likely to gloss over historical truth. Pompey is a motley figure and in him we are likely to find more both of humanity and of historical verity.

Although Lucan makes it clear that on historical grounds there was no more reason to blame Caesar than Pompey for the civil war, he treats Caesar for most of the epic as a force for evil in his own right. Once only, as we have seen,⁵ Lucan commends Caesar—for seeking to avoid bloodshed during the attempted fraternization in Spain. For the rest he spares no effort to brand Caesar's cruelty.⁶ Some compensation is provided by the urgent lines which describe Caesar's energy,⁷ but we can see that this very energy is one of the reasons for

¹ App. 2. 25; Suet. *Jul.* 30. 5.

² 1. 326 ff.: 'et docilis Sullam scelerum vicisse magistrum . . . sic et Sullanum solito tibi lambere ferrum durat, Magne, sitis.' Cf. 7. 307.

³ Cic. *Att.* 9. 7. 3; 10. 2 and 6; 10. 7. 1. For invectives see Val. Max. 6. 2. 4 ff.; Sen. *Contr.* 10. 1(30). 8; Cic. *Att.* 7. 8. 5.

⁴ Plut. *Caes.* 13. 3; App. 2. 14; Flor. 2. 13.

8-14; Dio 37. 56. 1-2.

⁵ 4. 254 ff. See above, p. 490.

⁶ See p. 489 n. 5 above.

⁷ 1. 143 ff.; 2. 492 ff., 650 ff.; 5. 403 ff. Historians had already created a picture of Caesar as an impetuous man who trusted to luck rather than judgement (App. 2. 35; 57; Plut. *Caes.* 32, 38. 2.).

Lucan's repugnance. Energy and ambition combined produce an almost superhuman force of destruction, yet one on which Lucan can still pour contempt, when an opportunity offers. Caesar's grief and indignation over Pompey's death are said to be feigned.¹ In the palace at Alexandria he succumbs to a pretty face and he is later shown lurking nervously in the royal apartments while the Egyptians attack.² However, this merely illustrates his depravity when faced with the greatest temptations. For, in Lucan's view, Cleopatra's banquet would have turned the head of a Fabricius, Curius, or Cincinnatus.³ Otherwise Caesar remains the same from his first appearance, when he is compared to a thunderbolt which will destroy anything in its path, to the time when, under siege in Alexandria, he is compared to a caged wild beast and the fires in Etna.⁴ He is unscrupulous in seeking the dominance that, he believes, destiny has decreed for him,⁵ solicitous of his soldiers' welfare,⁶ but quick to remind them that they are his clients. In his address to the mutineers he says: 'Divine providence will never so humble itself that the fates have time to consider your death or survival. *Humanum paucis vivit genus*.⁷ As a model character for an incipient tyrant it is brilliant, but it cannot explain why a man like C. Matius loved Caesar in spite of his faults, why Cicero could have been seduced by his charm, or why Caesar's veterans should have remained loyal to his memory. Lucan's Caesar has been compared to Milton's Satan in *Paradise Lost*, a complete villain whose resolution invites sympathy. There is a fatal objection; Lucan cannot expect us to sympathize with Caesar, for it was Caesar who won.

We have already seen how Lucan was apparently influenced by Seneca in portraying Cato as an opponent of civil war on principle and a reluctant supporter of the Pompeian cause.⁸ Seneca frequently uses Cato as an example of the Stoic *sapiens*, who is a standard of morality.⁹ This canonized Cato was without doubt the creation of the Cato biographies (and perhaps the history of Cremutius Cordus, if his work dealt with events before Caesar's murder). On the evidence of his actions, Cato was resolutely opposed to both Caesar and Pompey from 61 to 52 B.C., pursuing this enmity often without regard for the consequences. However, when the civil war approached, Cato encouraged Pompey to prepare to crush Caesar in the senate's name, and it was only later at Capua that he had qualms about civil war.¹⁰ Though Seneca was on occasion critical of Cato's contamination with Republican politics,¹¹ he praises him for following his own course without swerving in the face of bribery, danger, and humiliation.¹² 'Cum alii ad Caesarem inclinarent, alii ad Pompeium, solus Cato fecit aliquas et rei publicae partes.'¹³ 'If Caesar wins, he will die, if Pompey, he will go into exile'¹⁴—presumably because, in Cato's view, Caesar would create a permanent tyranny, Pompey a temporary one. Cato's march through the African desert and his suicide are treated as classic examples of a Stoic's refusal to be moved by external forces.¹⁵ For Cato the civil war was

¹ 9. 1035 ff.² 10. 72 ff., 439 ff.³ 10. 251 ff.⁴ 1. 151 ff.; 10. 445 ff.⁵ In Lucan *fortuna* favours Caesar and is sometimes his personal good luck (the *felicitas* of a great commander), see 1. 226;⁶ 4. 121-3; 5. 303-4, 510, 593; Brisset, 62 ff.⁷ 1. 340 ff.⁸ 5. 340-3.⁹ Above, p. 495.¹⁰ *Ep.* 14. 12-13, 24. 6, 51. 12, 67. 13.¹¹ Plut. *Cato mi.* 52.3 and *Pomp.* 61. 1. Cic. *Att.* 7. 15. 2: 'Cato enim ipse iam servire quam pugnare mavult.'¹² *Ep.* 14. 13; *de Cons. ad Marc.* 20. 6.¹³ *Ep.* 95. 69 ff., 104. 29 ff.; *Const. Sap.* 2. 2; *Prov.* 2. 10, 3. 14.¹⁴ *Ep.* 104. 30.¹⁵ *Ibid.* 32.¹⁶ *Ibid.* 33 (details of the march are found in a more elaborate form in 9. 582 ff.).

not a struggle for his freedom—that was assured—it was to see whether he would have any companions with which to share it.¹

Such was the character which Lucan transposed into his epic. The attitude that Lucan ascribes to Cato in 49 probably does not represent Cato's real feelings. Oddly enough, however, it resembles the attitude of Cicero, who in his letters of early 49 has no doubt that Pompey, like Caesar, is more concerned with his own power than the Republic and that, if he wins, his victory will be like Sulla's. At the same time Cicero believes that, if Pompey loses, the Republic will be irretrievably lost.² So a primitive instinct to be loyal to his own kind drove him into Pompey's camp.³ Cato's approach in Lucan is more positive: he hopes he will improve Pompey's party, but the doubts are the same. When Cato assumed leadership of the Pompeian remnants in Cyrene, 'after the death of Magnus the whole party was the party of liberty'. Although before Pharsalia Cato had hated Pompey and had followed his cause only because it was the cause of legitimacy and the senate, he (like Brutus) was now the dwelling-place of the avenging spirit of Pompey.⁴ However, he could still say with satisfaction that only one of the three *domini* was left. Without Pompey civil war was morally justified.⁵ The march through the desert was to be a huge endurance test so that the army could prove its *virtus* and show the self-denial which was the basis of patriotism and constitutional government ('*durum iter ad leges patriaeque ruentis amorem*').⁶ Thus Cato's men had the opportunity which, in Lucan's view, should have been given to the generations after Pharsalia: '*alieni poena timoris / in nostra cervice sedet. post proelia natis / si dominum, Fortuna, dabas, et bella dedisses.*'⁷

On the first occasion that Lucan discusses Pompey he introduces a note of pathos by comparing him to a sacred tree, aged, with branches bare but for dedicated spoils, no longer firmly rooted but kept upright by the inertia of its own weight. In love with his own popularity, Pompey has forgotten through civil life the art of generalship.⁸ This is without doubt an underestimate. Caesar in the *Bellum Civile* shows on the whole great respect for his adversary's ability, even though Pompey's unspectacular caution contrasted with Caesar's own brilliance and dash. Lucan does not do justice to the potential strength of Pompey's military position and the confidence with which the senate originally adopted him as a war-leader. The unfavourable comments in Cicero's correspondence on the inadequacy of Pompey's generalship and army⁹ may have directly or indirectly contributed to Lucan's view, as well as Pompey's failure to press his advantage at Dyrrhachium.¹⁰ Moreover it is probable that to some extent Lucan anticipated the outcome of the war and the figure that Pompey would cut after Pharsalia. I do not think that Lucan intended in this way to soften the picture of Pompey as a dynast because Cato and the senate were on his side.¹¹ On the contrary, it seems that Lucan emphasizes the contradictions

¹ *Ep.* 95. 71. Cf. 71. 10: '*olim provisum est ne quid Cato detrimenti caperet.*'

² *Att.* 7. 5. 4, 7. 7; 8. 11. 2; 9. 6. 7, 7. 3; 10. 7. 1.

³ *Att.* 7. 7. 7. One wonders whether perhaps in his *Cato* Cicero ascribed to Cato his own views.

⁴ 9. 17 ff., especially 29–30.

⁵ 9. 262–6. Cf. *Cic. Att.* 10. 16. 3 for the view that all the *boni* would have joined

Cato, if he had stayed in Sicily.

⁶ 9. 385 ff.

⁷ 7. 644–6.

⁸ 1. 129 ff.

⁹ Cf. *Cic. Att.* 7. 11. 3, 13 a. 1; 8. 16. 1; 9. 19. 3; *Fam.* 4. 6. 2; 9. 9. 2 (Dolabella's view); Malcovati, *Athenaeum*, xxxi (1953), 295 f.

¹⁰ See above, p. 492.

¹¹ As Brisset believes, 113f.

in Pompey's character rather than minimizes them.¹ Pompey may be a pathetic dynast, but he is a dynast none the less. Before he leaves Italy he tries unsuccessfully to inspire his troops by a speech, in which he boastfully recalls his past victories, makes no secret of his service under Sulla, and remarks somewhat ingenuously that, since he has reached the summit of legitimate power in a free people, any attempt to surpass him will produce a tyranny.² Later in Book 2, when forced to retreat, he reveals grandiose plans for raising war in the East, which highlight his vanity.³ This is the Pompey known to us from Cicero's letters, congenitally unable to see any point of view but his own.⁴

During the account of the campaign in Illyricum and Greece Lucan stresses Pompey's failures as a general in that he allowed Caesar to escape at Dyrrhachium and joined battle against his better judgement at Pharsalia⁵—in both cases with greater justification. However, two new traits are added to Pompey's character. A foreboding of failure emerges in his dialogue with Cornelia on the eve of her departure for Lesbos⁶ (where both dwell on the consequences of defeat rather than victory) and is found again in his two speeches before Pharsalia, to his council of war and his troops.⁷ Lucan also ascribes to him moral scruples about reinvading Italy and about the bloodshed that would ensue if he abandoned his war of attrition and fought a pitched battle.⁸ When the battle is lost, Pompey bears his misfortune with calm dignity and leaves the field to put an end to the slaughter.⁹ Lucan advises him to be happy that he is not the victor and by his retreat has made the rest of the struggle one between liberty and Caesar. He is now freed from crime, hope, and the treachery of fortune. He has only to choose a place to die.¹⁰

If Lucan moved straight from Pharsalia to Pompey's death on his arrival in Egypt, it would be easy to interpret Pompey's career during the civil war as a progress towards self-knowledge and self-purification, a martyrdom which led to sanctification. This is indeed how some scholars have recently interpreted it.¹¹ However, this entails ignoring the first part of Book 8. At the beginning of this book Pompey loses the calm certainty with which he left the field of Pharsalia. During his flight to Lesbos he is a prey to fear, regret, and humiliation.¹² After leaving Lesbos and being joined by his elder son and some loyal senators,¹³ he dispatches Deiotarus on an embassy to the Parthians to remind them of his own refusal to harm Parthia during his eastern campaigns. The Parthians should now advance to conquer Rome in his name.¹⁴ Later at Syedrae in Cilicia in a conference with his friends, after arguing that he must seek support from either Africa, Egypt, or Parthia, he opts for the Parthian alliance.¹⁵ If they disappoint him, at least Caesar will not have power over his dead body.

¹ The contradictions are finally stressed in Cato's obituary on Pompey (9. 190 ff.).

² 2. 531 ff., esp. 562 ff.

³ 2. 632 ff.

⁴ Cic. *Att.* 7. 8. 4. Cf. 7. 4. 2; *Fam.* 8. 8. 9.

⁵ 6. 296 ff.; 7. 85 ff.

⁶ 5. 739 ff., 769 ff.

⁷ 7. 107 ff., 376 ff.

⁸ 6. 299 ff., 319 ff.; 7. 87 ff., esp. 121–3.

⁹ 7. 659 ff.

¹⁰ 7. 686–711, 698–706 pick up the theme of 121–4.

¹¹ B. M. Marti, *AJP* lxxvi (1945), 352 ff. (esp. 369 ff.); Brisset, 118 ff.; Due, 109 ff.

Contra Syndikus, 170. See Additional Note B, p. 504.

¹² 8. 1–27.

¹³ Apparently at Attaleia in Pamphylia (Plut. *Pomp.* 76. 1).

¹⁴ 8. 211–38. We have no good evidence for a treaty sworn between Pompey and the Parthians (218 f., cf. Flor. 1. 46. 4). Lucan presumably has in mind the Parthian embassy in 63 B.C. to Pompey in Syria, when Pompey received a commission to arbitrate between Parthia and Armenia (App. *Mith.* 106. 501; Plut. *Pomp.* 39. 3).

¹⁵ 8. 276–327.

If they assist him, he will either destroy Caesar or Rome's greatest remaining enemy.¹ It is not difficult to predict the objections then raised against this plan. Pompey will be a 'transfuga mundi', 'Parthorum famulus'. He can hardly defend the cause of liberty in this guise. If Rome must have a king, it should be one of her own citizens. The Parthians are untrustworthy, poor fighters, and may rape Cornelia after dinner. It is the Parthians whom Romans should have been fighting, not each other. After two hundred lines of argument, the rejection of Pompey's plan is told in a bald half-line: 'victa est sententia Magni.'² Doubts may arise about the historicity of Pompey's project. Caesar merely mentions that before Pharsalia Lucilius Hirrus had been sent on an embassy to Parthia; Dio refers to the story that Parthian aid was sought but rejects it; Florus' brief account may well be derived from Lucan.³ However, Appian and Plutarch confirm the story in essentials, Plutarch attributing the successful counter-arguments to Theophanes.⁴ The ultimate source is probably Theophanes himself, who is unlikely to have totally invented it, even though he used it to win himself the credit for dissuading Pompey from treason. Where Lucan found the story we cannot tell, but he clearly found it plausible, remembering perhaps T. Labienus' son, Q. Labienus Parthicus, and his attack on the Roman provinces in Asia at the head of a Parthian army.⁵

At Syedrae Pompey is shown by Lucan to be as much a dynast as he ever was, a bad Roman—but unable to realize his ambitions. His humiliation is complete. Death, however, provides his resurrection. At the end of Book 8 Pompey meets his fate with calm constancy, thinking of his future reputation.⁶ He must crown the successes of his life with a proof that he can bear adversity in death. 'Sum tamen, o superi, felix, nullique potestas / hoc auferre deo.'⁷ Lucan in an imaginary epitaph records his run of military victories and adds that he always returned to civil life after a war.⁸ He returns to this theme in the antithetical *laudatio*⁹ which Cato is made to deliver when he hears the news in Cyrene. Cato is more generous than in his estimate of Pompey in Book 2. He admits Pompey's vast power, wealth, and ambition, but qualifies each admission by pointing out that Pompey retained some scruple and loyalty to the constitution. In particular, Pompey remained a private citizen when the people would have made him a tyrant; he acknowledged senatorial authority while directing its policies. 'Salva / libertate potens, et solus plebe parata / privatus servire sibi, rectorque senatus, / sed regnantis, erat.'¹⁰ With Pompey's removal the pretence of *libertas*, which in truth had not existed since Rome had submitted to Sulla and Marius, at last perished.¹¹

Lucan stresses the pathos of Pompey's flight from Pharsalia and his death, but this is not all. He suggests that, in a sense, by his defeat and death Pompey won.¹² Before Pharsalia Pompey declares that after today his name will either be hated or pitied. All the misfortune will fall to the conquered, all the crime to the victor.¹³ After the battle Lucan consoles Pompey, 'Trust in the gods, trust in the long favour the fates have shown you, *vincere peius erat*.'¹⁴ Pharsalia frees

¹ 311 ff.² 330–455.³ Caes. 3. 82. 4; Dio 42. 2. 5; Flor. 2. 13. 51 (only he and Lucan mention Syedrae).⁴ App. 2. 83; Plut. *Pomp.* 76. 4.⁵ Sydenham, *Roman Republican Coinage*, 1356 f.; Dio, 48. 26. 3–5.⁶ 8. 613 ff.⁷ 630–1. His *felicitas* in the context is clearly the product of his past success and glory, not that of a philosopher.⁸ 8. 793 ff., esp. 813–15.⁹ 9. 190 ff.¹⁰ 192–5.¹¹ 204–6.¹² Cf. Due, 111 ff.; Brisset, 124 ff.¹³ 7. 120 ff.¹⁴ 7. 705–6.

Pompey from crime, death frees him from further misfortune and the risk of crime. Although Pompey becomes more conscious of the evil of civil war during the campaign in Greece, even in defeat he cannot give up the pursuit of power and *dignitas*, until his murderers decisively correct his career.

This is a character-portrait which, in my view, in spite of some exaggeration and simplification is not far removed from the Pompey of history. The very contradictions which Lucan exposes make the portrayal convincing.¹ At the same time it has a wider significance. Pompey could never be a master of the world because of the ghost of republicanism which he defended. His supporters pressed him to fight at Pharsalia in order that his emergency powers should not be prolonged and the return of civil government should be hastened.² He was dissuaded from concluding an alliance with the Parthians on his own account because this would destroy his dignity as a Roman and a champion of liberty. The cause which he adopted in self-justification was also a fetter. Yet his failure was his salvation. It preserved his shaky republicanism from exposure as a sham. The strength of this interpretation is its foundation in the history of the fall of the Republic. Lucan's Pompey epitomizes those who corrupted free political institutions to the utmost, while paying lip-service to freedom and even wanting in their hearts to believe in it.

Pompey's paradoxical situation was to some extent shared by the cause that he represented. Lucan realized that, whatever the result, civil war would destroy the Republic as it was, the old Rome.³ Because of its corruption, republicanism could only survive as an ideal by being defeated by Caesar. What then was the place of Cato in this scheme? Pompey could only represent Republican legitimacy, the adherence to constitutional form.⁴ Cato, however, stood for what to Lucan was a higher cause, Republican liberty.⁵ Lucan lived too long after the civil war to see it through the eyes of the politicians of the Republic. For him it was in the end a contest between two political principles which were, and are, more fundamental than the maintenance of certain Republican institutions—*libertas et Caesar*. The moral of the poem was not a political programme (for which Republican history was no longer relevant) but a prescription to the individual.⁶ However, the historical information which Lucan absorbed in order to enrich his theme and make his poem live gave him also a precious insight into the particular problems and contradictions which the late Republic faced. Lucan's Pompey is a man of his own period, but

¹ Cf. Syndikus, 103 f.

² 7. 51 ff., esp. 79–80, 84–5. Cf. Caes. 3. 82. 2; App. 2. 67; Plut. *Pomp.* 67. 3.

³ Excellently discussed by Due, 110 ff. However, he does not make the point that, for Lucan, Pompey does not represent all of the old Republic.

⁴ Notice Lucan's lengthy treatment of the constitutional position at the end of 49, when the retiring consuls treat the Pompeian senators in Epirus as the senate and formally appoint Pompey supreme commander (5. 1–49, cf. Dio 41. 43),—also Lucan's comment on Cato: 'oderat et Magnum, quamvis comes isset in arma / auspiciis raptus patriae ductuque senatus' (9. 21–2).

⁵ Contrast with the refs. above 9. 249 ff.,

where Tarcondimotus suggests that the Pompeian remnants should show allegiance to the official Roman consul, a proposal which Cato condemns by ignoring it.

⁶ Cf. 7. 644–6, where Lucan hopes not so much for a change in the course of history, but an opportunity for each generation to struggle against it. Lucan's general hostility to the principate and his ambivalent treatment of Nero are admirably discussed by Due (92 ff.). Brisset (193 ff.) takes Lucan's acceptance in practice of a principate, if not of Nero as *princeps*, as a basis for interpreting the poem, but the relationship between Lucan's thought and practice is unlikely to have been so simple and the evidence of the poem itself is a safer guide.

through his self-inflicted calamity he is a political exemplar and poetic hero for all time.

Whether we fall by ambition, blood or lust,
Like diamonds we are cut with our own dust.¹

ADDITIONAL NOTES

A. *Lucan and Tacitus*

A number of parallels in language were noted by Luise Robbert (*De Tacito Lucani Imitatore*, Diss. Göttingen, 1917), mostly the result of similar 'poetic' usage by the two authors, e.g. 'ignes animis flagrantibus addit' (7. 559) and 'flagrantibus iam militum animis velut faces addiderat' (Tac. *Hist.* 1. 24). The most interesting comparison (already made by Ruehl, *RhMus*, lxii (1907), 310 ff.) is between 'si libertatis superis tam cura placeret, quam vindicta placet' (4. 808-9) and 'non esse curae deis securitatem nostram esse ultionem' (Tac. *Hist.* 1. 3). However, there is another parallel to Tacitus' phrase: 'ingenti quidem animo divus Titus securitati nostrae ultionique prospexerat ideoque numinibus aequatus est' (Pliny, *Pan.* 35). It looks as if Tacitus is making an ironical correction of his friend's pronouncement with one eye on Lucan. His *ultio* has the same sense as Lucan's *vindicta*, the gods' vengeance on men. *Libertas* is certainly not the same as *securitas*, but each word represented the political *summum bonum* in the historical context in which it was placed. Lucan's influence on Tacitus here was cautiously accepted by Syme (*Tacitus*, i. 143). I have already discussed in the text the possibility that Lucan's discussion of the causes of the civil war (1. 173 ff.) influenced Tacitus (*Ann.* 3. 27). 'Deditque iura quis pace et principe uteremur' (*Ann.* 3. 28) may also owe something to Lucan's 'cum domino pax ista venit' (1. 670). Another possible resemblance, to my knowledge not mentioned before, is between Lucan and Tacitus' philosophical digressions on the subject of chance versus destiny (2. 4 ff.; *Ann.* 6. 22). Both are inspired by a previous account of prophecy—performed by the *haruspex* Arrius and the astrologer Figulus in Lucan, by the astrologer Thrasyllus in Tacitus. Unlike Seneca (*Ep.* 16. 5-6), who distinguished three possibilities, that mortal affairs were governed by inexorable fate, by a provident deity, or by sheer hazard, Lucan and Tacitus omit divine providence (when Lucan introduces Jupiter, he is only the founder of a system of impersonal natural law). Though professing uncertainty, both Lucan and Tacitus are inclined to believe that human affairs are fixed in advance by a system of natural causes, but the possibility of prediction, while it fascinates Tacitus, arouses horror in Lucan.

Other interesting linguistic parallels:— 'dira quies' in 7. 26 and *Ann.* 1. 65; 'miles subitus' (= 'miles tumultuarius') in 1. 312 and *Hist.* 4. 76; 'nomina vana Catones' (1. 313) and 'Muciani et Domitiani vana et sine viribus nomina' (*Hist.* 4. 75); 'cautibus asper / exarsit mucro' (7. 139-40) and 'pugionem . . . asperari saxo et in mucronem ardescere iussit' (*Ann.* 15. 54); 'impatiensque morae venturisque omnibus aeger' (6. 424) and 'aeger morae et spei impatiens' (*Hist.* 2. 40).

B. *Pompey as proficiens*

B. M. Marti's thesis (*AJP* lxi (1945), 369 ff.) that Lucan's Pompey develops his character in stages corresponding to the different grades of those

¹ Webster, *Duchess of Malfi*, Act v, Scene 5.

aspiring to Stoic *sapientia* (*proficientes*) does not convince me. It is not solidly enough based on Lucan's text, it passes over Pompey's Parthian plans in Book 8 (which do not fit a man with a firm grasp on Stoic virtue), and above all it seems based on a misinterpretation of Seneca's discussion of *proficientes* (*Ep.* 75. 8 ff.). Marti's argument assumes that the grades of advance to *sapientia* are described by Seneca in ascending order, but close inspection reveals the opposite. The first grade (*Ep.* 75. 9-12) are those who would be *sapientes*, if only they realized it (cf. *Stoic. Vet. Fragm.* iii. 539). They have not only laid aside *morbi* of the soul, i.e. ingrained vices, but are now out of their reach. They have also laid aside *adfectus*, undesirable passions, but are still vulnerable to their return. The second grade (13) have laid aside both *maxima animi mala* (presumably *morbi*) and *adfectus* but may slip back into either. The third grade (14) are not yet free of all *magna vitia*. They are still liable to *ira* and *ambitio* (*ambitio* is an example of *morbus* in 11). Marti considers that Pompey is in the first grade at the beginning of Book 3 and in the third grade at the beginning of Book 8. Thus, if the parallel she sees between Seneca and Lucan in this matter were valid, Pompey's character would, in Lucan's view, have deteriorated.

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