REMAPPING THE PAST: CAESAR'S TALE OF TROY
(LUCAN *BC* 9.964–999)

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As Aeneas and the exiled Trojans are about to set sail and embark upon their westbound journey, they gaze upon their homeland and the ancient city of Troy. Devoured by its own flames, its buildings leveled to the ground, Troy is no more (Virg. *Aen*. 3.10–11: *relinquo / et campos ubi Troia fuit*). Thus Virgil's Aeneas takes his final leave from his homeland, accompanied by this image of desolation and destruction, bound to see Troy never again. But a different destiny awaits his progeny. After fire and the passing of time have reduced the city to a heap of ruins, Lucan, the epic successor of Virgil, will bring back Aeneas' descendant, Caesar, to the homeland of his ancestor. The sequence of the action is well known. As Caesar, after the battle of Pharsalus, is hastily and uselessly pursuing his already dead enemy Pompey, Lucan lands him, in what is very likely historical fiction, at the site of Troy.[1] Caesar, like Alexander the Great, all of a sudden seems to be taken by the desire to visit the remains of this ancient and once glorious city:

> circumit exustae nomen memorabile Troiae
> 965 magnaque Phoebei quaerit vestigia muri.
> iam silvae steriles et putres robore trunci
> Assaraci pressere domos et templa deorum
> iam lassa radice tenent, ac tota teguntur
> Pergama dumetis: etiam periere ruinae.
> 970 aspicit Hesiones scopulos silvaque latentis
> Anchisae thalamos; quo iudex sederit antro,
> unde puer raptus caelo, quo vertice Nais
> luxerit Oenone: nullum est sine nomine saxum.
> inscius in sicco serpentem pulvere rivum
> 975 transierat, qui Xanthus erat. securus in alto
> gramine ponebat gressus: Phryx incola manes

[1] All historical sources are silent about the incident. They merely cite Caesar's stop in Asia Minor. The silence is especially significant in the case of Plutarch as he describes at great length Alexander's visit to Troy (*Alex.* 15.4). Had Plutarch had any knowledge of Caesar's visit to Troy, it is likely that he would have included it in the life of Caesar, which was paired with that of Alexander. On the topic, see Zwierlein 1986: 460–478, esp. 465, with bibliography. Cf. also Mayer 1981: 3, explaining Lucan's "invention" of Caesar's tour of Troy in terms of the "addiction" of Neronian poets to Trojan themes. For a different explanation, see Ahl 1976: 109, n. 44, arguing that here Lucan cannot refrain from toying with the rumor that Caesar considered the possibility of transferring the capital to Troy (Suet. *Iul.* 79).

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Hectoreos calcare vetat. discussa iacebant
saxa nec ullius faciem servantia sacri:
"Herceas" monstrator ait "non respicis aras?"   (Lucan 9.964–979)

He walks around a memorable name—burnt-out Troy—
and seeks the mighty remains of the wall of Phoebus.
Now barren woods and trunks with rotting timber
have submerged Assaracus' houses and, with roots now weary,
occupy the temples of the gods, and all Pergamum
is veiled by thickets: even the ruins suffered oblivion.
He sees Hesione's rock and Anchises' marriage-chamber hiding
in the woods; the cave where the adjudicator sat; the place
from which the boy was snatched to heaven; the peak
where naiad Oenone grieved; no stone is without a story.
Unwittingly, he had crossed a stream creeping
in dry dust—this was Xanthus. Oblivious, he placed
his footsteps in the deep grass: the Phrygian local tells him
not to tread upon the shade of Hector. Scattered stones
were lying there, preserving no appearance of anything sacred:
the guide says: "Have you no respect for the Hercean altars?"

Not surprisingly, the ruins of Troy offer to the visitor a gloomy spectacle. In walking through what we can now scarcely call Troy, Caesar is treading the scattered rubble of old walls, ruins taken over by underbrush, foundations held together by roots. Even the ruins of Troy have perished, as Lucan in his hyperbolic fashion puts it (*etiam periere ruinae*, 9.969). Nor does Caesar seem to make any sense of them. As pointed out by Zwierlein, the similarities between Alexander's visit to Troy and Caesar's are obvious: Caesar, who is about to become the absolute ruler of Rome, is here aptly modeled on Alexander, who epitomizes the despot-figure, the *vaesanus rex* (Lucan 10.42).[2] Caesar, however, appears somewhat inferior to Alexander, at least in his capacity as a tourist. When Alexander visits the site where Ilium once stood, he recognizes what he sees as he walks knowledgeably among the ruins.[3] Moreover, he is also greatly moved as he ponders the greatness of the past heroes who fought in the Trojan war and the blessings of Achilles, who while he lived had a faithful friend and after death had a great herald of his fame (Plut. *Alex.* 15.4).[4] Caesar, by contrast, remains

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[2] On the similarities between Caesar's visit to Troy and Alexander the Great's, see especially Zwierlein 1986: 465–470; Rutz 1970: 235–265, esp. 249. For other examples of Caesar's assimilation to Alexander in Lucan's *BC*, see Zwierlein 1986: 468–469.

[3] On Alexander's visit to Troy, see Diod. 17.17.3; Plut. *Alex.* 15.4; Arr. *Anab.* 1.11.7–8. All the sources report that he also made offerings. Diodorus mentions offerings to Achilles, Ajax, and other non-specified heroes and a sacrifice to Athena. Arrian mentions a sacrifice to Zeus, Athena, and Priam, in order that he might not be angry with the race of Neoptolemus. Plutarch mentions sacrifices to Athena and libations to the heroes.

[4] Aside from our historical sources, the episode is also reported by Cic. *Arch.* 24; Silius 13.796. For an analysis of these passages, see Zwierlein 1986: 466.

insensitive before the ruins of the ancient city and, unlike Alexander, he does not seem to be able to make any sense of what he sees. Though each stone has its story to tell, he needs the services of a guide to find the stone and tell the tale.

So Ahl reads the passage, emphasizing Caesar's shortcomings as a tourist.[5] Nor is Ahl alone in his interpretation of the passage. In her more recent book *Ideology in Cold Blood*, Bartsch arrives at similar conclusions:

And indeed, the earth he (Caesar) tramples would be meaningless were it not for the guide's intervention: through this man's eyes, through his interpretation of the overgrown grass and scattered stones, old Troy comes alive, the site of legend and history: through him, "no stone lacks a name." Otherwise Caesar is *inscius*, unknowing; without the Phrygian's ability to provide a narrative for the ruins, the fragments of history remain only that, a heap of traces (*vestigia*) with no internal cohesion and nothing to hold them together. No one asks about the nature of this native's authority; that is not the point. Certainly no witness to the fall of Troy, he nonetheless carves out a story from the little he has, and it is enough. For Caesar is happy with his version of history: inspired by the tale, he sees an ancient city where we could only see the ruins of ruins.[6]

According to Bartsch, Caesar is here represented at his most myopic. He is a comic parody of himself, thus making this passage, as Johnson suggests, "the funniest moment in Latin Literature," a literature which, by his own admission, does not lack "funny moments."[7] But is Lucan's Caesar really so ignorant and careless as usually suggested and is this episode just a parody, albeit successful, of Caesar?[8]

In this paper I will reread this passage with the intent of showing that far from being represented just as an ignorant fool, Caesar shows a rather good memory of the legendary history of the city. His memory, however, is not comprehensive; it is deviously selective as Caesar aims at fashioning his own "tale" from the ruins of the now decayed city, which, in Lucan's imagery, is representative simultaneously of Troy and Rome. After the victory of Pharsalus, Caesar, in Lucan's *Bellum Civile*, is no longer solely a character of Lucan's tale. In his visit to Troy, he takes up a new and more insidious role. He himself becomes the writer of the tale of the past and eventually the founder of a new city. It is against Caesar's new role

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[5] Ahl 1976: 215. For a general analysis of the Trojan-scene and its interpretative problems, see further Zwierlein 1986: 461–462.

[6] Bartsch 1997: 132.

[7] Johnson 1987: 119; cf. Edwards 1996: 65.

[8] For a somewhat different interpretation of the passage, see Ormand 1994: 38–55: here Caesar is viewed not as an entirely ignorant tourist, but as one who "recognizes" the Troy of the *Aeneid* and not that of the *Iliad*. For a similar interpretation of the passage, see also Quint 1993: 6–7, emphasizing that Caesar's tour of Troy offers a particularly Trojan sightseeing tour, beginning at the palace of Assaracus and ending not with the tomb of Achilles, but with that of his Trojan victim, Hector. Like Ormand, Quint traces the origin of this "Trojan" version of the tale of Troy to the epic of Virgil; he does not fail to notice the delicious irony that Lucan's Caesar seems to have read the *Aeneid*, composed twenty-five years after the death of the historical Caesar.

as writer and founder that Lucan in this passage warns the reader, and it is in reaction to him that he writes his own tale of the past: the *Bellum Civile*.

Let us begin by asking whether Caesar really is as ignorant of the ruins of Troy as many scholars suggest. Although in his tour of Troy he shows a certain degree of ignorance (*inscius*) mixed with a certain arrogant disposition (*securus*), his attitude towards the site and, correspondingly, his ability to "see" the ruins surrounding him changes quite dramatically during his visit. Verbs and adjectives clearly signal his metamorphosis. The first segment of his visit, during which the guide, although maybe already present, remains completely silent, is characterized by Caesar's eagerness to visit Troy. As a *mirator famae* he visits the shore of Sigeum, the river Simoeis, and Ajax's grave (Lucan 9.961–963). He seeks (*quaerit*) the remains of Apollo's wall (Lucan 9.965). His eagerness to tour the site is combined with an unusual ability to "see." At line 969 the narrator has just reminded the reader that at Troy even the ruins have suffered oblivion, thus clearly calling attention to the impossibility for any visitor of Troy to see anything other than shapeless, meaningless, and therefore nameless stones. Yet in the following verses Caesar seems to prove the narrator wrong. At this point in the narrative there is an important shift in focus from external/primary narrator to internal narrator.[9] This shift is triggered by the verb *aspicio*, which is conspicuously positioned at the beginning of the verse. *Aspicio* denotes "to perceive mentally" or "to visualize internally" as well as "to see,"[10] and here establishes an embedded focalization: at lines 970–973 the reader is allowed to see Troy from Caesar's perspective. And through Caesar's eyes, Troy seems quite a different place from the decayed site described by the primary narrator. In this landscape of ruins, Caesar is able to visualize (*aspicit*) Hesione's rock, Anchises' bedchamber which is now hidden in the woods, the cave where Paris sat as judge, the site where Ganymede was

[9] The term focalization was first coined by Genette (1980), as he criticized traditional accounts of "point of view." He believed that the aspect of "who speaks" should be separated from that of "who sees." For the first phenomenon, Genette coined the term "voice" and for the second the term "mood." See further Bal 1985: 105; Genette 1988; and, of special interest for classicists, Fowler 1990: 42–63, with good bibliography. Cf. also Conte 1986: 141–184; Segre 1980; de Jong 1987, which follows very closely Bal's model. According to de Jong (1987: 38), complex narrator-text (embedded focalization) can be divided into three kind of passages: (1) those describing the content of perceptions; (2) those describing the content of thoughts, emotions, feelings; and (3) indirect speech. The transition from simple narrator text to complex narrator text can be marked explicitly by verbs of: (1) seeing, hearing; (2) thinking, remembering, feeling; and (3) speaking. To these three categories may be added: (4) similes and (5) affective and "emotionally coloured words." On these last two categories, see further de Jong 1987: 123–146; cf. Bonfanti 1985: 26: "queste spie nei casi più vistosi sono rappresentati, per l'*Eneide* dai verbi di vedere." In regard to verbs of seeing, Bonfanti (1985: 32) draws a distinction between what she calls "geometric perspective," which limits the "external visual focus" of the scene, and "semantic perspective," which refers to the internal visualization of the scene by the character. A similar distinction is made by Rosati (1979: 559).

[10] See, for example, Lucan 9.611: *ductor, ut aspexit perituros fonte relicto*; cf. Juv. 7.66–68: *magnae mentis opus nec de lodice paranda / attonitae, currus et equos faciesque deorum / aspicere et qualis Rutulum confundat Erinys*. Caesar's ability to see Anchises' grotto, now hidden in the woods, suggests that in this passage also the verb *aspicio* denotes "mental visualization" and "mental perception."

snatched to heaven, and the peak on which the Naiad Oenone mourned. He is able to visualize these ruins in a meaningful way and to give them a name. He has created a narrative for Troy. Thanks to Caesar, and not to the guide, who, so far, has still not been mentioned, no stone lacks a name (*nullum est sine nomine saxum*). Thus ends the first part of Caesar's tour of the site of Troy.[11]

It is only at this point that Caesar's attitude changes quite dramatically. Only now does he show clear signs of contempt and overconfidence (*securus*) concerning what he sees, or, better, what he all of a sudden fails to see. For now Caesar has become *inscius*. He is no longer able to see. For Caesar, Troy has again become what it really is, a heap of meaningless stones from which he is no longer able to fashion a coherent tale. And yet the ruins of Troy do not remain without a narrator. As Caesar places his foot on deep grass, the Phrygian guide, who is now suddenly introduced into the text, recognizes for him the spot as the grave of Hector and warns him not to tread upon it. Similarly, from scattered ruins which preserve no appearance of anything sacred—the primary narrator has just reminded us of this—the guide is able to identify the altar of Zeus Herceus, and reproaches Caesar for being blind and/or disrespectful towards this sacred place: *"Herceas" monstrator ait "non respicis aras?"*[12]

To understand the causes of Caesar's dramatic change, to which the narrator painstakingly draws the reader's attention, we need to go back to the beginning of the passage and once again work our way through the archeological site of Troy. Though each stone has a name and a story to tell, Caesar sees and therefore selects only a few "stones" to tell his own "story" of Troy.

In Caesar's tour we can find clear references to the three branches into which the descendants of Dardanus had split after Tros had fathered his three sons, Ilus, Assaracus, and Ganymede.[13] Of this earlier generation, only Assaracus, Anchises' grandfather, is mentioned by name in connection to the palace where he once lived (*Assaraci ... domos*). But most importantly, another famous site related to this family line finds a conspicuous place in Caesar's "reconstruction" of the story of Troy. Caesar does not fail to visualize Anchises' bedchamber, now hiding in the woods (*silvaque latentis / Anchisae thalamos*),[14] where Anchises once conceived with Venus that Aeneas whom a few verses later Caesar will hail as his ancestor and ancestor of the Julian family (*di cinerum, ... / Aeneaeque mei*, 9.990–991).

Likewise Ganymede, the other descendant of Tros, snatched away to the sky by Jupiter, finds a conspicuous position in Caesar's remapping of the legendary

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[11] For a different interpretation of the *sententia, nullum est sine nomine saxum*, see Bartsch 1997: 132, reading the statement as referring directly to the guide. This interpretation, however, forces the reading of the text, for the guide up to this point has not been mentioned at all. For a similar interpretation, see Ahl 1976: 215.

[12] The verb *respicio* conveys both meanings and here probably the sense of the sentence is left purposely ambiguous.

[13] For a genealogy of the "family" of Dardanus, see Apollod. 3.12. Aeneas himself in the *Iliad* graciously provides a map of his family and ancestors in his lengthy speech to Achilles (*Il.* 20.215–240). On this topic, see Anderson 1997: 63–66.

[14] For a different translation of the passage, see Bartsch 1997: 132.

history of Troy. Although he is not mentioned by name, Caesar is actually able to see the very spot from which the boy was carried off to the sky (*unde puer raptus caelo*).[15] We will analyze the significance of his presence in Caesar's reconstruction of the "story" of Troy shortly.

As for the third—and arguably the most important—branch of the Trojan dynasty, the descendants of Ilus, Caesar, in his tour, seems to ignore almost entirely this branch of the family. After all it is precisely when he is nearing the grave of Hector that he becomes blind, and he would trample on it carelessly, were it not for the Phrygian guide. But this is not all. Caesar, who up to this point had been able to see rocks and stones buried in ruins and to give them names, does not seem to see one of the most famous ruins of Troy, the altar of Jupiter Herceus, the most prominent physical component of Priam's house, particularly symbolic of the family domain.[16] The altar of Jupiter Herceus used to stand in the middle of the courtyard as an architectural and religious focal point of the domestic realm.[17] But the altar is also linked to this branch of the Trojan family by another weighty connection. It was here that Priam, the last king of Troy and the last king of that dynasty, had been slaughtered by Achilles' son Pyrrhus.[18] The altar, long a symbol of the sacrilege committed by Pyrrhus, is now about to be violated again by Caesar's blundering over it.[19] But Caesar is not always blind. When it comes to the descendants of Ilus, blindness is also linked with a selective and extremely damaging recollection of events. Other members of the family of Ilus will not simply be dismissed as non-existent entities of the Trojan past. By oblique references to them, Caesar ingeniously casts a negative shadow on them.

Laomedon, the direct descendant of Ilus, is not mentioned by name, but powerfully evoked by stories related to him. As Caesar eagerly seeks the remains of the great walls of Apollo and sees Hesione's rock, he skillfully fashions from the ruins of Troy the story of Laomedon's *periuria*.[20] Laomedon, the ancestor of the royal family, twice betrayed his own word, by breaking his compact first with

[15] Aside from the story, Ganymede is recognizable also from the participle *raptus*, which often appears linked to his name as a sort of epithet: cf. Virg. *Aen.* 1.28, where he is referred to as *rapti Ganymedis*; cf. Ov. *F.* 6.43: *rapto Ganymede dolebam*.

[16] For the position of the altar in the center of the courtyard, see *Il.* 24.306, where Priam offers libations to Zeus before he sets out to retrieve the body of his son. For the altar of Zeus Herceus and its symbolism, see Anderson 1997: 37.

[17] See further Anderson 1997: 37.

[18] On the uniformity of this tradition and its widespread diffusion both in literature and visual arts, see Anderson 1997: 29–48. For its presence in Latin poetry, see Ennius cited by Cicero (*Tusc.* 3.45): *haec omnia vidi inflammari / Priamo vi vitam evitari, / Iovis aram sanguine turpari.* Cf. also Virg. *Aen.* 2.550–552. For a different opinion, cf. Johnson 1987: 119, viewing the altar of Zeus Herceus as another spot most sacred to the Julian family.

[19] See also Hardie 1993: 107.

[20] For a different view, see Ormand 1994: 51, explaining Hesione's presence as an attempt on Caesar's part to retrace Aeneas' legendary ancestry as accurately as possible. Hesione's presence is thus compared to that of Assaracus.

Apollo, the builder of Troy's walls, and secondly with Hercules, the rescuer of Laomedon's daughter Hesione, who was bound to a cliff to be the prey of a sea monster. As Ovid puts it, recounting the two stories in *Metamorphoses*, because of Laomedon's *periuria*, Troy, twice liar, was taken twice (*bis periura capit superatae moenia Troiae*).[21]

The canonical version of Laomedon's *periuria*, however, is here altered in one important detail. In Caesar's reconstruction of the events, Apollo becomes the sole divinity responsible for the construction of the walls of Troy—Caesar, we may remember, seeks the walls of Apollo—while his co-builder, Neptune, is completely ignored. In Caesar's remapping of the events, Laomedon's *periuria* become an even more heinous crime having direct impact on him. As Apollo is a god closely associated with the Julian family, Laomedon's *periuria* have not only offended a god, but the god who protected Caesar's family.[22]

Caesar's attention now shifts to the tale of Paris, one of the last descendants of Ilus. He is able to see the cave where Paris sat as an umpire of the famous beauty contest between Juno, Minerva, and Venus and the rock where the betrayed nymph Oenone, as we learn from Ovid, first viewed her husband Paris embracing another woman.[23] Although Paris remains unnamed, the reference to his famous "judgment" in Venus' favor is easily identifiable.[24] Paris already appears as the unnamed *iudex* in Horace *Odes* 3.3, where he is held accountable for his "cheating" on Juno and Minerva and for his violation, through the seduction of Helen, of the laws of hospitality. Hence he is viewed by Juno as the main cause, together with the *periuria* of Laomedon, of Troy's doom.[25] Paris is again the unnamed *iudex* in Ovid's *Fasti*. This time, however, his name is not linked with Laomedon, but with Ganymede and, in a speech that is highly and mockingly evocative of the beginning of the *Aeneid*, the two are held responsible by Juno for her rage

[21] Ov. *Met.* 11.215; cf. also *Il.* 21.441–457, where the same story is narrated; Virg. *G.* 1.501–502: *satis iam pridem sanguine nostro / Laomedonteae luimus periuria Troiae*. On the passage, see Thomas 1988: *ad loc.* For a similar representation of Laomedon as a *periurus*, see also Hor. *Carm.* 3.3.22–24. See also *Aen.* 4.541–542, where Dido reproaches herself for having trusted Laomedon's descendants: *"nescis heu, perdita, necdum / Laomedonteae sentis periuria gentis?"* I thank one of the referees for this last reference.

[22] Apollo was closely connected to the Julian family and in 45 B.C. the *ludi Apollinares* were given at Caesar's expense (Dio 43.48.3): see especially Weinstock 1971: 12–15.

[23] The scene of Oenone weeping on a *vertix* seems to recall specifically Ov. *Her.* 5.61–74, where Oenone, in her letter to Paris, describes how she, searching the sea from a high rock, first saw Paris with Helen and filled holy Ida with lamentations and cries: *adspicit inmensum moles nativa profundum: / mons fuit; aequoreis illa resistit aquis. / hinc ego vela tuae cognovi prima carinae, / ... tunc vero rupique sinus et pectora planxi, / et secui madidas ungue rigente genas, / inplevique sacram querulis ululatibus Iden / illuc has lacrimas in mea saxa tuli.*

[24] See Ormand 1994: 51.

[25] Hor. *Carm.* 3.3.18–24: *"Ilion, Ilion / fatalis incestusque iudex / et mulier peregrina vertit / in pulverem, ex quo destituit deos / mercede pacta Laomedon, mihi / castaeque damnatum Minervae / cum populo et duce fraudulento."*

and unquenchable hatred against the Trojans.[26] From the *periurus* Laomedon to Paris the *iudex*, Caesar's reconstruction of the genealogy of the sons of Ilus thus becomes one and the same with the tale of the sins that eventually caused Troy's downfall.

Specific patterns of selection begin to emerge in Caesar's tour of Troy. Far from being an Alexander *redivivus*, who comes to Troy to pay homage to the great heroes of the Homeric past, Caesar's visit to the site reveals a more devious programmatic intent. Caesar's ability to see on the one hand and his blindness on the other are paradigmatic of his strategy of "remapping" history. Caesar's tour of Troy shows his desire to appropriate the history of Troy as the history of the Julian *gens*. Only direct ancestors of the Julii emerge blameless from this desolate landscape. Blame and sin characterize the other dynasties of the Trojan tale. Symptomatically, of the other two branches of the descendants of Dardanus, only Laomedon, Paris, and Ganymede, who were all so clearly connected with Troy's downfall, as we have seen, find a conspicuous position in Caesar's story of Troy. When Caesar cannot find faults, blindness, as his behavior towards monuments associated with Hector and Priam shows, will do the trick. In a recent study, Quint, followed by Ormand, has suggested that Caesar's tale of Troy is modeled on the *Aeneid*. He rightly points out that at Troy Caesar is seeking his "family roots."[27] Yet his tale of Troy is not the version of the *Aeneid*. There Priam and Hector were still crucial elements of a common Trojan heritage. Caesar's reconstruction of the Trojan past and of his "family roots" is more deviously selective. It is more dynastistically oriented. In his reconstruction, Troy becomes merely a Julian Troy where there is no longer space for the other two branches of Dardanus' heirs. In Caesar's tale of Troy these other two branches become rival dynasties to be discredited or, when this is not possible, forgotten altogether.

Yet Caesar's tale does not remain unchallenged. Through the character of the Phrygian guide, the reader is offered an alternative, antithetical story, in which the very ruins that Caesar has deliberately ignored are preserved from oblivion. As soon as Caesar treads on Hector's grave and fails to see the altar of Jupiter Herceus, the guide makes his appearance in the scene to reproach him for his violation of this sacred place: "Have you no respect for the Hercean altars?" His warning is immediately echoed by the narrator, who, commenting on the transitory fortunes of mankind, harshly cautions Caesar not to be jealous of the sacred labor of poets that alone snatches everything from fate and consecrates mortals to immortality.[28]

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[26] Ov. *F.* 6.43–44: *causa duplex irae: rapto Ganymede dolebam, / forma quoque Idaeo iudice victa mea est*; cf. Virg. *Aen.* 1.27–28: *manet alta mente repastum / iudicium Paridis spretaeque iniuria formae / et genus invisum et rapti Ganymedis honores*; cf. also Servius *ad Aen.* 3.1.

[27] Quint 1993: 6–7; Ormand 1994: 50–53.

[28] Scholars differ greatly on the interpretation of this passage. Zwierlein (1986: 466–467) sees it as specifically modeled on Alexander's visit to Troy, for both Alexander and Caesar show *invidia* towards the heroes of the past whose lives have been immortalized by poetry. Ahl (1976: 220) also

o sacer et magnus vatum labor! omnia fato
eripis et populis donas mortalibus aevum.
invidia sacrae, Caesar, ne tangere famae.   (Lucan 9.980–982)

O how sacred and immense the task of bards! You snatch everything
from fate and give eternity to mortal people.
Caesar, do not be touched by envy of their sacred fame.[29]

These verses are important. Through the narrator's voice, the tale of the guide
gains new authority. It is not just merely another, alternative tale of Troy. The
narrator's voice identifies the guide's version specifically with the *labor vatum*.[30] It
is the *labor vatum* that the guide preserves from the ruins of the past to contrast
with Caesar's version of the tale of Troy.

Troy indeed seems the most suitable place for such an important confrontation
between Caesar and the poet.[31] At Troy, Caesar's "past" and the epic poet's past
converge, and each story-teller, from different perspectives, may declare himself
to be the legitimate heir of its tale and therefore its legitimate bard. Yet neither
Caesar's version of the story nor the guide's may control and assert its superiority
over the other. After all, at Troy, as the narrator has made clear, even the
ruins have perished. The altar of Jupiter Herceus is no more recognizable than
Anchises' grotto. The grotto lies now hidden in the woods. Likewise, the altar of
Jupiter Herceus has lost any semblance of its original form. All that is left of it
are scattered stones preserving no appearance of anything sacred.

The entire passage of Caesar's visit to Troy, therefore, gains symbolic signi-
ficance. The narrator underlines the selective and subjective nature not only of
Caesar's reconstruction, but also of the poet's.[32] At Troy everyone can create
his own tale to tell. Poetry and, more specifically here, epic poetry may grant
immortality, but like Caesar's tale it is an expression only of what is not, or of
what no longer is, and is therefore subjected to the same laws of partiality.

Is there a larger function for this important pronouncement in Lucan's *Bellum
Civile*? In his seminal study on the work, Ahl has repeatedly emphasized the

emphasizes the similarities between the two episodes but highlights their differences as well, noticing
that Lucan makes no suggestions that Caesar, like Alexander, felt any need for a poet to celebrate his
deeds. The poet, not Caesar, is moved to comment on the transitory fortunes of mankind, and the
focus is on the debt Troy owes to the poets, not the debt Caesar owes them.

[29] For a different reading of line 982, cf. Ahl 1976: 219, translating the passage "Caesar, do not be
envious of the poet's holy fame." For a discussion of Ahl's reading, see Zwierlein 1986: 461–462.

[30] For an exhaustive treatment of the role of the guide and his relation to the poet, see Ormand
1994: 50, identifying the character of the guide with that of a poet. For a similar idea, see Green
1991: 252, identifying the Phrygian guide with Lucan only. For a different interpretation, see Bartsch
1997: 133–134, arguing that the second person singular (*eripis*) may be interpreted as referring
simultaneously to *labor* itself, the Phrygian guide, and Lucan himself as a poet.

[31] See also Masters 1992: 158, noticing that in his last stop at Troy, the protagonist of the "last" epic
war, Lucan's Caesar, returns to the city of the first epic war.

[32] See also Bartsch 1997: 134, attributing instead the power of reconstructing the past to the
guide/poet alone, for the activity of the guide resembles that of the poet.

connections in the poem between Troy and Rome; in this passage, too, he does
not fail to observe the close resemblance that the desolate landscape of Troy bears
with Lucan's description of the consequences of the battle of Pharsalus in Italian
territory:

But, even more powerfully, the passage revives memories of Lucan's description of the
consequences that the battle of *Pharsalia* would have for Italy ... The resemblance between
the description of Italy (7.391–408) and Troy is too close to be accidental. Lucan is saying
that the civil war and, in particular, the battle of Pharsalia, has utterly ruined Italy.[33]

After the battle of Pharsalus and after the ruinous fall of Pompey (*Magni ...
ruinam*),[34] Rome is destined to become a *fabula*, a *memorabile nomen* just like
Troy. As it had already done in Virgil, Horace, and other Augustan poets, Troy
(and its fall) works in Lucan as a model for the fall of Rome, or at least for the fall
of the Roman Republic.[35] To this analysis we may add a suggestive image that
will connect even further the two cities and their stories.

   We have previously pointed out that the altar of Jupiter Herceus, in the
literary and non-literary tradition, was unequivocally connected to one of the
most atrocious crimes committed on the last night of Troy: the murder of Priam
by Achilles' son, Neoptolemus. But the image of Priam's death, evoked in this
passage by the altar of Zeus, may also serve another function. Notoriously, in
Lucan's *Bellum Civile* the actual death of Pompey is modeled exactly on the death
of Priam as narrated in Virgil's *Aeneid*.[36] Through allusions to the *Aeneid* in

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[33] Ahl 1976: 215–216. Cf. also Ahl 1976: 215 for a comparison between Troy and Pompey himself:
the rotting trunks under which Troy now lies buried recall the description of Pompey as the rotting
oak in Book 1 and the suggestion that Troy is now a *memorabile nomen* brings to mind the rendering
of Pompey as *Magni nominis umbra*. For other important parallels between Pompey and Troy, see
Bartsch 1997: 135. Other antiphrastic allusions to the Virgilian text reinforce the connection between
Rome and Troy. As argued by Thompson and Bruère (1968: 1–21) and Martindale (1993: 49–50),
Caesar's visit to Troy is modeled on Aeneas' visit to Pallanteum where Rome will rise.

[34] Lucan 8.528–529: *potes Magni fulcire ruinam, / sub qua Roma iacet?*

[35] See also Masters 1992: 158.

[36] The image of the two headless bodies lying on the shore links the death of these two heroes in
the most obvious way: Virg. *Aen.* 2.557: *iacet ingens litore truncus*; Lucan 8.698–699: *litora Pompeium
feriunt, truncusque vadosis / huc illuc iactatur aquis.* The closure of both scenes is also similar in tone. It
is built on an antithesis, tragic in its structure, between the greatness of the past and the nothingness
to which the two heroes have fallen: Lucan 8.701–704: *hac fortuna fide Magni tam prospera fata /
pertulit, hac illum summo de culmine rerum / mota petit cladesque omnis exegit in uno / saeva die quibus
immunes tot praestitit annos*; *Aen.* 2.554–557: *haec finis Priami fatorum, hic exitus illum / sorte tulit Troiam
incensam et prolapsa uidentem / Pergama, tot quondam populis terrisque superbum / regnatorem Asiae.*
Verbal allusions to Priam's death are many and have been rightly noted by scholars; see especially
Narducci 1973: 317–325, also pointing out the following verbal correspondences: *Fortuna ... Magni
... prospera fata / pertulit* (Lucan 8.701–702) echoes the Virgilian *fatorum ... exitus illum / sorte tulit
(Aen.* 2.554–555). The iteration *hac ... fide / ... hac* (Lucan 8.701–702) recalls *haec finis ... hic exitus
(Aen.* 554). Divergences between the two accounts are also remarkable. Lucan's final vision of Pompey
is not a dignified reflection, but a paradox. One expects a headless body to be unrecognizable, hence
Virgil's *sine nomine corpus*, but Lucan fancies that the loss of his head is the very thing that identifies
Pompey (Lucan 8.711: *una nota est Magno capitis iactura revulsi*). See further Narducci 1973: 322.

the *Bellum Civile*, the death of Priam and the death of Pompey are constantly assimilated. Hence, in this passage, the altar of Jupiter Herceus, a tragic reminder of Priam's fate, becomes in turn evocative of Pompey's death as well. The common destiny endured by the altar of Jupiter and the grave of Pompey in Lucan's *Bellum Civile* strengthens even further the connections between the two. The altar of Jupiter Herceus, like the grave of Hector, is now a heap of scattered stones lying about without a semblance of anything sacred, unrecognizable without the help of the guide. Likewise the grave of the mutilated body of Pompey will suffer, in the narrator's words, the same fate, for a visitor from Rome would pass it by if it were not pointed out (8.822: *quod nisi monstratum Romanus transeat hospes*).[37] As for the altar of Jupiter, so also the grave of Pompey needs the aid of a guide/poet, a *monstrator*, who can tell and preserve its tale.[38]

Through these evocative images, Rome and Troy become interchangeable, and Caesar's tour of Troy becomes simultaneously a metaphorical tour of Rome and its most recent history. Symptomatically, Caesar is shown duplicating his own actions towards the *Urbs*. It is here at Troy that he crosses another river, the Xanthus, replicating the very action that marked the beginning of the civil wars: the crossing of the Rubicon.[39] Nevertheless, the differences are also significant. At the outset of the civil war, the Rubicon, the limit of Italian territory, is swollen (*tumidumque per amnem*), ready to resist Caesar's aggression (Lucan 1.204). Now, as all Italy after the civil wars is a heap of ruins, so also the river that Caesar crosses is nothing more than a dried-up stream, winding through the dust.[40]

More importantly, as the story of Troy is associated with that of Rome, Caesar's tale acquires new meaning. The two antithetical tales of Troy championed by Caesar and the Phrygian guide also become symbolic of two antithetical tales of Rome's history. In a self-referential act, the poet/guide becomes Lucan himself and the tale he preserves for posterity becomes his own text, "his" version of the tale of Rome that is antithetical to Caesar's.[41] Interrupting the third person narrative that has characterized the account so far, the narrator breaks into an apostrophe reminding Caesar precisely of this: "the future generations will read you and me, our Pharsalia shall live on, and no age will ever doom us to oblivion":

On the intertextual link between Virgil's Priam and Lucan's Pompey, see also Bowie 1990: 470–481; Hinds 1998: 8–10.

[37] See Mayer 1981: *ad loc.*

[38] On the term *monstrator*, see Ormand 1994: 50.

[39] The passage is also evocative of *Aen.* 3.350, when Aeneas arrives at Buthrotum and sees the new river Xanthus, which like Caesar's Xanthus is just a dried-up stream, a replica *in deterioribus* of the original (*Aen.* 3.350–351: *arentem Xanthi cognomine rivum / agnosco*). Significantly, in Virgil's passage Aeneas looks at the river, while Caesar crosses it.

[40] On Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon, see Masters 1992: 1–10; Goerler 1976: 291–308. The adjective *inscius* that characterizes Caesar's crossing of the Xanthus is all the more significant if we take into account that Caesar's *Commentarii* also ignored the Rubicon and made the capture of Ariminum the first of Caesar's actions in the civil war. See further Masters 1992: 3.

[41] For the figure of the guide and the poet/Lucan, see also Bartsch 1997: 134; Ormand 1994: 50.

venturi me teque legent; Pharsalia nostra
vivet, et a nullo tenebris damnabimur aevo.

(Lucan 9.985–986)[42]

In a recent book, Masters advances the hypothesis that Lucan's *Bellum Civile* is modeled directly on Caesar's *Bellum Civile*. Masters notices that Lucan's poem, as it stands (and he believes that the work was completed), begins and ends almost exactly where Caesar's *Bellum Civile* began and ended and that this work served as Lucan's main model or better antimodel:

Knowing what we do about the techniques of *imitatio*, we are in a better position to see that Lucan may have chosen his model not as a "source" for facts—with which, in any case, he was probably largely familiar—but as *a point of departure*. It is in these terms, I believe, that we should view the relationship between Lucan and Caesar. Lucan need not have relied on Caesar for his facts; but I wish here to sustain the hypothesis, advanced first by Griset, Haffter, and Rambaud, that Lucan's *Bellum Civile* is a deliberate counterpoise to Caesar's commentary of the same name; that, in short, just as Lucan opposes and confronts Virgil in the domain of literary epic, so does he oppose and confront Caesar in the domain of history.[43]

If Masters's suggestion is correct, this passage becomes a programmatic statement, a clear poetic manifesto. The verb *legent* that Lucan uses here would not need any alteration from its original sense, but it would simply mean what it actually means: "the future generations will read you and me, my account and your account, Lucan's *Bellum Civile* and Caesar's *Bellum Civile*." Yet both versions are just what they are. They are only partial accounts of an irretrievable past. Lucan's programmatic manifesto about his poetic enterprise coexists with the awareness of its arbitrariness. The comparison with the Phrygian guide makes it clear. As the Phrygian guide, so also the narrator of the ruins of Rome sees and tells what is no longer there. His account is doomed to be as selective and subjective as Caesar's.[44]

Do then the poet and Caesar come out even from this confrontation? Lucan seems to warn the reader to the contrary. As the poet's apostrophe comes to an end, the narration resumes and here we find Caesar, who, ending his tour through the ruins of Troy, ruins that are both the physical ruins of Troy and the figurative

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[42] This passage has not found unanimous interpretation. Hermann (1970: 283–287) believed that lines 980–986 had been misplaced and were part of the proemium of Lucan's *BC*. Ciechanowicz (1982: 265–275) interprets the entire passage as an encomium of Nero and his poetic achievements. The apostrophe "Caesar" would, therefore, refer here to Nero and the problematic *me teque legent* at line 985 would refer correspondingly to Lucan's *Pharsalia* and Nero's *Troica*. Johnson (1987: 120–121) interprets it as a brilliant parody of a vatic affirmation of the power of poetry and the immortality it confers both on its *laudandus* and its *laudator*. Similarly Zwierlein (1986: 477) reads Lucan's promise to immortalize Caesar's accomplishments in his poetry as entirely sarcastic. Both scholars implicitly interpret the difficult *me teque legent Pharsalia nostra* as Housman (1926: 296) did: "proelium a te gestum, a me scriptum." See also Ormand 1994: 52–53.

[43] Masters 1992: 17–18. For a full discussion of the end of Lucan's *Bellum Civile* with relevant bibliography, see Masters 1992: 216–259.

[44] See further Bartsch 1997: 136–137; Ormand 1994: 53–54.

ruins of Rome, makes the following promise as he addresses the gods of the ashes in his capacity as the descendant of Aeneas:

> ".... date felices in cetera cursus,
> restituam populos; grata vice moenia reddent
> Ausonidae Phrygibus, Romanaque Pergama surgent."   (Lucan 9.997–999)

> "Grant me a prosperous passage for the future:
> I shall restore the people; in gratitude the Ausonians will give back
> their walls to the Phrygians, and Pergamum will rise Roman."

As his predecessor Aeneas had founded a Trojan Rome, Caesar will now found a Roman Pergamum. Caesar has taken up, once again, a new role. From writer of "history" now Caesar becomes the "architect," the founder of a new city and hence of a new story. Caesar will undertake this task alone. The narrator cannot compete with him in this new enterprise. The narrator can only warn us about the fallacy and the dangers of Caesar's promise: the rebuilding of the city of Troy is an impossibility, as is the rebuilding of the walls of Rome. Through Caesar's tour of Troy, the narrator has shown that Caesar has neither the ability nor the will to accomplish that. After all Caesar cannot rebuild something of which he has, or pretends to have, no memory. From the ashes and ruins of Troy and Rome Caesar will indeed build a new city, but its resemblance to its predecessors is bound to be as selective and partial as Caesar's memory of it. Its connections with its history are doomed to be critically severed. As founder of the new dynastic family who will rule over the destiny of Rome, Caesar in the end will indeed rebuild the walls of a new city, but he will neither restore the people (*restituam populos*) nor will he bring back the ancient walls (*moenia reddent*) as he had vowed. Caesar's role as a founder is bound to mirror his role of writer. As Caesar the writer has fashioned from the ruins of the past a Julian history, so, from these same ruins, Caesar the founder will build a Julian Rome.

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