

## PROBLEMS OF CHRONOLOGY IN LUCAN'S CAREER

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The ancient evidence for Lucan's life, and for the dating of his various writings, has been examined many times by scholars; but the usual judgment has been that the evidence is not only excessively scanty but also unreliable.<sup>1</sup> As a result, there has been little agreement between the various attempts to elucidate the chronology of Lucan's life and work.<sup>2</sup> Of the fifteen literary productions attested by ancient biographers and other references, only the *De bello civili* survives, although some fragments have been preserved from the *Iliacon*, *Catachthonion*, *Orpheus*, and *Epigrammata* (Hosius 328-30), as well as a few others from unidentified works (Hosius 330-31). Inquiries have naturally centered on the *De bello civili*, and for the date and composition of this poem alone the disagreement among scholars is enormously wide. For obvious reasons, it is even harder to find a secure date for the other works, only a few of which survive even in fragments.

The present disagreement about the *De bello civili* would seem to indicate that the evidence about the poem is simply not sufficient to justify any reliable and sound conclusion. However, in this paper I shall review once again the external evidence and—with proper qualifications—the internal evidence of the *De bello civili* itself, in order to produce a consistent time-scheme for the composition and publication of the poem; this will then be shown to have some bearing on the whole question of Lucan's poetic career and the progression and

<sup>1</sup> The fragments and *testimonia* are most conveniently collected by C. Hosius in his third Teubner edition (Leipzig 1913) 328 ff., henceforth cited as **Hosius**. Another fragment of the *Iliacon* is suggested by J. D. P. Bolton, *CQ* n.s. 6 (1956) 238.

<sup>2</sup> For some suggested chronologies, H. Genthe, *De Lucani vita et scriptis* (Halle 1859) 36; C. F. Weber, *Ind. Lect. Acad. Marburg* (1857) 20; F. Marx, *RE* 1 (1894) 2227-28, s.v. "Annaeus 9" (henceforth cited as **Marx**).

development of his literary interests and activities, from the first juvenile *tours-de-force* to historical epic.

Perhaps one clarification of the method of argument is needed. Any coherent information provided by the ancient evidence, where the state of the text does not lie directly under suspicion, will be assumed to be at least worth considering unless there is some good reason to reject it or treat it with special caution. This is not to say that the evidence, when duly tested for *prima facie* reliability, is then to be considered as giving indubitable truth; on the other hand, if all the external evidence is found to be completely in agreement on any point hitherto disputed, it would seem reasonable to accept it without excessive scepticism.

In the present inquiry, the best starting-point will be the *De bello civili* itself, since the poem itself has survived, and there is a reasonable amount of evidence about it. The inquiry into the date of the poem, as far as positive arguments are concerned, will confine itself to the external evidence, although obvious features of the poem, where relevant, will be taken into account. The method of arguing the date of a work from internal evidence tends to be logically circular, and therefore supposed allusions in the *De bello civili* will be listed separately in an appendix. The sole value of these "allusions," therefore, will be as a negative test of the date argued from external evidence; the question will be simply whether supposed internal evidence is *consistent* with the conclusions reached in the main body of the present article.

The chronology of the *De bello civili* involves the following questions: (1) When was it started? (2) How quickly was it written? (3) When was it formally published, in whole or in part, by Lucan? (4) What parts, if any, were not formally published by Lucan? (5) What signs are there of incompleteness, either rewriting or revision with major additions? Involved in question 5 is a complication which has recently arisen: in 1958 Haffter argued that the poem is complete, except for some incomplete passages towards the end.<sup>3</sup> Previously it had always been thought that Lucan had intended to continue the narrative through at least twelve books; perhaps, according to the most commonly held opinion, as far as the death of Cato. It should

<sup>3</sup> H. Haffter, *MH* 14 (1956) 118; against, V. Buchheit, *RhM* 104 (1961) 362-65; W. Rutz, *Lustrum* 9 (1964) 263-64. See also J. Brisset, *Les idées politiques de Lucain* (Paris 1964) 163 (henceforth cited as **Brisset**).

be pointed out that several other projected endings have been suggested by scholars—such as the death of Caesar, the battles of Philippi, and even the battle of Actium.<sup>4</sup> However, for the purposes of the present inquiry, question 5 will assume that the text of Lucan's poem, as we have it, is incomplete; that is, that Lucan *did* intend to write more.

1. When was the poem started? The majority of scholars have opted for a date around 61.<sup>5</sup> But this is of course pure guesswork, since it depends upon question 2. For this reason, the most extreme early and late dates which have been suggested are not open to direct refutation. These are ca. 58 (Bagnani) and July 64 (Vitelli).<sup>6</sup> Bagnani's date has attracted little attention, and indeed it was put forth only as a subsidiary point in his attempt to date Petronius' *Satyricon*. Vitelli's theory, on the other hand, has attracted much attention, but has always been flatly rejected, with great confidence, as being essentially improbable and implying a speed of composition without parallel among Roman writers of epic. However, Lucan's precocity as a major poet by the age of 25 is also without parallel, and it is somewhat gratuitous to assume that the young and hot-headed Spaniard wrote as carefully as Vergil and Horace. The only way of dating the commencement of the *De bello civili* is by the perilous and suspect test of internal allusions. However, the results of question 2 could be damaging to Vitelli's theory; if it could be shown that Lucan wrote slowly and carefully, then it *would* be quite impossible for him to have started his epic only eight months before his death.

2. How quickly was the poem written? On the one hand, there is no reason to suppose that Lucan did write slowly. On the other, there are some indications that he wrote, or could write, remarkably quickly. First, he achieved fame at the Neronia of 60 for extemporizing an epyllion *Orpheus*, which was presumably in hexameters (Hosius 335.21–25). If a poet could write *ex tempore* a poem in a difficult meter and of some length, which could win for him at least a modicum of praise from Roman literary circles in a contest against what must

<sup>4</sup> For some suggested endings, Rutz (above, note 3) 266–71.

<sup>5</sup> Marx 2228–29; Weber (above, note 2) 20; G. de Plinval, *Latomus* 15 (1956) 517; A. Puntoni, *RAL* 8.2 (1947) 102; J. M. C. Toynbee, *CQ* 36 (1942) 88; C. Hosius, *Jahrbücher f. Philologie* 145 (1892) 353.

<sup>6</sup> G. Bagnani, *Arbiter of Elegance* (Toronto 1954) 8; C. Vitelli, *SIFC* 8 (1900) 33.

have been considerable opposition shortly after his twentieth birthday, this shows that he had an exceptional ability to write quickly; and since Lucan also published his *Orpheus*, it seems that he did not require of his literary productions long and careful composition and polishing before giving them to the public. Of course, his feat of extemporizing may have been lessened by the use of previously-learned or memorized material, but the other competitors must have had the same opportunity to do this.

Second, the major stylistic fault of the *De bello civili*, by universal consent,<sup>7</sup> is Lucan's lack of industriously varied rhythm and diction and choice of words—as opposed to the tradition of Vergil and Horace, continued by Persius, Petronius, and Nero himself.<sup>8</sup> This monotony of rhythm and language is most easily explained by supposing that the *De bello civili* was written fairly quickly, once the outline and structure of the poem had been sketched out. Third, the poem on the subject of the Civil War which Petronius includes in the *Satyricon* (119–24) not only echoes the basic stylistic faults of Lucan<sup>9</sup> as well as much of his subject-matter and even diction, but is also given an introduction in the preceding narrative. In 115.2 we find the “author” of the poem, Eumolpus, on board a wrecked ship scribbling (*ingerentem*) a poem—presumably the poem on the Civil War—straight onto parchment, without any preliminary sketches or corrections on papyrus. The Neronian audience of the *Satyricon* must have been aware that Nero did not write in this way. This part of the *Satyricon* (115–24) seems to have been written shortly after Lucan's death,<sup>10</sup> and it might be possible to detect an even earlier allusion to Lucan in Petronius' verses in 108.14, which start with the phrase *quis furor*.<sup>11</sup> In 118.1–6 Petronius

<sup>7</sup> See the full collection of examples listed by W. E. Heitland in Haskins' edition (London 1887) lxxxi–iv, xciv–ci.

<sup>8</sup> For careful composition, Persius 3.10–14, Suetonius, *Nero* 52.3. For rapid writing, Horace, *Sat.* 1.4.9, Martial 8.20, Catullus 22.4–8.

<sup>9</sup> This question is fully analyzed by F. T. Baldwin, *The Bellum Civile of Petronius* (New York 1911), and by H. Stubbe, *Philologus*, Suppl. 25 (1933).

<sup>10</sup> K. F. C. Rose, *CQ* n.s. 12 (1962) 166–68.

<sup>11</sup> If Petronius does allude to Lucan by the phrase *quis furor*, this would be a possible confirmation of the usually discredited story in the Voss Life (Hosius 337.17–22) that Lucan's opening line was originally 1.8, *quis furor o cives*. Petronius may have heard a recital of Book 1 in which line 8 was the first line; but of course the use of *quis furor* may be pure coincidence. For a full discussion of the Voss story, G.-B. Conte, *Maia* 18 (1966) 42.

returns to the question of Lucan's poetry. Eumolpus delivers a diatribe, presumably as Petronius' mouthpiece at this point, against "impetuous young men" (he obviously means Lucan alone), and one of his main criticisms is, that "they" write too fast and too casually:

multos *iuvenes*<sup>12</sup> carmen decipit. nam ut quisque versum pedibus instruxit  
sensumque teneriorem verborum ambitu intexuit, putavit se *continuo* in  
Heliconem venisse. . . . credentes *facilius* poema extrui posse quam con-  
troversiam sententiolis vibrantibus pictam. . . . testis . . . Horatii *curiosa*  
felicitas. . . . belli civilis ingens opus quisquis attigerit, nisi plenus litteris  
*sub onere labetur*.

The poem which Eumolpus recites, in addition, is described as an *impetus* (118.6). Thus we have from Petronius contemporary evidence that Lucan wrote, at least in the opinion of the Neronian court circle, with exceptional and exceptionable speed.

From this examination of question 2, it appears that Vitelli's suggested date is not *completely* impossible. Lucan died on April 30, 65. If he started the *De bello civili* after the Fire of Rome, as Vitelli suggests (i.e. in late July 64), he could have completed the 8,060<sup>13</sup> lines of the poem while averaging less than thirty lines a day; this, surely, is by no means beyond the abilities of an impetuous and highly-talented young poet with a gift for extemporizing verses, especially if he had previously sketched out a tentative outline or plot-structure before actually starting the composition of the epic poem. However, it

<sup>12</sup> Some textual problems are involved in this passage. The oldest mss. of the O-class have *multos inquit Eumolpus o iuvenes*, though the Renaissance O-class mss. omit the *o*, followed by Bücheler. The L-class mss. have *Eumolpus. multos o iuvenes*. The Florilegia have simply *multos nimirum. inquit Eumolpus* is clearly an interpolation, and since Eumolpus seems to be talking to Encolpius alone (Corax and Giton are not paying attention, cf. 117.12) it seems that *o* is also interpolated. It is also possible that the whole scene involving the Civil War poem may not be in its original place in the narrative, since there are lacunae before and after it; but from 124.2 it appears that during the journey to Croton Eumolpus delivers some sort of monologue. If the lacuna at the end of 117 is quite small, the activities of Corax and Giton provide a not very polite or serious background to Eumolpus' pronouncements.

<sup>13</sup> Housman in his edition (revised, Oxford 1927) xxvi, deals with the question of spurious and missing lines. In his text he deletes one line from the first triad (1.282), five from the second (4.171, 5.650/1, 6.187, 207, 556), ten from the third (7.154, 161, 257-58, 388, 746-48, 9.160, 494) and one from book 10 (518). He fills possible lacunae at 2.703, 5.535, 9.674, 10.122, 472. The *average* number of lines in the triads is not materially affected by these few doubtful passages.

would be as imprudent and rather implausible to insist on Vitelli's dating as to reject it roundly out of hand.

3. When was the poem published? It is clearly stated by the Vacca life of Lucan (Hosius 335.25) that Lucan published only three books of the *De bello civili*. This evidence, plus the later statement in Vacca's account that the *reliqui vii belli civilis libri* were not finally revised by the poet, makes it clear that the third book of the *De bello civili* was the last thing published by Lucan. It is out of the question that Vacca refers to books other than the first three; no one would publish individual books of a historical epic out of chronological sequence.<sup>14</sup> The usual date conjectured for the publication of the first three books is around 63,<sup>15</sup> but the evidence which we have suggests a different date.

Lucan's publication of the *De bello civili*, and of any other poetry, and also his pleading in the law-courts, was halted by order of Nero. The cause of this ban was the jealousy of the emperor, although of course the clash must also be viewed in the context of the increasing tension, in the second half of Nero's reign, between the Stoic circles led by Seneca and the less earnest literary group led by Petronius. Vacca's account associates the *De bello civili* with the ban: "ediderat . . . tres libros quales videmus. quare inimicum sibi fecit imperatorem." The ban is recorded also by Cassius Dio, who dates it to the year 65.<sup>16</sup> His account confirms that of Vacca by giving the cause of the ban as the great praise which Lucan's poetry earned. Tacitus, also under the year 65, records that Lucan came hastening to join the Pisonian conspiracy, smarting with resentment because of the ban.<sup>17</sup> The Voss Life (Hosius 337.4-5) says nothing about the ban, but merely records an earlier, friendly rivalry between Lucan and Nero.

The most confusing evidence is that given by the Suetonius Life

<sup>14</sup> Books other than the first three are suggested by R. Pichon, *Les Sources de Lucain* (Paris 1912) 270-71, and by V. Ussani, *RFIC* 29 (1901) 59. Their arguments are without value; see Brisset 181-82.

<sup>15</sup> The year 63 is presumed by Marx, Hosius, Nock, Lejay, Puntoni, Schönberger, and many others.

<sup>16</sup> Dio 62.29.4: ὁ δὲ δὴ Λουκανὸς ἐκωλύθη ποιεῖν, ἐπειδὴ ἰσχυρῶς ἐπὶ τῇ ποιήσει ἐπηνείτο.

<sup>17</sup> Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.49: "Lucanum propriae causae accendebant, quod famam carminum eius premebat Nero prohibueratque ostentare, vanus adsimulatione."

(Hosius 332). The text seems to be full of lacunae, and reads as follows:

... non tamen permansit in gratia. siquidem aegre ferens <\*\*\*> recitante subito ac nulla nisi refrigerandi sui causa indicto senatu recessisset, neque verbis adversus principem neque factis excitantibus post haec temperavit.

It seems fairly clear that Nero is the subject of *recessisset*, because of *indicto senatu*; similarly, *aegre ferens*, agreeing with the subject of *permansit*, implies that Lucan was offended by Nero's withdrawal. Thus, unless we insist upon adopting various hazardous emendations, or positing a large lacuna before *recitante*, there is no reason to see in the Suetonius account any evidence materially opposed to the account given by Vacca and the historians. But since the text is so uncertain, especially in the matter of possible lacunae, it is perhaps better not to build any argument upon this account for the dating of the poem.<sup>18</sup>

The evidence stresses Lucan's impetuosity, and therefore it is likely that the ban followed soon after the quarrel, since Lucan's retaliation to the quarrel must have been immediate and violent. Vacca refers to Lucan's *iuvenilis animi calor*, and the Suetonius Life records some spectacular instances of his indignation (Hosius 333.2-10).

As noted above, Dio dates the ban to 65; Tacitus, under the same year, records that a very angry Lucan joined Piso's conspiracy. The plot does not seem to have been a serious enterprise for long before the year 65. Its secrets were not at all well kept, and it is unlikely that it can have been brewing for very long before its discovery; Tigellinus' secret police seems to have been fairly effective.<sup>19</sup> It appears from Tacitus' account that Lucan joined the conspiracy *after* it had started to take shape, and therefore it must have been in the year 65 that he enlisted in the cause, perhaps not long before it collapsed. His own indiscretion (Hosius 333.6-10) may have helped to warn the government that trouble was brewing in Stoic circles, more serious

<sup>18</sup> The Suetonius text is used as a basis for argument in a rather arbitrary fashion by G. K. Gresseth, *CP* 52 (1957) 24; cf. G. Pfligersdorffer, *Hermes* 87 (1959) 355.

<sup>19</sup> Tacitus, *Ann.* 14.65 (62 A.D.) might indicate an early formation of the plot, but see R. Syme, *Tacitus* (Oxford 1958) 745. For the whole plot, H. de la Ville de Mirmont, *REA* 15 (1913) 405; 16 (1914) 45, 197, 295. It appears from *Ann.* 15.48 that the plot began only after the beginning of the year 65: "ineunt deinde consulatum Silius Nerva et Atticus Vestinus, coepta simul et aucta coniuratione." For the careless way in which the secret was kept, see *Ann.* 15.51.

than the literary and ideological tension between Stoic and Neronian mentioned above.

The evidence of Statius (*Silvae* 2.7) may be of some value in our attempt to determine the date of publication of Books 1–3. He says, in a survey of Lucan's major literary works (which must surely be in chronological order)<sup>20</sup> that the *De bello civili* was being written after the *De incendio urbis* and the *Adlocutio ad Pollam*. The first of these minor works cannot be before July 64, and the second is presumably still later. Thus Statius seems to associate the *De bello civili* with the last few months of Lucan's life. The actual words which Statius uses show quite clearly that he is mentioning Lucan's works in chronological order, and also what idea he had of the sequence of Lucan's later works; after the mention of the *De incendio urbis* (lines 60–61) he continues (62–66):

*hinc castae titulum decusque Pollae  
iucunda dabis adlocutione.  
mox coepta generosior iuventa  
albos ossibus Italis Philippos  
et Pharsalica bella detonabis.*

Statius, then, thinks of the *De bello civili* as being composed, or of parts being published, in the last few months of Lucan's life (102–4):

*dum pugnas canis arduaque voce  
das solatia grandibus sepulcris—  
o dirum scelus, o scelus!—tacebis.*

Thus the *De bello civili* started to appear after July 64, and Lucan was still working on it when he died (*dum pugnas canis*). This, then,

<sup>20</sup> Vacca's list is the fullest, giving everything except the *Famosum carmen* (which must have been unpublished) mentioned by Suetonius, and the *Adlocutio ad Pollam*, which Statius obviously makes a point of mentioning because he himself is addressing Polla. It is quite evident that Statius describes Lucan's major works in chronological order, prudently passing over the poetry written at Nero's court. But Vacca's list can hardly be in chronological order, and he does not even list all of Lucan's works in the same context. Vacca lists the *De incendio urbis* directly after the Sagitta speeches, but this may be because he includes the *De incendio* and the *Epistulae ex Campania* under the phrase *prosa oratione*, which qualifies the Sagitta speeches; cf. M. J. McGann, *CQ* n.s. 7 (1957) 126–28.

In the Suetonius Life there is another difficulty for the chronology; the text seems to refer to the *Laudes Neronis* and the *Orpheus* as Lucan's *prima ingenii experimenta*—but there may be a lacuna after *experimenta*.



is in harmony with the dates provided by Dio and Tacitus for the ban; Books 1-3 were probably published in 65 or possibly very late 64.<sup>21</sup>

4. What parts were formally published? This question has already been answered under 3; *editio*, in the sense of making the work available to the general public and having copies on sale, is confined to the first three books, unless Lucan took the extraordinary step of giving his epic to the world in instalments out of chronological order. Of course, he may well have *recited* passages from Books 4-10 in private, and even circulated copies to his friends; Nero's ban would not have prevented that. Some knowledge of the later books may even have reached the Neronian circle in this way.<sup>22</sup>

5. What signs are there of incompleteness or re-working? Housman could only discern a few awkward phrases in Books 9 and 10.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, that these two books were not ready for publication is shown by their peculiar length; Book 9 has 1108 lines, and Book 10 has only 546, whereas the average for all ten books is 806. But in the other unpublished books, 4-8, there does not appear to be any significant indication of serious incompleteness. Is there anything in their *content* which makes them significantly different from Books 1-3?

Traditionally, scholars have believed that Books 1-3 are relatively favorable to Nero and the Empire, whereas from Book 4 onwards there is a crescendo of anti-Neronian *Tendenz* and republicanism. This traditional view now appears to be little more than an illusion.<sup>24</sup> In 1.33-66 there does seem to be flattery of Nero, but this flattery may not be free from irony (cf. the appendix). Nero's ancestor Domitius is favorably mentioned in 2.478-91, 507-10, 517-25; but this is true also of 7.219-20, 599-604, 610-15. Further, in Books 4-6 there is not a scrap more anti-Neronian or anti-Caesarian material than in Books 1-3; in fact, Books 4-6 seem if anything somewhat

<sup>21</sup> The ban is dated to 65 by M. Pavan, *AIV* 113 (1955) 218.

<sup>22</sup> See Rose (above, note 10) 167-68.

<sup>23</sup> Housman (above, note 13) xxx.

<sup>24</sup> The theory seems to have originated with G. Boissier, *L'opposition sous les Césars* (Paris 1875) 292-93. It has been accepted by most scholars, including Puntoni (above, note 5) 111, who thinks that the anti-Cesarism in the first three books is only rhetorical. See also V. L. Holliday, *DA* (1962) 2787-88. For correction of Boissier, J. Cousin, *RCC* 1938-39, 2.142-46; E. Griset, *RSC* 3 (1955) 56; Brisset 175-92; Rutz (above, note 3) 254; O. Schönberger, *Hermes* 87 (1959) 346-47.

milder than 1-3 in their treatment of such topics. This is not explained by the differing subject-matter; Lucan elsewhere shows great ingenuity in injecting wrathful passages about politics into contexts which would not normally require or invite such digressions.

The change in tone and subject-matter begins, not in Book 4, but in Book 7. With the beginning of this book, Lucan's orthodox Stoic "republicanism," rhetorical anti-Cesarism, and sympathy for Pompey change into more direct criticisms of, and allusions to, contemporary political events and institutions. In Book 7 the dominant theme is the tyranny of Caesar and of *his descendants*; through most of Book 8, Lucan spends an inordinate amount of time railing at the shameful corruption of Rome and the Romans by the Parthian menace and the decadent East, and he complains that the shame of Carrhae remains unavenged. All this can scarcely refer to the Augustan settlement of the Armenian question, but rather to the Neronian solution, which was for some people disappointingly non-expansionist and did not include the annexation of Armenia, let alone a real victory over the power of Parthia.<sup>25</sup> In Book 9 the climax is a eulogistic portrayal of the Stoic hero and martyr, the younger Cato. Apart from these dominant themes, Books 7-9 contain far more sustained, pointed, and violent political language and passages than any of the first six books.<sup>26</sup>

It appears likely that these three themes in Books 7-9 are directly inspired by the political situation in which Lucan found himself involved, as a member of the literary Stoic group in Rome, during the last few months of his life: the increasing tyranny of Nero and his disregard for senatorial tradition and authority, his settlement of the Armenian problem (politically prudent, but lacking in military glory), and the growing idealization of the prospect of martyrdom in the

<sup>25</sup> E. M. Sandford, *Studies in Honor of E. K. Rand* (New York 1938) 255; Brisset 193. Contrast 7.387, 389, 423, 431 with 8.289 ff.

<sup>26</sup> The scope of this paper does not permit an exhaustive presentation of the evidence. The following figures are, perhaps, sufficient illustration of the difference between the triads. Omitting book 10, I list the number of occurrences of words in each triad, in the sequence 1-3, 4-6, and 7-9. Examples listed are those in which the context has a political nature. *liber/libertas* 13-6-21; *imperium* 2-4-9; *tyrannus* 1-2-20; *populus* 57-31-64; *rex/regnum/regnare/regere* 37-45-108; *fas/nefas* 17-21-26; *dominus/domitor* 7-9-17; *scelus* 19-18-37; *servire/servilis/servitium* 2-6-10. An approximate total of the number of *passages* dealing with liberty and tyranny gives the ratio 12-8-33.

defense of *libertas*—Suetonius (Hosius 333.7–9) records that Lucan, after the ban, went around saying how glorious it was to slay a tyrant, “multus in gloria tyrannicidarum palam praedicanda ac plenus minarum.”

Another feature of Books 7–9 is that they are somewhat longer than 1–6. The average for 1–3 is 731, for 4–6 it is 823, and for 7–9 it is 931. It is possible that Lucan intended Book 9 to end somewhat earlier than it does in our texts, and this would restore Book 10 to a more standard length; Books 7 and 8 both have 872 lines, and the average for 9 and 10 is 875.<sup>27</sup> Guyetus (Hosius *ad loc.*) suggests 9.999 as the intended stopping-place; 9.949 is perhaps preferable. At all events, the greater overall length of Books 7–9 might be explained by the supposition that Lucan added passages to them after the ban.

The situation may be summed up thus: (1) At least three books were completed, and only three were published, before the ban. (2) Books 4–6 are apparently no more angry than 1–3, and seem just as complete, though somewhat longer. (3) Books 1–6 are on average much shorter than 7–9. (4) It is natural to suppose that Lucan's poetry became much more angry after the ban, and this is implied by Suetonius' account of Lucan's behavior after the quarrel. (5) Books 7–9 are full of passages much more angry than anything found in the first six books (see above, note 26). Thus it looks as though Books 4–6 were almost ready for publication at the time of the ban, whereas 7–9 were in a much less finished state. The relative shortness of Books 1–3 is presumably due to some final pruning on Lucan's part before final publication; in 4–6, the pruning is in a more advanced state than in 7–10. It seems that after the ban Lucan inserted angry passages into Books 7–9 and possibly 10 also, while leaving the last book incomplete, and not clearly indicating the book-division between 9 and 10.

<sup>27</sup> Herein seems to lie the explanation of the puzzling phrase in Vacca, *tres libros (edidit) quales videmus*. It must have been obvious to any scholar in antiquity that there was something odd about the book-divisions in 9 and 10, and Vacca had learned that Lucan himself had published only the first three. Hence his phrase means “the book-divisions, as we see them in our texts, are Lucan's official book-divisions only for the first three.” A. Rostagni, *Suetonio, De poetis e biografi minori* (Torino 1944) 176–78, argues that the Vacca life preceded an edition of Lucan (possibly dating to the first century A.D.), but this is not a necessary hypothesis and does not affect the present argument.

The hypothesis suggested in the previous paragraph may appear rather elaborate, but it does explain what would otherwise be a peculiar situation, which seems to have attracted little attention. The publication of only three books is peculiar for this reason: why did Lucan publish them in 65, at a time when—according to most scholars—he still had at least two more books to write? This makes sense only if Lucan intended to finish his revision of Books 4–10 very rapidly, and also write and complete the presumed Books 11–12 (or even more) in not many months. On Haffter's hypothesis, of course, that Lucan did not intend to write much more, the date of publication for Books 1–3 makes much more sense. As suggested above, 4–6 were almost ready for publication at the time of Lucan's death, and even the presumed insertions into 7–9 do not betray any great amount of unevenness.

Thus the situation and nature of the last four books is in harmony with the date of publication suggested by the external evidence, provided by Dio, Tacitus, and Vacca. The publication of Books 1–3, and Nero's ban on Lucan's publishing, both belong to the year 65.

As mentioned above, Vitelli argued that Lucan had written *all* of the *De bello civili* between mid-July 64 and April 30, 65. Although a very remote possibility, this theory is still not out of the question. The weakness of Vitelli's theory is that it does not explain why Books 4–6 are so mild compared with 7–9. It is better to assume that *before the ban* Lucan had written much, or most, of Books 4–6, and that he may have written a large part of 7–10. It is also possible that he had been sketching out the rough outlines of his epic for some time before he actually began its composition in verse. Thus, if he did intend to proceed further than Book 10, the ban halted his work on that book; in which case he spent the last few weeks of his life adding passages to Books 7–9.

The chronology suggested above, at least in rough outline, will stand whether Lucan intended to proceed further or not. The important point is that the ban halted work on Book 10, whether there was still a great deal more narrative planned or only a brief addition (as Haffter suggests). Few scholars have accepted Haffter's arguments. The objections, as summarized by Rutz, do not add up to much.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> See the references given above, note 3.

But Haffter himself overlooked a vital piece of evidence. Vacca (Hosius 336.12-17), while discussing the incompleteness of the *De bello civili*, sums up the situation with an adaptation of Ovid's words (*Tristia* 1.7.40): *emendaturus si licuisset erat*. That is not how one describes a poem lacking several books. The Voss Life (Hosius 337.14) refers to the poem as containing *quaedam . . . imperfecta*, but in the context this evidence is suspect, since the author is discussing some corrections and alterations made by Seneca! The words of Statius already quoted, *dum pugnas canis . . . tacebis*, of which Buchheit makes so much, are quite consistent with Haffter's theory; it must have been obvious to everybody that the *De bello civili* was not complete to the final touch—which is all that can be safely deduced from Statius' words.

Now that Lucan's major work, the *De bello civili*, has been assigned to the years 64-65 rather than to the early 60's, some adjustment must be made in the chronology of his other literary works. A few of these can be dated with reasonable certainty. The *De incendio urbis* must surely have been written very shortly after the Fire of Rome (July 19-24, 64). It is not identical with the *Famosum carmen* which, as Suetonius states, was written after the ban—i.e. in early 65. This poem was a lampoon attacking Nero and his friends (Petronius, Tigellinus, Nerva, etc.; see Hosius 333.5-6). The *Adlocutio ad Pollam*, as Statius' words imply, was written after the *De incendio urbis*. Since the *Adlocutio* is not mentioned by Vacca—whose list is otherwise very full, omitting only the *Famosum carmen*—it could have been part of the *Epistulae ex Campania*, which Lucan may have written in imitation of Seneca's letters, which date to the years 63-65.<sup>29</sup> Both the *De incendio urbis* and the *Adlocutio* seem to have been in prose.<sup>30</sup>

The speeches for and against Octavius Sagitta, which were also in prose, must surely have been written while the case and its lurid details were still fresh in the memory of the reading public, and thus this work will date to the latter part of 58. Lucan must have been in Rome during the trial in order to have learned enough about it to write the speeches effectively. The *Laudes Neronis* are firmly dated to the Neronia of 60; the *Orpheus* was written and presumably recited in a

<sup>29</sup> The date of Seneca's letters is well discussed by H. Hilgenfeld, *Jahrbücher f. Philologie*, Suppl. 17 (1890) 601.

<sup>30</sup> See above, note 20.

major competition, and since both Suetonius and Vacca associate the *Laudes* with the *Orpheus*, we may conclude that the *Orpheus*, in its original written version, belongs to the year 60 also. The version of which the surviving fragments are printed in Hosius 328–29 may have been a somewhat revised version, but even so its publication must have been shortly after the Neronia.

For the other works, there is even less sure indication of date. In some cases even the titles are uncertain. Statius records that the *Iliacon* (sc. *Iliaca*) was Lucan's first work, and this poem is first on Vacca's list also. Statius says that it was written *teneris adhuc in annis*. Since Lucan was only 25 when he died, he may have been precocious enough to have written his first attempt at the epic style in his very early teens, around 53. The next work, according to Statius' list, is the *Catachthonion*, which was probably written before the Sagitta speeches, at a time when Lucan was more concerned with literary studies than with purely rhetorical work. The *Catachthonion* obviously provided material which Lucan could use again in his extemporized *Orpheus*.

Of the other attested works, all are frivolous except the incomplete tragedy *Medea*. This drama may have been inspired by Seneca's tragedies, or by the fall of Agrippina in 59, or by Lucan's visit to Athens. The stay in Athens can hardly be before 57, since Lucan must have been too young then to make the move to philosophical haunts; and the Sagitta speeches show that Lucan was in Rome, occupied with rhetorical studies, in 58. Since Nero recalled Lucan from Athens, and since from the time of the Neronia Lucan was a favorite poet in the court circle, the year 59 is indicated as the time of the visit to Athens.<sup>31</sup>

Of the frivolous poems the following seem to be the titles: *Epigrammata*, *Saturnalia*, *Silvae*, and *Satyricae fabulae*.<sup>32</sup> These almost certainly belong to the time during which Lucan was a favorite of

<sup>31</sup> So Marx 2227.

<sup>32</sup> *Epigrammata* is Weber's conjecture for the mss. readings *ippamata* or *appāmata*. He also suggests *Epirrhemata*, referring to such works as the *Adlocutio ad Pollam*. The mss. have *salticae fabulae*, which could be interpreted to mean libretti for pantomimes, but the adjective *salticus* is not found in Classical Latin and is very rare even in later writers; and I have found no parallel anywhere for the meaning "of pantomimes." The Bipontine edition of Lucan (1783) prints *Satyricae fabulae* without comment; the emendation is attributed to Fabricius by Genthe (above, note 2) 63.

Nero; the Neronian court, as opposed to the Senecan literary circle, was noted for its frivolous way of life, although some artistic endeavors were taken seriously. The Lucanic works which can be dated to before 60 and after 63 all seem to be serious. It is just possible that the *Satyricae fabulae* (if indeed this is the true title) were written in partial imitation of Petronius' *Satyricon*. Since Petronius did not start his novel until, probably, late 62,<sup>33</sup> Lucan's imitation would date to 63/4. At some point before Persius' death in November 62, Lucan proclaimed that his own poems were *ludi* in comparison with Persius' *vera poemata*.<sup>34</sup> This has little value for the dating of Lucan's light poetry, except to show that Lucan was not writing only serious poetry before 63; this conclusion would appear obvious enough from the fact that Nero had already become his literary associate in 60.

Although the dating of Lucan's minor works must remain most uncertain, the following phases of his career may tentatively be discerned: first, juvenile attempts at the epic style, almost certainly in imitation of Vergil—the *Iliacon* after *Aeneid* 2 and the *Catachthonion* after *Georgic* 4 and *Aeneid* 6; these poems were probably the result of Lucan's literary studies in his early teens. Second, the Sagitta speeches seem to reflect Lucan's progress to studies in forensic rhetoric. The visit to Athens was probably spent, for the most part, in the study of philosophy, and there is no indication that it inspired or produced any literary work. Third, the recall from Athens and the entry into Nero's artistic circle, doubtless with the sponsorship of Seneca. Although Statius seems almost to ignore this period of Lucan's life, it seems to have been most productive: the *Laudes Neronis*, *Orpheus*, *Epigrammata*, *Silvae*, *Saturnalia*, *Satyricae fabulae* (?) and possibly the *Medea*. The reasons for Statius' silence, of course, are obvious; since Lucan ended as a "martyr" to the tyrant Nero, it would not be tactful or appropriate to say much about his years of friendship at the Court.

It seems to be only in the year 64 that seriousness returned to the

<sup>33</sup> K. F. C. Rose, *Latomus* 20 (1961) 822.

<sup>34</sup> The text of the Probus Life of Persius is most uncertain at this point; see W. Clausen's OCT edition (1959) 32.20–22. To his apparatus may be added Rostagni's emendation (above, note 27) 171: *ut vix se retineret, recitante eo* (sc. Persio) *clamare (recitantem clamore codd.) quae ille, esse vera poemata: quae ipse faceret, ludos*. The general sense of the passage, however, is quite clear.

young poet, leading to the final and fatal breach with Nero.<sup>35</sup> This fourth phase seems to have been influenced mostly by Stoicism and by Seneca; hence the *Medea* and the *Epistulae ex Campania* may both belong to the year 64, since they are both based on Senecan models. Hostility to Nero was shown in the *De incendio urbis*, the early books of the *De bello civili*, the *Famosum carmen* and—in very pronounced form—in the last books of Lucan's epic. The *De incendio urbis* may, indeed, have been in rivalry with Nero's *Troica*; but in the last few months of Lucan's life the young poet seems to have returned to the poet whom he had started by rivalling—Vergil.<sup>36</sup> Thus the wheel turned full circle: Lucan began and ended as an emulator of the *Aeneid*, but—*dum pugnas canis . . . tacebis*.

<sup>35</sup> Some confirmation of the date of Lucan's friendship with Nero might be deduced from the date of his quaestorship, which he was allowed to hold before the legal age. I know of no parallel for anyone except members of the imperial family receiving advancement of more than one year; in this case the promotion would allow him to take office no earlier than December 5, 63, when he was 24 years old. But it may be that men were allowed to take office in their 25th year: see T. Mommsen, *Staatsrecht*<sup>3</sup> 1.572–74, 576; in this case Lucan could have taken office in December 62. After the quaestorship was granted, Lucan was given an augurate. From this evidence it seems that his favor with Nero continued at least to the end of 62 and possibly 63.

<sup>36</sup> Lucan stated his rivalry with Vergil explicitly during his recital of part of the *De bello civili*, with the remark, “et quantum mihi restat ad Culicem?” comparing, as Suetonius says, his *aetas* and *initia* with Vergil's. The remark is echoed by Statius (*Silv.* 2.7.74), “ante annos Culicis Maroniani.” To what age were Lucan and Statius referring? The opening of the *Culex*, “lusimus Octavi,” would immediately suggest the year 44 B.C., since the phrase sounds like a farewell, and Octavius became Octavianus in that year, involved in politics and *res seriae*. Lucan was 25 on November 3, 64. If he made the reference to the *Culex* after that (as argued in the present article), then “Vergil” must have been 26; if Lucan made the remark before his 25th birthday, “Vergil” may have been 26 or less. Lucan's allusion might suggest that he was close to the Vergilian age: the closeness prompted the comparison.

The manuscripts of the Donatus Life of Vergil give Vergil's age for the composition of the *Culex* as 15, 16 (majority of mss.), or 17. Recent editors, such as Brummer (Teubner 1933) and Hardie (*OCT* 1957), attribute the emendation xxvi to Scaliger. But Scaliger, in his *Commentarii et Castigationes in Appx. Verg.* (1595) 265–66, expresses such contempt for the authority or reliability of Donatus, dubbing him an *ignobilis grammaticus*, that he can scarcely have wanted to improve his authority or “reliability” by emending his text! Scaliger argued simply that Donatus' age for Vergil was wrong, and that Vergil must have been much older than 15 (see Weber, *Ind. Lect. Acad. Marburg* [1856] 8, and F. Oudin, in Heyne's 4th ed. of Vergil, Vol. 4 [London and Leipzig 1832] p. 5). Scaliger does not mention this problem in any edition of his *De emendatione temporum* (1582, 1593, 1598, 1629). Statius' own statement is dismissed as worthless by E. Diehl, *Die Vitae Vergilianae* (Bonn 1911) 13. The erroneous attribution of the emendation xxvi to Scaliger seems to have originated with Brummer.



## APPENDIX

I give a brief survey of supposed "internal allusions" in the *De bello civili* which might be relevant to the date of composition. This is not an exhaustive list of all the internal allusions that have been detected by scholars, nor does it set out to *prove* anything about the date of composition. What it does show is that there is no reasonably secure internal evidence which is not consistent with the date of composition argued in the main text of the present article.

*The Nile.* It seems that Lucan wrote 1.19–20 and 10.176 ff. after Pliny, NQ 6.8.3, and thus these passages should date to late 64 or early 65. See A. Gercke, *Jahrbücher f. Philologie*, Suppl. 22 (1895) 108; M. Rehm, *Philologus* n.f. 20 (1907) 374; Housman (above, note 13) 335; A. D. Nock, CR 40 (1926) 17–18; K. A. Eichberger, *Untersuchung z. Lucan* (Tübingen 1935) 65; G. Pfligersdorffer, *Hermes* 87 (1959) 373–75.

*Alexander.* H. Christensen, NJKA 23 (1909) 127, dates the references to Alexander (10.20 ff., 272–75) to early 65.

*Flattery of Nero.* For the question of irony in 1.33–66 (implying a late date, after Lucan's disillusionment with Nero) see L. Paul, *Jahrbücher f. Philologie* 149 (1894) 409; Housman on 1.41; E. Griset, RSC 3 (1955) 134; P. Grimal, REL 38 (1960) 296; L. Thompson, CP 59 (1964) 147.

*Fire of Rome.* Lucan may allude to this in 1.493–95, as may Seneca, Epp. 91.1, 13, 94.61—though, if so, he expresses himself very cautiously. See Vitelli (above, note 6) 61.

*Comet of 64.* Lucan may refer to this in 1.592. See Tacitus, Ann. 15.47 and also 14.22, Pliny, NH 2.92; against, R. S. Rogers, TAPA 84 (1953) 237 ff.

*Seneca.* For Lucan's use of Seneca's works, see C. Hosius, *Jahrbücher f. Philologie* 145 (1892) 337, and above on the Nile. In 1.92–93 Lucan may allude to Seneca's retirement from the Neronian court in 62.

*The Ban.* The famous lines in 9.985–86, *a nullo damnabimur aevo*, may be a direct allusion to the ban on Lucan's poetry.

*Poppaea's Funeral.* Marx 2232–33 sees an allusion to this event in 8.729 and 9.10; but R. Hanslik, RE 22 (1953) 88, s.v. "Poppaea Sabina," argues that Poppaea died after Lucan. See Tacitus, Ann. 16.6 and Pliny, NH 12.83.

*The Closing of the Janus Temple Gates.* Suetonius, Nero 14, dates this to the year 66, but it is not recorded by Tacitus and is denied by Orosius, Adv. Pag. 7.3.7. Coins of the year 64, as well as those of 66, depict the gates

closed: see Mattingly and Sydenham, *Roman Imperial Coinage* 1 (London 1923) 156–58 (Nos. 168, 170 [64 A.D.] and 167, 197 [66 A.D.] are specified). The coins of 64 seem to celebrate the preliminary agreement with Parthia, as opposed to the formal closing of the gates, and Lucan may refer to this in 1.62.

*Ambitious Excavations.* The Corinthian Canal project was not started until 66, though Lucan refers to it in 1.100–3 and 6.57–59; but there must have been talk of it in Rome for some time before it was started—and the idea was not new with Nero. Lucan may also be thinking of the Campanian project; see Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.42.

*Nero's Poetry.* The scholiast on 3.261 states that Lucan imitated some lines of Nero on the Tigris; but the imitation need not be tendentious, and the date of Nero's poem is unknown.

*The Campanian Earthquake.* This may be alluded to in 5.100–1; Seneca, *NQ* 6.1.2, dates it to 63, though Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.18 places it under the year 62. But Campania is a highly volcanic region and Lucan need not be referring specifically to the great earthquake of the early 60's.

*The Golden House.* 9.520–21 and 10.112–13 may refer to the excessive luxury of Nero's great palace, commenced in 64; but the "House of Gold" is a commonplace theme in Roman literature.

*The year 62.* Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.18, records the wreck of the grain-fleet and the mishandling of the treasury, both in the year 62; 3.56–58 and 152 might allude to these events, but here again both are commonplaces. It may, then, be a coincidence that both supposed allusions follow so quickly upon one another. To my knowledge, these are the only possible allusions which might indicate that Lucan was writing the *De bello civili* as early as 62.

*The Delphic Oracle.* The scholiast on 5.113, 139, and 178 states that Nero closed the shrine. No date is given, and there is no other evidence to support the statement. See H. W. Parke, *The Delphic Oracle*<sup>2</sup> (Oxford 1956) Vol. 2, Nos. 243, 597; for sceptical comment, *ibid.* 1.283–84.

*Octavia and Agrippina.* L. Herrmann, *REA* 32 (1930) 339, sees references to Octavia in 3.638 ff., and to Agrippina in 3.647 ff. Marx 2234 sees a reference to Nero's incest with Agrippina in 8.404–7. This last seems somewhat more probable than Herrmann's divinations.