SCIENCE, EGYPT, AND ESCAPISM IN LUCAN

by

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Abstract

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This dissertation seeks to demonstrate Lucan's profound engagement and conflict with two ancient intellectual and literary traditions that can both be regarded as escapist, that is, as promising or postulating a sanctuary (whether physical or spiritual) from the world's troubles, and that were both active in Lucan's own day: utopian writing about science, exemplified in Latin by Lucan's uncle Seneca the Younger, as well as by the astronomical poet Manilius, and utopian Egyptology, as reflected in a wide variety of texts ranging from Herodotus, through Diodorus Siculus, to Lucan's contemporary, the Alexandrian polymath Chaeremon. To this end, I have examined two closely related sequences in the De Bello Civili that have received little attention from scholars of Lucan, namely Pompey's journey to Egypt in Book Eight and Caesar's Egyptian sojourn in Book Ten, during which Lucan's two main characters are each shown attempting to take refuge from the poem's ubiquitous violence through the double avenue of travel to Egypt (to which the defeated Pompey flees, and where his pursuer Caesar hopes to leave the civil war behind) and the practice of natural science (with Pompey's astronomical inquiry and Caesar's investigation of the Nile). In this context, I have also considered Cato's Libyan adventures, from the intervening Book Nine. Both Pompey and Caesar discover that escape through either method is impossible, for the fabled Egyptian Shangri-La is now
embroiled in the political, social, and economic crisis of the outside world, while not only the natural universe but even the very act of inquiry into nature are alike contaminated by the ethos of civil war. The virtuous Cato, on the other hand, does not even make the attempt, maintaining a single-minded focus on his civic duties. By revealing such escape to be both immoral (through Cato's example) and impossible (through the examples of Pompey and Caesar), Lucan signals his decisive rejection of the escapist predilections of many of his contemporaries (including his uncle Seneca and his own father Annaeus Mela), who tried to distance themselves from the vicissitudes of political life under the later Julio-Claudians through retirement into a state of philosophical *otium.*
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σύ μοι ἐσσι πατήρ καὶ πότνια μήτηρ
ἡδὲ κασίγνητος, σὺ δὲ μοι θαλέρος παρακοίτης.
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Introduction: Failures of Escape and Invasions of Sanctuary

The whole of Roman history (as conceived by the Romans) is premised on a successful escape, the flight of Aeneas and his followers to Italy; the disaster of one particular city, Troy, is amply compensated by the foundation of another, Rome, which will go on to rule the earth. In his De Bello Civili, on the other hand, Lucan portrays the collapse of the Roman Republic as a truly universal catastrophe that forbids any such escape, precisely by virtue of Rome's global hegemony. Although Lucan's characters struggle desperately to exempt themselves from the general ruin, to find some private sanctuary in the midst of public chaos, all these attempts are invariably doomed, for no individual can hope to evade a conflict that disturbs not only the entire Greco-Roman world but even (according to Lucan) the remote and fabulous lands of Ethiopia and India.

In addition to the general ubiquity of the civil war, two specific individuals operate over the course of the poem to frustrate all attempts at escape: the characters Caesar and Cato, on opposite ends of the ideological and moral spectrum. In Book Five, for instance, Caesar's troops mutiny and demand a respite in old age from endless campaigning (5.273-277): *finis quis quaeritur armis?* A similar appeal for a *finis* to war and a return to home and family is voiced by Cato's soldiers in Book Nine after they learn of Pompey's death (9.230-233): *patrios permitte penates/ desertamque domum dulcesque revisere natos./ nam quis erit finis, si nec Pharsalia pugnae,/ nec Pompeius erit?* On both occasions, the reluctant soldiers are propelled back into the fray by an angry speech from their general. Of course, Caesar and Cato are sharply distinguished at these two crucial junctures by the moral dimension of their case for continued engagement in the civil war. In essence, Caesar's goal is to inflame his soldiers' love of warfare for its own
sake, lest his men should recover a *mens sana* (5.309) that shrinks from the atrocities and shuns the rewards (*praemia Martis*) of civil war (5.305-309). He accordingly speaks of the folly of relinquishing *praemia belli* (5.330) and casts scorn on civilian life, hurling the hallowed epithet *Quirites* as an insult: *discedite castris,/ tradite nostra viris ignavi signa Quirites* (5.357-358). Cato, by contrast, appeals to the lofty ideals of *libertas* (9.265) and *leges* (9.267), which are a *causa pericli/ digna viris* (9.262-263). The effect of these two diametrically opposed orations is, however, the same: the weary soldiers are either bullied (in Book Five) or inspired (in Book Nine) into recommitting themselves to the interminable conflict.

As in Book Nine, so at his first appearance in the poem in Book Two, Cato sets out from a sound moral footing to refute his listener's hope for a personal refuge from civil war. As Rome trembles on the eve of hostilities, Brutus knocks on Cato's door to tempt him with the prospect of solitary *otium* amidst *arma*: *melius tranquilla sine armis/ otia solus ages* (2.266-267). Cato, however, sharply rebukes Brutus, indignantly recasting Brutus' *otia solus ages* as a rhetorical question and arguing that detachment from the Republic's death-agonies is not only shameful (*pudorem* at 2.295) but in practice impossible (given the universal extent of the disaster, as expressed through the image of celestial collapse):

*sidera quis mundumque velit spectare cadentem expers ipse metus? quis cum ruat arduus aether, terra labet mixto coeuntis pondere mundi, compressas tenuisse manus? gentesne *furorem* Hesperium ignotae Romanaque bella sequentur diductique fretis alio sub sidere reges, *otia solus agam? procul hunc arcete pudorem, o superi, motura Dahas ut clade Getasque securvo me Roma cadat. (2.289-297)*

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1 I here read *pudorem* with Fantham rather than *furorem* (see her note ad loc.).
Brutus urged Cato not to allow himself to be *populi...furentis/ cladibus inmixtum* (2.249-250), not to succumb to *furor* (2.254), but, given the choice between the enjoyment of personal tranquility and participation in the worldwide insanity of civil war, *oitia* (2.295) vs. *furor* (2.292), Cato opts unequivocally for the latter. Persuaded by Cato, Brutus plunges himself with all too much enthusiasm into the thick of the struggle (note the disapproval expressed by *nimios* at 2.325): *sic fatur, et acres/ irarum movit stimulos iuvenisque calorem/ excitat in nimios belli civilis amores* (2.323-325). The key term *stimulus* is elsewhere used to describe the process of incitement to civil war, either of Pompey and Caesar taken together (1.120) or of Caesar in particular (1.263), and is also applied to the frenzy of civil war at 4.517 and 7.557. Although, as in his speech to the mutineers in Book Nine, Cato appeals to Brutus' righteous patriotism rather than to the baser instincts encouraged by Caesar in Book Five, the fact that even this supremely virtuous and rational statesman can have a dangerously inflammatory effect on the similarly virtuous and rational Brutus highlights the inevitability of psychological as well as physical entanglement in the civil war;² Brutus' apparent contamination by bellicose *furor* is especially significant in the light of Lucan's description of Brutus at the beginning of the episode as immune to the frenzied terror and grief (another aspect of the madness of war) currently afflicting the rest of the Roman populace: *at non magnanimi percussit pectora Bruti/ terror, et in tanta pavidi formidine motus/ pars populi lugentis erat* (2.234-236).

² See Fantham (note on 2.323-325) for the Virgilian background to the image of goading into war-frenzy; as she observes, Cato is thereby aligned with Virgil's Allecto (who incites Turnus to war at *Aeneid* 7.419-462), a far from flattering comparison.
It is, however, Caesar rather than Cato who makes it a personal crusade to propagate the civil war as widely as possible. Even though Caesar is a politician and general pursuing political and military goals in a (more or less) rational fashion, he also revels in carnage and chaos for their own sakes. In urging Cato not to embroil himself in an inherently sinful conflict, Brutus imagines Caesar's joy at the thought that one so virtuous has stooped to his own level: *quam laetae Caesaris aures/ accipient tantum venisse in proelia civem!/ nam praelata suis numquam diversa dolebit/ castra ducis Magni; nimium placet ipse Catoni,/ si bellum civile placet* (2.273-277). Caesar thus stands not only for his own partisan cause but for the civil war as a whole; indeed, as the lightning bolt of the famous simile from Book One (1.151-157), in a very real sense Caesar *is* the civil war in all its destructive power, and, on the field of Pharsalus, Lucan accordingly describes him as *rabies populis stimulusque furorum* (7.557) and as the incarnation of Mars or Bellona (7.568-569). In Book Six, when the Pompeians break through the fortifications surrounding Dyrrachium, Caesar is so enraged (as expressed once again by the key term *furorem*) at their enjoyment of a moment of *pax* and *quies* that he rushes blindly into battle to spoil it, even at the price of defeat: *accendit pax ipsa loci, movitque furorem/ Pompeiana quies et victo Caesare somnus./ ire vel in clades properat, dum gaudia turbet* (6.282-284).³ Caesar abhors a vacuum: he cannot stand any space that is not filled with his *fURoR*. In Lucan's poem, Caesar therefore functions as a consummate violator of sanctuaries, frustrating all attempts to carve out a refuge from the war that he both embraces and embodies. It is worth considering four of these episodes of invasion of sanctuary in greater detail, beginning with two closely connected sequences in Book Three.

³ Compare 2.650-651, where Caesar is described as *numquam patiens pacis longaeque quietis/ armorum.*
Book Three

Two cities fall to Caesar's forces in Book Three, Rome and Massilia. In each case, Lucan must contend with the disappointing historical fact that the city's fall was accompanied by no scenes of carnage, no desperate last stand, merely a tame surrender followed by a magnanimous reprieve from all the horrors of a sack. For both Rome and Massilia, however, Lucan succeeds in evoking those horrors through a variety of techniques; these devices have the further effect of aligning the fate of Massilia with that of Rome itself as a victim of civil war.

Rome

Lucan has been building up to Caesar's entry of Rome since Book One, when the inhabitants are terrified by a variety of portents, as well as by wild rumours of Caesar's ferocious designs on the city (1.481-484). Again, in Book Two, the citizens give themselves over to bitter lamentation (2.16-42); as in Book One, the horrors of Rome's prospective fall are experienced in imagination, this time through the vivid and gory recollection of the slaughter that marked the various phases of the strife of Marius and Sulla a generation earlier, and that is now to be repeated (2.224-225). When Caesar actually makes his grand entrance in Book Three, he therefore encounters a city prostrate with fear: urbe in terram terrore subit. namque ignibus atris/ creditur, ut captae, raptus moenia Romae/ sparsurusque deos (3.97-100).

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4 Of course, as even Caesar concedes in his own account of the war (and as Lucan's narrative certainly emphasizes), the Massilians, unlike the craven inhabitants of Rome, at least put up a valiant fight and endure considerable hardships before their capitulation (see e.g. Bellum Civile 1.57-58, 2.4-6, and 2.22). Lucan's contrast between the cowardice of the Romans and the valour of the Massilians in Book Three is treated by Mitchell (pp. 50-51); the present discussion, however, concerns rather those features that serve to align Lucan's Massilia with his Rome.
Although Caesar refrains from fulfilling these grim predictions, the sack of Rome and the fall of the Roman Republic as a whole are symbolically enacted in the episode of the looting of the treasury of Saturn; this outrage is described in terms suggestive of the sacking of a city, for it is described as rapina at 3.121 and tristi...rapina at 3.167, while Caesar himself is termed raptor at 3.125. Lucan prefaces his account of the angry confrontation between Caesar and the tribune Metellus, who blocks the temple doors, by casting it as a fundamental opposition between vis on one side and ius and libertas on the other, in other words as the basic moral conflict of the civil war itself: exit in iram,/ viribus an possint obsistere iura, per unum/ libertas experta virum (3.112-114). Where Metellus undertakes a spirited defence of the res publica (literally, for he is defending public property, the common wealth), appealing to the traditional sacrosanctity of both the temple and (above all) his own tribunician person (3.123-133), Caesar heaps scorn on the principles of lex and libertas, as well as on their champion (3.137-140). Although Caesar begins with an ostentatious refusal to shed Metellus' blood (3.134-137), in the face of Metellus' continued resistance the mask of constitutionality and clementia is stripped away, as it will be for so many emperors to come (including Lucan's own Nero), and Caesar contemplates resorting to brute force: nondum foribus cedente tribuno/ acrior ira subit: saevos circumpicit enses/ oblitus simulare togam (3.141-143). At this point, a more prudent associate of Metellus urges him to accept the hard fact that the Romans have now joined the ranks of the peoples whom regna coercent (3.145) and to conduct himself accordingly; libertas itself is lost for good, but the umbra libertatis may be preserved by voluntary acquiescence to the tyrant's commands (3.145-147). This episode thus offers a foretaste of life under Nero's Principate, just as the methods of the Principate
are foreshadowed by Caesar's cynical purchase of the favour of the Roman people with cheap grain near the beginning of Book Three (3.52-58) and by the craven behaviour of the remnants of the senate immediately prior to the Metellus scene (3.108-112). Given the fundamental choice that all opposition to the princeps is ultimately faced with, namely death or submission, Metellus opts for the latter and withdraws from the stage, abandoning the temple to Caesar's depredations. The ancient hoarded wealth of the Roman people, acquired over the long annals of foreign conquest from the Punic Wars down to Pompey's own victories (3.157-166), is dragged into the light of day and put to the service of Caesar's insatiable war machine. In a very material sense, then, the civil war initiated by Caesar absorbs and annihilates the traditional identity of the Roman Republic; the Principate that results from the civil war is also symbolically inaugurated in all its grotesque inequality, since now for the first time a Caesar is richer than Rome, *pauperior...fuit tunc primum Caesare Roma* (3.167-168).

Massilia

Fresh from his despoliation of Rome, Caesar arrives at Massilia en route to Spain. In their pious (and properly Roman) reluctance to violate their obligations of *fides signataque iura* (3.302) to Pompey, the Massilians plead to be allowed to remain neutral in the present conflict. Nevertheless, they preface their speech with an assertion of their unwavering loyalty to Rome as a whole, in all of whose foreign campaigns they have willingly participated down through the ages: *semper in externis populo communia vestro/ Massiliam bellis testatur fata tulisse,/ comprensa est Latiis quaecumque annalibus aetas* (3.307-309). The Massilians have thus played their part in the same series of glorious wars of the old Republic that was previously evoked by Lucan's catalogue of the
trophies and treasures looted from the temple of Saturn, and so Massilia functions like the treasury as an embodiment of the greatness of old Rome under attack by Caesar, just as its fides identifies it with traditional Roman values.\(^5\) Indeed, Massilia's origins closely parallel Rome's, for, as the Massilian envoys recount to Caesar, their settlement was founded by desperate refugees fleeing the destruction of the mother city Phocaea, *numquam felicibus armis/ usa manus, patriae primis a sedibus exul,/ et post translatas exustae Phocidos arces/ moenibus exiguis alieno in litore tuti* (3.338-341).\(^6\)

In spite of their association and identification with the ancient Republic, however, the Massilians now hope to exempt themselves from the ruin of that Republic.\(^7\) The worldwide nature of the conflict, which Cato cited as grounds for rejecting Brutus' escapism, is actually advanced by the Massilian envoys in support of their request, since the willing presence of so many foreign allies renders any enforced contribution by the Massilians superfluous: *adde, quod innumerae concurrunt undique gentes,/ nec sic horret iners scelerum contagia mundus,/ ut gladiis egeant civilia bella coactis* (3.321-323).

Their goal is to keep their city quarantined from the *scelerum contagia* of 3.322, just as Brutus advised Cato not to allow himself to be *ducibus scelerum populique furentis/ cladibus inmixtum* (2.249-250); they seek a *secretum* (3.314), to shut out the grim reality of war (as expressed with *sinas excludi bellum* and *sit locus exceptus sceleri*) so that

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\(^5\) See Rowland (p. 205) for the significance of the Massilians' fides as a cardinal virtue of *vetus Roma*. The Massilians also appeal to *pietas* and *humanitas* at 3.317 in "a combination of two traditional Roman values" (Hunink, note ad loc.). In addition, as Hunink points out, the Massilians' courage serves to align them further with *vetus Roma* (as opposed to the degenerate latter-day inhabitants of Rome): "to a certain extent Massilia may be said to display the old Roman virtus, which has been utterly lost in Rome itself, and to be paradigmatic of this ancient Rome" (p. 142).

\(^6\) Hunink comments (in his note on 3.339), "here again, Massilia seems to recall Rome...The story of its foundation after the mother city had been burnt down, also clearly connects BC with its main model, Vergil's *Aeneid.*"

\(^7\) Rowland comments, "Having become so intertwined with Rome's destiny over the years, Massilia now attempts to avert from itself, by non-participation, the horror that, in Lucan's eyes, awaited both Rome and the world as the outcome of the fratricidal civil war" (p. 205).
Massilia can serve as a secure refuge and meeting place for the leaders of both camps:

\[\text{nobis haec summa precandi:/ terribiles aquilas infestaque signa relinquas/ urbe procul nostrisque velis te credere muris,/ excludique sinas admisso Caesare bellum./ sit locus exceptus sceleri, Magnoque tibique/ tutus (3.330-334).}\]

Just as Metellus does with regard to the treasury of Saturn, the Massilians refuse to allow their city to be exploited in the furtherance of Caesar's civil war ambitions. They also evince a touching faith in the power of instinctual \textit{pietas} towards kinsmen and fellow citizens to contain the frenzy of civil war, since they argue that if the fighting is left exclusively to Roman hands, there will be found no one willing to strike an inherently impious blow (3.324-329). The Massilians thus hope that the civil war can be excluded not only from their own city but, ultimately, from the entire Roman world.  

The naive belief that Roman will ultimately baulk at slaughtering fellow Roman is of course proved false time and again over the course of the poem. As for the Massilians' hope to protect their own city from the \textit{furor} of civil war, Caesar immediately and angrily rejects their appeal for peaceful isolationism and preaches instead a gospel of total war under his standards, with a scornful repetition of the Massilians' \textit{contagia} (in the same metrical \textit{sedes} as at 3.322): \[\text{at enim contagia belli/ dira fugant. dabitis poenas pro pace petita,/ et nihil esse meo discetis tuitus aevo/ quam duce me bellum (3.369-372).}\]

Because Caesar's \textit{aevum} is an age of universal \textit{bellum}, the Massilians' proposal to

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8 Like the mutinous soldiers of Books Five and Nine, the Massilians express this hope as a longing for an end to the unholy conflict, \textit{finis...scelerum} (3.328).

9 Hunink (note on 3.326) comments (citing many instances) that "readers of BC know only too well that relatives do take up arms against each other. In fact, the motif of 'killing friends and relatives' constantly returns, especially in Book 7."

10 Hunink (note on 3.371) compares \textit{meo...aevo} here to Lucan's description of Caesar looking down on \textit{suae...moenia Romae} at 3.90; on the latter, he remarks (in a comment equally applicable to 3.371), "translations of Bourgery ('de sa chère Rome'), Duff ('Rome, his mother city') and Luck ('seine Vaterstadt
welcome Caesar himself within their walls while simultaneously excluding the civil war
(*excludique sinas admissos Caesar bellum*, 3.332) betrays a total ignorance of Caesar's true identity: he and the war are one and the same.

Caesar then proceeds to carry out his threat of *poenae* by besieging and taking the city; in the process of violating the metaphorical sanctuary of Massilia as a whole, he also invades and destroys a more literal sanctuary in the form of a nearby sacred grove, taking an axe to its ancient trees with his own hand (3.399-452) and reducing them to lumber for his massive siegeworks. Almost certainly an invention by Lucan, this episode reproduces the fundamental conflict between Pompey and Caesar, for the former is compared to a venerable old oak at his introduction in Book One, whereas Lucan likens Caesar to the lightning-bolt that destroys trees (1.129-157). Moreover, the violation of a Massilian *sanctum sanctorum* recalls the similar violation of the treasury of Saturn a few hundred lines earlier; indeed, as Hunink points out (in his note on 3.399), Lucan's introductory description of the grove as *longo numquam violatus ab aevo* (3.399) points back to the phrase *multis non tactus ab annis* (3.156), which describes the pristine condition of the treasury prior to Caesar's onslaught. The destruction of the grove thus entails a double invasion of sanctuary by the civil war: first, although it is *bello...intacta priore* (3.427), the grove is devoured by Caesar's war effort like the treasury of Saturn (and like Rome as a whole); and second, the act of deforestation actually foreshadows Caesar's imminent destruction of Pompey and the Republic for which he stands.

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11 See Hunink (pp. 168-169).
12 See Rowland (pp. 206-207) and Rosner-Siegel (pp. 175-176) for a reading of the grove episode as a metaphor for the destruction of Pompey.
13 The phrase *ab aevo* falls at the end of line 3.339 like *ab annis* in line 3.156. See Mitchell (pp. 52-54) for other correspondences between the looting of the treasury and the fall of Massilia in Lucan's design of Book Three.
Although Lucan does not actually recount the fall of Massilia as such, the Massilian ambassadors (in their speech to Caesar) picture the horrors they are prepared to endure and inflict at the final hour instead of submitting to Caesar: *nec pavet hic populus pro libertate subire,/ obsessum Poeno gessit quae Marte Saguntum./ pectoribus rapti matrum frustraque trahentes/ ubera sicca fame medios mittentur in ignes,/ uxor et a caro poscit sibi fata marito,/ volnera miscebunt fratres bellumque coacti/ hoc potius civile gerent* (3.349-355). Like the Roman people, the Massilians thus experience in imagination a scene of dreadful carnage, and just as the anonymous elder of Book Two looks back to the example of the reigns of terror of Marius and Sulla to illustrate his fears for the future fate of Rome, so the Massilians envision the grim end of their city in terms of the fall of Saguntum to Rome's enemy Hannibal (with whom Caesar has already been aligned at 1.255 and 1.305).\(^{14}\) Moreover, the Massilians conceive the final desperate measure of the Saguntines, namely the mutual slaughter of family members (see Livy 21.14), precisely as an act of civil war;\(^{15}\) this is in accordance with Lucan's presentation of the Roman civil war as the unholy strife of kin against kin, most obviously through the pairing of Caesar and Pompey as *socer* and *gener*. Indeed, the anonymous elder of Book Two, envisioning the horrors that now await Rome by recollecting those suffered in the time of Marius and Sulla, paints a picture of familial self-slaughter under the latter that is every bit as gory and horrific as the one given by the Massilians, although in this case the violence is inflicted on unwilling victims; as in the Massilians' prediction (at 3.354), the

\(^{14}\) Rowland (p. 206) notes the significance of Caesar's equation to Hannibal at 1.305 for a reading of the Massilians' allusion to Saguntum. Caesar is aligned with Marius at 1.546 and elsewhere, so that the Roman elder's recollection of the Marian terror similarly carries the suggestion of the fall of the city to a Caesarian figure.

\(^{15}\) As Hunink points out (note on 3.326), the Massilians' contemplation of familial slaughter at the end of their speech serves to undermine their own earlier prediction that basic *pietas* will ultimately prevent Roman from killing Roman.
strife of brother against brother forms the climax of the catalogue of household murders (2.148-151). Consequently, the imagined fall of Massilia is closely aligned with that of Rome.

The Massilians' dire prediction does not, strictly speaking, come to pass; in the event, the Massilians end up tamely capitulating and are spared the horrors of a sack by Caesar (as the latter records in his Bellum Civile at 2.22), a fact that Lucan chooses to ignore. Nevertheless, the Massilians are far from escaping the civil war unscathed, for in Lucan's account they are forced to participate (as the losing side) in what is arguably the most gruesomely described battle scene in the whole poem, a chaotic naval mêlée that contains in microcosm many images of the self-destructive and fragmenting character of the civil war as a whole. The Massilian Lycidas (gripped by his comrades on one side and a grappling iron on the other) is (like the Roman Republic) torn in two at 3.635-646, while at 3.741-751, an old man (a Massilian) commits suicide over the dying body.

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16 Rowland comments on "the extremely significant fact that Lucan suppresses the actual fate of Massilia after its final defeat - Caesar allowed the city to retain its freedom. As far as Lucan was concerned, this was a boon denied the entire world" (pp. 205-206). According to Dio's account, however, this grant of freedom was perceived as a hollow sham, because at the same time Caesar stripped Massilia of all its assets and territory: καὶ ὅς ἐκεῖνος τὸτε μὲν τὰ τε ὅπλα καὶ τὰς ναῦς τὰ τε χρηματα ἀφελέστο, ὕστερον δὲ καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ πάντα θλήν τοῦ τῆς ἔλευθερίας ὑνώματος (41.25.3). This, of course, is exactly the fate of Rome itself in Book Three, as symbolized by the looting of the treasury of Saturn: Rome is despoiled of all its wealth to fill Caesar's coffers, but it is permitted to retain the umbra libertatis (3.146). Another reason must therefore be sought for Lucan's omission of the fall of Massilia than Lucan's desire to align Massilia with Rome, since the historical reality of Massilia's ultimate fate in fact supported just such an alignment; perhaps Lucan seeks to preserve undiminished the stark contrast between Massilian virtus and Roman cowardice, even though Massilia has not remained immune to Rome's favor.

17 The following examples (among others) are listed by Rowland (pp. 207-208), with the exception of the dismantling of the ship, which is given by Masters (p. 42); except where otherwise stated, detailed textual analysis of the various passages is my own.

18 The phrase ruptis...venis at 3.639 recalls the rupto foedere regni of Lucan's proem (1.4), while the portentous behaviour of the bonfire of the Latin festival at the commencement of hostilities in Book One is likewise a significant parallel: compare scinditur avulsus (3.638), with reference to Lycidas, and flamma...scinditur in partes gemonique cacumine surgit/Thebanos imitata rogos (1.550-551). Note that scinditur falls at the same emphatic position at the beginning of both lines (these are the only two occurrences of the form scinditur in the entire poem). Scindere is also used of the dismemberment of the Roman world through civil war at 10.416. Rowland observes (pp. 207-208) that the dismemberment of
of his son; compare Lucan's description of the civil war as a suicide at 1.2-3.\footnote{19} At 3.672-674, having exhausted their supply of more conventional weapons, the combatants (Massilians and Romans alike)\footnote{20} are compelled to resort to desperate measures to continue the fight. Among such measures is the dismantling of the stern-ornaments and planking of their own ships to furnish makeshift missiles (3.672-673), summarized with the striking phrase, *in pugnam fregere rates* (3.674). This passage recalls the simile used to describe the abandonment of Rome by its people and senate in Book One (1.498-504), where Lucan pictures a ship disintegrating in a storm (with *fracta...veliferi...pondera mali* at 1.500 and *sparsa conpage carinae* at 1.502) and its helmsman and sailors leaping in panic into the sea and thereby precipitating the shipwreck (*naufragium sibi quisque facit* at 1.503, with a cognate of *frangere*).\footnote{21} The Massilians thus participate in the madness of the self-destruction of the Roman ship of state, and *furor* is a key term here. The Massilians began with the hope that they could turn aside Caesar's *furor* through reasoned words and diplomacy: *furorem/indomitum duramque viri deflectere mentem/pacifico sermone parant* (3.303-305). Again, in their speech to Caesar, the Massilian delegates posited a distance between themselves and the frenzy of war raging among their superiors: *si caelicolis furor arma dedisset...non tamen auderet pietas humana vel armis/vel votis prodesse Iovi* (3.315-318). By the time of the chaotic sea battle, however, the

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\footnote{19}{With regard to the suicidal Massilian elder, Hunink comments on "the father's neglect of paternal duties" towards his dying son Argus, in that, "[c]ontrary to expectations, he will not give Argus a final embrace and a final kiss even though he has been asked for it (739). His behaviour is very strange, since relatives are mostly presented as very eager to show these last signs of love" (note on 3.745). Even though the Massilians appealed to *pietas* in their speech to Caesar (at 3.317), a Massilian father now rejects the demands of paternal *pietas* in favour of the suicidal frenzy of civil war.}

\footnote{20}{Hunink comments (note on 3.670) that, by this stage, "[t]he poet no longer gives any indication as to the nationality of the victims: there is no distinction any more between Massilians and Caesareans."}

\footnote{21}{The oxymoronic phrase with which Lucan closes the simile, *in bellum fugitur* (at the beginning of line 1.504), is also analogous to the phrase that closes the account of the dismantling of the ships in Book Three, *in pugnam fregere* (at the beginning of line 3.674).}
Massilians have been so thoroughly infected by the general insanity that they dismantle their own ships to serve for weapons, an action that perfectly encapsulates the self-destructiveness of civil war, and that is introduced by the phrase, *invenit arma furor*.\(^\text{22}\)

Most strikingly, the Massilians actually do end up taking the sword to one another in the manner they foretold in their speech to Caesar, for when one of their ships is lost, its crew desperately try to scramble onto the deck of another, only to have their reaching arms pitilessly cut off by the latter's crew, who fear the loss of their own vessel if they admit the burden of their distressed comrades (3.661-669). On the specification of these hardhearted sailors as both an *inpia turba* (at 3.666) and Greek (at 3.667), Hunink (in his note on the latter) comments, "By now, the difference between Greeks and Romans has become much less relevant to the poet. Civil war has blurred the distinction between right and wrong. Thus the Greeks, who are favoured throughout the Massilia-section, are now presented as committing impious acts." What is more, by denying the claims of *societas* (the second ship is termed *puppis socia* at 3.663), the Massilians here abandon the *fides* that they earlier demonstrated in their refusal to betray their allegiance to Pompey. The expulsion of the shipwrecked sailors also constitutes a denial of sanctuary, in contradiction of the spirit of the Massilians' offer of their city as a safe refuge from war for both Caesar and Pompey. In other words, just as they feared, the well-intentioned Massilians have become fully contaminated by the malignant ethos of the Roman conflict. Accordingly, when last encountered in the poem, at the end of Book Three, the Massilians are shown engaged in civil strife in the most pathetic and ignoble fashion, as

\[^{22}\text{In another instance of the suicidal image of the destruction of a ship by its crew that occurs barely twenty lines earlier, a group of sailors overturn their own vessel and drown themselves beneath it by crowding against a single side in their overeager pursuit of the fighting (3.647-652).}\]
bereaved fathers squabble over headless corpses, *accensisque rogis miseri de corpore trunco/ certavere patres* (3.760-761).\(^{23}\)

The civil war has therefore invaded the Massilian refuge in several different ways: on the most literal level, the Massilians are compelled to fight against Caesar's forces on Pompey's side;\(^{24}\) the fall of Rome is played out in the destruction of the sacred grove through a variety of associations and resonances; the Massilians are embroiled in a sea battle that encapsulates all the bloodthirsty *furor* of the conflict as a whole; and they threaten to embrace the dreadful spirit of civil war so completely that they take the sword to one another in mass suicide (a threat that is in part realized during the naval battle). Moreover, as Rowland points out, Massilia is "paradigmatic not merely of Rome, but precisely of *vetus Roma*" (p. 205), and every stage of the fall of Massilia can be read as an analogue for the fall of Rome itself.\(^{25}\) The reason Massilia has not avoided the Roman civil war is that in a very real sense it is Rome, condemned to suffer Rome's tragedy. The first Massilians may have escaped the downfall of their native Phocaea, like the first Romans in their flight from Troy, but there is no escape for either Massilia or Rome from the new, global calamity.

**Book Five**

In Book Three, Caesar's two invasions of sanctuary (at the treasury of Saturn and the sacred grove) are supported by the army at his back. In each of two paired episodes in Book Five, by contrast, a single individual (whether Caesar himself or a Caesarian

\(^{23}\) Note that *certavere* recalls *certatum*, in the same emphatic position at the start of the line, in Lucan's proem (1.5).

\(^{24}\) Rowland observes, "The people of Massilia are immediately connected to Pompey's cause, for Lucan makes the common error of confusing Phocaians with Phocians (3,301; cf. 340-341, 561, 583, 728), while the Phocian contingent heads the catalogue of Pompey's supporters (3,172)" (pp. 204-205).

\(^{25}\) Rowland (p. 206), for instance, compares the exchange between Caesar and the Massilian envoys to Caesar's communications with the Roman senate at the end of 50 and the beginning of 49 BC.
figure) is all that is needed to violate a space that has previously offered sanctuary from the madness of Caesar's war.

Amyclas

Eager one night to cross the Adriatic from Epirus to obtain reinforcements in Italy, Caesar seeks out Amyclas, the owner of a humble boat, in his equally humble hut; in spite (or rather because) of its humility, the latter suffices to keep Amyclas sheltered and safe, for Lucan terms the home a *secura...domus* at 5.515-516. It should be noted that Caesar's own state of mind as he approaches Amyclas' door is far from *securitas*, since he walks *sollicito...gressu* (5.508). Here is a note of warning that a metaphorical storm is nearing Amyclas' tranquil abode, just as the crow's *instabili gressu* on the beach (5.556) is one of the weather signs that warn him of the onset of a more literal storm. Moreover, the adjective *sollicitus* is generally associated with the anxieties of civil war in Lucan (as at 2.5, 4.399, 5.780, and 7.8). Caesar thus bears the *sollicitudo* of civil war to a home that has so far remained immune to it and proceeds to shatter the peace of Amyclas' domain, first of all through a violent and repeated knocking on the door (5.519-520). Amyclas' first thought is of an everyday and peacetime occurrence, that some shipwrecked sailor has arrived on his doorstep in need of assistance (5.520-521); in other words, he has no idea that he is about to become embroiled in the events of a war of which he is altogether innocent and heedless, *securus belli* (5.526). It is poverty that permits Amyclas to remain thus unalarmed by the peremptory knocking on his door:

> praedam civilibus armis/ scit non esse casas. o vitae tuta facultas/ pauperis angustique lares! o munera nondum/ intellecta deum! quibus hoc contingere templis/ aut potuit

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26 Barratt cites 5.556 as a comparandum for the wording of 5.508-510. Narducci (p. 250) compares the restless gait of Sallust's Catiline (at *Catil. 15.5*).
muris, nullo trepidare tumultu/ Caesarea pulsante manu (5.526-531). This passage is a perfectly standard laus paupertatis, of the sort beloved by popular philosophers and moralizing poets from the Hellenistic period onwards. Lucan also extols the refuge (tutum, 8.241) of poverty in Book Eight, when the king Deiotarus dons the disguise of a lowly slave (as indicated by famulo and inopem) to carry out a mission for Pompey (8.239-243). In fact, the storm episode itself is prefaced by an explicit contrast between Caesar's sleepless obsession with the pursuit of his ambitions and the quies, somnus, and liberation from armorum curae enjoyed by those whose fortuna is minor: solverat armorum fessas nox languida curas,/ parva quies miseris, in quorum pectora somno/ dat vires fortuna minor (5.504-506). At least in Amyclas' case, however, the securitas belli afforded by his straitened circumstances proves illusory in the face of Caesar's forceful intervention. Amyclas unwisely opens his door and thereby compromises his isolation; the phrase poste recluso (5.531), which describes the opening of the door, recalls the description of Caesar's penetration of the treasury of Saturn: rupes Tarpeia sonat magnoque reclusas/ testatur stridore fores (3.154-155).

Once admitted, Caesar promptly incites Amyclas to subordinate himself to his commands (iussa secutus) and thereby relinquish the life of poverty that has so far kept him safe from the war: tum poste recluso/ dux ait: "expecta votis maiora modestis/ spesque tuas laxa, iuvenis: si iussa secutus/ me vehis Hesperiam, non ultra cuncta

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27 See Barratt's notes on 5.516-518, 5.523-526, and especially 5.527-531. Narducci observes, "La paupertas dalla quale Amicla trae la serenità della sua esistenza è rievocata da Lucano in termini che rimandano alla contrapposizione, centrale nelle Georgiche virgiliane, tra l'otium degli agricoltori, immersi nella pacifica ripetitività dei cicli naturali, e il negotium degli uomini politici ambiziosi, apportatori di ogni sorta di sconvolgimenti" (p. 252).

28 The similarity in theme between the two passages is observed by Mayer in his note on 8.241-243.

29 Nehrkorn points out the "idyllic" character of Lucan's description of Amyclas' lifestyle and ignorance of the war (pp. 155-157); this idyll persists "bis schliesslich der Fuhrer selbst an die Pforte klopft" (p. 154).

30 Note that recluso at 5.531 falls emphatically at the end of the line like recluso at 5.531; these are the only two instances of recludere in any form in the poem.
carinae/ deb ebis manibusque inopem duxisse senectam./ ne cessa praebere deo tua fata volenti/ angustos opibus subitis inpler e penates" (5.531-537). Although the text of 5.535 is disputed (see Barratt’s note ad loc.), the basic force of Caesar's appeal remains unambiguous: Amyclas is to forfeit all the advantages cited in the laus paupertatis of the preceding lines.31 Caesar's scorn for Amyclas' current vota modesta is particularly telling. This is after all a poem in which the observance of modus, of limit and self-restraint, distinguishes the heroes (like Cato) from the villains (like Caesar), and in which the civil war itself is presented not only as a violation of constitutional and natural boundaries (most obviously through the crossing of the Rubicon) but also as the inevitable byproduct of an age of immoderate luxury, when Romans have rejected the fecunda virorum...paupertas embraced by their ancestors (1.165-166).32 By tempting Amyclas to forsake the exemplary modestia of his poor and simple life and to fill his angusti penates (corresponding to the angusti Lares of Lucan's laus paupertatis at 5.528) with opes subitae, Caesar is reenacting the moral ruination of Rome itself. Indeed, Caesar has already been portrayed in the poem as a corruptor of old-fashioned Roman virtue. In his epitaph for Curio at the end of Book Four, Lucan speaks (at 4.816-820) of a once-promising champion of the people led astray by the venality of the age (in general) and by Caesar's gold (in particular). Caesar's successful bribing of Curio is at once a symptom of the decline of Roman morality and the catalyst (momentum...rerum, 4.819) for the fall of the Republic, since the hireling Curio now exploits his authority with the

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31 The contrast between Lucan's praise of poverty and Caesar's promise to enrich Amyclas is discussed by Narducci in terms of literary models (pp. 251-254), as well as by Nehrkorn (p. 157) and De Nadaï (pp. 194-206).
32 The significance of modus and related terms to the moral economy of the De Bello Civili will be explored more fully in Chapter Four.
plebs to advance Caesar's nefarious agenda. Caesar hopes to buy Amyclas just as he bought Curio (and, through Curio, Rome itself, as Lucan notes at 4.821-824).\textsuperscript{33}

In short, Caesar is both demanding an end to Amyclas' utopian isolation from the events of the war (by requiring his assistance for the prosecution of the campaign) and offering (or threatening) to obliterate the poverty that ensures such isolation. He seems to believe that the lives of those around him are his to command, and Lucan identifies his demeanour as tyrannical, just as it was in his response to the Massilians and in his increasing impatience with Metellus at the temple doors: *sic fatur, quamquam plebeio tectus amictu,/ indocilis privata loqui* (5.538-539).\textsuperscript{34}

Like the Massilians, Amyclas at first attempts to dissuade Caesar through reasoned speech, providing a lengthy catalogue of ominous weather signs that advise against putting out to sea (5.540-556).\textsuperscript{35} In stark contrast to the Massilians, however, Amyclas quickly yields to the overwhelming force of Caesar's personality, ending his speech on a note of meek surrender to the irresistible tide of world events: *sed si magnarum poscunt discrimina rerum,/ haud dubitem praebere manus* (5.557-558). It should be observed that 5.558 closely echoes Caesar's exhortation to Amyclas at 5.536 (barely twenty lines earlier) to abandon his life of poverty: *ne cessa praebere deo tua fata*

\textsuperscript{33} Narducci comments on the significance of Caesar's address of Amyclas as *iuvenis*: "La qualificazione di Ami cla come *iuvenis* non è forse casuale; con questa proposta di arricchimento a un personaggio che rappresenta i valori della *paupertas*, Lucan potrebbe avere inteso alludere alla corruzione (ben documentata dalle fonti storiche) che Cesare aveva esercitato, attraverso regali e donativi di ogni genere, sugli esponenti della generazione giovanile." Although Narducci does not draw a connection with Curio, it is important to note that Curio may have been as young as 31 when he defected to Caesar in 50 BC (given his quaestorship four years earlier).

\textsuperscript{34} Pichon (p. 252) compares Livy's description of the Tarquins: *nescire Tarquinios privatos vivere* (2.2.3). See Helzle for the significance of this phrase to Caesar's characterization elsewhere in the poem. Narducci (pp. 251-252) observes that Caesar's arrogance is manifested first of all in his violent and repeated knocking at Amyclas' door (5.519-520).

\textsuperscript{35} Nehrkorn points out that the impatient Caesar must have found Amyclas' long catalogue of weather signs a considerable annoyance (pp. 157-158).
volenti/angustos opibus subitis inplere penates (5.536-537). Amyclas is employing Caesar's own language to indicate his submission to Caesar's designs; just as he opened his door to admit Caesar into his home, so now he admits Caesar's agenda of global destruction into his life.

The phrase that describes Amyclas' action in setting sail, *dat carbasa ventis* (5.560), points back to Lucan's account of the nautical skill of Telo, the helmsman of one of the Massilian ships in the naval battle of Book Three: *derigit huc puppem miseri quoque dextra Telonis,/ qua nullam melius pelago turbante carinae/ audivere manum, nec lux est notior ulli/ crustina, seu Phoebum videat seu cornua lunae,/ semper venturis conponere carbasa ventis* (3.592-596). In both passages, the phrase *carbasa ventis* (falling at the end of the line) thus concludes a description or display of expertise in the interpretation of weather signs. Telo, however, is able to draw on that expertise to guide the sailing of his ship. This allows him to keep the sails always turned to favourable (tail) winds, *semper venturis conponere carbasa ventis*, even in rough seas (*pelago turbante*). Telo's *ars* makes him master of the storm. Amyclas, by contrast, must abandon all the nautical lore that he has just expounded, since it advises him against putting out to sea in the first place. With the phrase *dat carbasa ventis*, he surrenders control of his ship to the winds, just as he has surrendered control of his life to Caesar, who is frequently aligned

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36 Note that the phrases *haud dubitem praebere* and *ne cessa praebere* occupy the same emphatic position at the beginning of their respective lines.

37 Consequently, even though, on the grounds that Amyclas does not explicitly accept Caesar's offer of enrichment, Narducci comments, "Amicla sa resistere alla tentazione" (p. 253, and see also Chambert, pp. 272-273), Amyclas does in fact implicitly accept Caesar's offer through his echo of Caesar's own words. Amyclas is willing to carry out whatever Caesar enjoins, whether that entails sailing his ship into dangerous weather or abandoning his lifestyle of utopian poverty (with the former serving as a metaphor for the latter).

38 Barratt cites 3.596 as a comparandum for *carbasa ventis* at 5.560. It is true that the combination of *carbasa* with some form of *ventus* at the end of the line is a conventional ending in Latin poetry (see Hunink's note on 3.596); nevertheless, the precise ending *carbasa ventis* occurs only on these two occasions in Lucan and helps reinforce a connection that is already apparent through the shared theme of nautical interpretation of weather signs.
with the elemental force of the wind in Lucan.\(^{39}\) Of course, *vela* (or some similar word) is often combined with *dare* to describe the action of setting sail; when a word for wind is included in the phrase as an indirect object, however, the poetic effect of the phrase depends to a large extent on the precise nature of the wind in question. If it is a specific wind to which the sails are released, in order to steer the ship in a specific direction, the effect is one of masterful, deliberate, and decisive action. At Lucan 9.1000-1003, for instance, impatient to make up for the delay of his visit to Troy, Caesar launches his fleet on the journey to Rhodes: *sic fatus repetit classes et *tota secundis*/ *vela dedit Coris*, *avidusque urguente procella*/ *Iliacas pensare moras Asiamque potentem*/ *praevenitur pelagoque Rhodon spumante relinquit*. With a specific goal in mind, Caesar orients his sails to a specific wind (the north-northwest Corus), the one that will offer him the most assistance in reaching his goal, and that is therefore favourable (*secundis*);\(^{40}\) the result is that he does in fact reach his intended destination, promptly and without incident. Even more specificity of purpose is implied in Telo's case by the use of the verb *conponere* rather than *dare*: the expert Telo carefully matches (*conponere*) his sails only with tail winds, *venturi venti*, which implies control over both sails and winds. By contrast, when sails are handed over to the winds in general (without regard for their direction), a certain desperation, a reckless plunge into danger, is often implied; this is certainly true of Dido's rhetorical question in *Aeneid* 4, when she contemplates the unbearable prospect of a return to a life of wandering over the seas in pursuit of Aeneas (4.546): *ventis dare vela*

\(^{39}\) See e.g. 1.151, 1.388-391, and 3.362-363, as well as Loupiac's discussion (pp. 48-50).

\(^{40}\) The suitability of the Corus wind for a journey from Troy to Rhodes is pointed out by Wick (in her note on 1000 sq.).
In fact, the winds to which Amyclas surrenders his ship are not even merely random and generalized, let alone venturi, for they specifically forebode imminent destruction. Lucan thus immediately qualifies ventis of 5.560 with the relative clause, ad quorum motus non solum lapsa per altum/aera dispersos traxere cadentia sulcos/sidera, sed summis etiam quae fixa tenentur/astra polis sunt visa quati (5.561-564). In effect, Amyclas is throwing up his hands in resignation, for he knows that he is entering waters where his ars will be of no further use to him. Indeed, even Telo is only free to practise his nautical craft in peacetime; in the sea battle off Massilia, plunged into the full horror of civil war, Telo ends up falling victim to a hail of javelins that prevents him from guiding his ship to its intended goal: avertit...ratem morientis dextra magistri (3.599). The allusion to Telo therefore serves simultaneously to contrast Amyclas with Telo (since the latter shows during peacetime a sure command of both his ars and his vessel in rough seas, whereas Amyclas blindly yields to the forces of nature) and to align the two men through Telo's eventual abandonment of ars and vessel alike under the lethal pressure of the civil war.

In agreeing to put to sea, Amyclas exchanges his quiet seclusion for a cataclysmic storm that reflects the furor of the civil war as a fundamental upheaval and dissolution of the cosmic elements; Lucan has already likened the civil war to a storm at 1.498-504

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41 The phrase vela dare ventis (or an analogous phrase) also carries connotations of recklessness and danger in Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.132 and Seneca, *Naturales Quaestiones* 5.18.6 and *Hercules Furens* 152.
42 As will be discussed in Chapter Two, the despairing abdication of political responsibility on the part of Pompey prior to the battle of Pharsalus is compared to that of the helmsman who, in the face of a violent storm, dat regimen ventis (7.126).
43 See Lapidge (pp. 367-368). Lapidge states, "The furor of this cosmic storm, which threatens to destroy the universe, is...a metaphorical correlative of the furor of Caesar, which similarly threatens to destroy the state" (p. 368). Lapidge also discusses the storm of Book Four along these lines (pp. 364-365).
and 2.454-460, and it is a common image for the civil strife of the late Republic.\footnote{44 Compare Horace, \textit{Odes} 1.14 (the motif can be traced back to Alcaeus); in their discussion of the literary and historical background to this poem (pp. 179-181), Nisbet and Hubbard point to Dio's account of a speech by Maecenas that compares the danger of civil war faced by the Roman state to that of a storm-tossed ship (52.16.3-4). Virgil reverses the relationship by using civil disorder as an image for a storm at \textit{Aeneid} 1.148-153.} The storm is also a popular metaphor for the life of blind folly, including political involvement as well as excessive concern for wealth, from which philosophy rescues the wise man.\footnote{45 Consider the first lines of Lucretius 2: \textit{suave, mari magno turbantibus aequora ventis,/ e terra magnum alterius spectare laborem} (2.1-2). In the immediately following lines, Lucretius equates the image of the storm with that of the battlefield (2.5-6), and he goes on to denounce the pursuit of wealth along with the pursuit of social, political, and military ambition as examples of the madness illustrated by the opening metaphor. The metaphor of escape from rough seas also appears briefly in the proem to Book Five (5.10-11). See Fowler (pp. 28-33) for the widespread use of this image in philosophy (as well as in philosophically flavoured poetry), especially for Epicureans. Horace, for instance, introduces his poem in praise of \textit{otium} (\textit{Odes} 2.16) with the image of a storm-tossed sailor praying desperately for tranquility (1-4), and stormy seas provide a metaphor for a life of involvement in city affairs in his \textit{Epistles} (1.1.16 and 2.2.84-85); compare Seneca, \textit{De Brevitate Vitae} 18.1.} Amyclas' descent into the storm therefore constitutes a triple loss of refuge: from the storm itself as a physical threat; from the civil war symbolized by the storm, a war in which Amyclas now finds himself a reluctant participant; and from the moral confusion and corruption that are also symbolized by the storm, that (according to Lucan's analysis in Book One) are the war's ultimate causes, and that Caesar has now imposed on Amyclas through his offer of enrichment.

Once again, but with greater desperation, Amyclas attempts in vain to dissuade Caesar from pursuing the suicidal voyage on the basis of his nautical lore, according to which the increasing confusion of wind and wave unmistakably warns of an imminent catastrophe (5.568-576). In response to this final expostulation to return to the safety of land, Caesar commands Amyclas to abandon the ship to the fury of the winds: \textit{sperne minas pelagi...ventoque furenti/ trade sinum} (5.578-579). This command (\textit{vento...trade sinum}) takes up the ominous phrase (\textit{dat carbasa ventis}) that began the account of the journey less than twenty lines before, at 5.560. Where the \textit{venti} of 5.560 were described...
as shaking the stars with their *motus* (5.561-564), Caesar specifies the wind to which Amyclas must surrender his sails as *furente*; he thus instructs Amyclas to abandon control not only to *ventus* (an element aligned with Caesar) but to *furor*, the driving force behind the entire civil war.\(^{46}\) Thereupon, Amyclas simply disappears from the poem, as though literally swallowed up in the maelstrom. By the time he returns briefly and anonymously to the stage at 5.645-646, the violence of the storm has completely annihilated the *ars* that he demonstrated in his first speech to Caesar, just as Telo's *ars* was nullified by his death in civil war: *artis opem vicere metus, nescitque magister,/ quam frangat, cui cedat aquae* (5.645-646).\(^{47}\) Caesar has succeeded in completely absorbing the happy pauper Amyclas into his new and terrible *aevum*, just as he did with the treasury of Saturn and the Massilian grove.

**Phemonoe**

Although it does not involve Caesar (at least not directly), another episode of Book Five also merits close investigation, for it neatly combines the two motifs of the failure of individual escape and the invasion of hallowed sanctuary. As events move steadily towards the fatal conclusion of Pharsalus, an anxious Roman senator on the Pompeian side, Appius Claudius, decides to consult the Delphic oracle about the future course of the conflict. Like the treasury of Saturn and the grove at Massilia, Delphi has enjoyed a long period of isolation from the violence and vices of the world around it:

*hoc...expositum cunctis nullique negatum/ numen ab humani solum se labe furoris/ vindicat* (5.103-104). On the emphatically placed *furoris*, Masters comments, "the

\(^{46}\) As Lapidge points out (p. 367), *furor* is used elsewhere in the passage to describe the action of the winds during the storm, together with *rabies* (another term frequently employed by Lucan to denote the madness of civil war).

\(^{47}\) See Barratt's note on 5.645-646 for literary precedents for the "theme of despair which defeats the skill of the sailor"; to her examples may be added *Aeneid* 3.202 (on Palinurus).
primary sense is difficult to discern; something like 'wickedness', but the notion is clearly
affected by the meaning 'civil-war madness'' (pp. 142-143). Lucan is claiming Delphi as
a lone (solum) refuge for all humanity (expositum cunctis nullique negatum) from the
insanity of civil war. These twin Delphic attributes of inclusion (of refugees) and
exclusion (of civil war) are the same ones that the Massilians hoped to maintain for their
own city, which they vainly sought to preserve both as a sanctuary for combatants who
have laid aside their arms and as a zone kept strictly quarantined from the contagion of
civil war. In addition, as well as enjoying a general immunity from human furor, the
oracle has experienced a long period of exceptional isolation ever since earthly rulers
began to fear the political consequences of the dissemination of future knowledge (5.111-
114); although Delphi's neglect may be lamentable to the pious, it is a welcome boon to
the priestesses themselves, since they are thereby spared the horrendous and life-
shortening ordeal of divine possession: nec voce negata/ Cirrhaeae maerent vates,
templique fruuntur/ iustitio (5.114-116).48 There is consequently a double idea of shelter
from furor operating in this episode: the shelter provided by Delphi itself from the
madness of the civil war (by virtue of its sanctity), and the shelter currently enjoyed by
the Pythia from the madness of divine possession (as a byproduct of the oracle's neglect).

In the form of the importunate Appius, however, external events now come
Crashing through into this quiet seclusion, just as Caesar comes banging on Amyclas'
door in the night: solus in acipites metuit descendere Martis/ Appius eventus, finemque
expromere rerum/ sollicitat superos multosque obducta per annos/ Delphica fatidici
reserat penetralia Phoebi (5.67-70), and sic tempore longo/ innotos tripodas vastaeque

48 Masters observes (p. 144) that Lucan is the only known ancient writer to claim that oracular possession
leads to an early death for the Pythia.
silentia rupis/ Appius Hesperii scrutator ad ultima fati/ sollicitat (5.120-123). As in the Amyclas episode, the disturbance of a scene of longstanding tranquility by the events of the civil war is denoted by the language of sollicitudo (compare Caesar's sollicitus gressus at 5.508). Moreover, both 5.67-70 and 5.120-123 point back to the two violations of sanctuary in Book Three, since the phrases multosque obducta per annos...penetralia and (to a lesser extent) tempore longo/ inmotos tripodas evoke Lucan's description of the treasury of Saturn as multis non tactus ab annis/ Romani census populi (3.156-157) and of the sacred grove as longo numquam violatus ab aevo (3.399).\(^{49}\) In the lines following the second of the two passages cited above, the parallel between Appius' consultation and Caesar's deforestation is in fact rendered very explicit, when the priest physically drags the Pythia out of a sequestered grove in which she has been enjoying a carefree retreat:  
\[
\begin{align*}
\textit{Castalios circum latices nemorumque recessus/ Phemonoen errore vagam curisque vacantem/ corripuit cogitque fores inrumpere templi} & \ (5.125-127).
\end{align*}
\]
\(^{50}\) In addition, where Caesar's acts of violation in Book Three are motivated by a desire to secure material support for his war effort, Appius disturbs the peace of Delphi in a determined quest for foreknowledge of the outcome of the civil war; here as in Book Three, then, the civil war (in one form or another) is shown to intrude upon a scene of longstanding peace.\(^{51}\)

\(^{49}\) Similarly, the phrase reserat...penetralia (5.70) points back to the characterization of the temple of Saturn (prior to Caesar's invasion) as nondum reseratae...aedis (3.117).

\(^{50}\) The form nemorumque occurs in the poem only here (at 5.125) and in the description of the Massilian grove (at 3.402).

\(^{51}\) Although he does not cite specific verbal parallels, Masters speaks of "the motif of 're-use of old things long untouched'" as "a Lucanian leitmotif" that connects the episode of Appius Claudius in Book Five, the invasion of the treasury and of the grove in Book Three, and the hasty seizure of arms grown rusty in peacetime (and stored beside the household gods, i.e. in a sacred setting) by the panicked inhabitants of Ariminum in Book One (p. 137, and see also p. 28, where he refers to the Massilian deployment of old men and old ships at 3.517-520 as another example of the same motif). Masters treats this theme metapoetically, as a metaphor for Lucan's own activity as an epic poet.
Another motif common to the Delphi episode of Book Five and to the invasions of sanctuary in Book Three is the fact that, in each instance, the threatened act of violation is delayed by the reluctance of onlookers or participants. In the case of the treasury of Saturn, Caesar's ingress is blocked by the indignant tribune Metellus. When he turns his hungry gaze on the sacred grove, it is his own soldiers who impose a delay in their pious reluctance to incur the guilt of such a sacrilege; Caesar must strike the first blow with his own hand, and even then his soldiers only acquiesce out of a fear of their leader that outweighs their fear of the gods (3.437-439). Phemonoe, however, surpasses both Metellus and the soldiers in her desperate postponement of the inevitable moment of divine possession. One reason for this is Phemonoe's status as *virgo* (she is so termed at 5.141, 5.161, and 5.193). The description of mantic possession in language suggestive of sexual violence is a well-established literary motif (as in *Aeneid* 6), but Lucan highlights the theme by introducing Phemonoe as a carefree ingenue wandering through an idyllic pastoral landscape, *Castalios circum latices nemorumque recessus/ Phemonoen errore vagam curisque vacantem* (5.125-126); this scene recalls Ovid's narratives in the *Metamorphoses* and the *Fasti* of the rape of Persephone, who (in both versions) begins the story in girlish play among the flowers of a Sicilian meadow, an activity described with the verb *errabat* at *Fasti* 4.426. For both Persephone and Phemonoe, physical violence from a male immediately breaks in upon their tranquil roaming, actual rape in Persephone's case and, in Phemonoe's, a violent dragging (note the sexually charged verb *corripuit* at 5.127) by a male priest at the behest of the male Appius to the temple where

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52 Compare *Metamorphoses* 5.391-394, as well as the account of the Homeric hymn to Demeter (4-14). At *Metamorphoses* 2.417-422, the rape of Callisto occurs while the latter is taking shelter from the sun in a shady *nemus* (2.418) and is *custode vacantem* (2.422).

53 For the sexual sense of *corripere*, see e.g. Seneca, *Medea* 105.
she is to undergo possession by the male Apollo. After all, unlike Virgil's Sybil, Phemonoe is here possessed for the first time, suffering a kind of loss of oracular virginity. In this connection, it is significant that both the treasury of Saturn and the sacred grove are characterized as having enjoyed a virginal condition prior to Caesar's incursion. The wealth of the treasury is thus multis non tactus ab annis (3.156), while the grove is a lucus...longo numquam violatus ab aevo (3.399) and (as the feminine silva) bello...intacta priore (3.427). The defenders of these sanctuaries, however, are males (Metellus and the soldiers) who themselves run no risk of bodily violation. Phemonoe's heightened desperation is thus explained by the fact that, while the characters of Book Three are merely acting to protect (or to avoid desecrating) a sacred space outside themselves, the analogous sanctuary that Phemonoe must defend against invasion is that of her own body.

The violation of Phemonoe is played out in several stages. To begin with, she is dragged by main force from the grove in which she has taken refuge to the gates of the temple (5.125-127). There, she attempts a futile deception (cassa fraude at 5.130), trying to persuade Appius that the oracle has fallen silent. This is a striking variation on the image of Metellus' resolute defence of the doors of the temple of Saturn: where Metellus seeks to block Caesar's access to the interior of the temple by interposing the barrier of his sacred person at the temple doors, Phemonoe delays Appius' quest by her refusal to allow her own sacred person to break through the doors of the temple at Delphi (fores

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54 See Burkert, p. 117 (and also p. 394, n. 84), for the sexual quality of the relationship between the Pythia and Apollo. Plutarch, for instance, describes the Pythia as Apollo's virginal bride (De Pythiae oraculis 405C).
55 For the use of intacta to denote female virginity, see e.g. Aeneid 1.345.
56 Amyclas, who like Phemonoe is fighting to prevent his own personal annihilation, makes in vain (like Phemonoe) two increasingly desperate attempts to avert destruction, first by his catalogue of ominous weather signs at 5.540-556 and then by his plea to return to land at 5.568-576.
inrumpere templi at 5.127). Once again, the priest must resort to physical force, this time to drive her into the sanctuary (5.142-146), and even then she persists in her obstinate refusal to cooperate, venturing another subterfuge as she feigns mantic possession to avoid the loss of her inner quies: deum simulans sub pectore ficta quieto/ verba refert (5.148-149). Quies and quietus are frequently employed by Lucan to describe the tranquility violated by the onslaught of civil war; the quies of the inhabitants of Ariminum, for instance, is broken by the noise of Caesar's invading army (1.239), whereupon they bemoan the fact that (standing as they do at the gateway to Italy) they are forever condemned to suffer the first shock of warfare even though pax alta and tranquilla quies still prevail everywhere else (1.249-250). Appius is accordingly aligned with Caesar as an enemy of the quies that Phemonoe is so desperate to preserve amidst the clamour of war, while his mounting anger and threats in the face of Phemonoe's continued recalcitrance recall Caesar's increasing (and increasingly violent) impatience towards Metellus. Cowed by his threats (tandem conterrita at 5.161), Phemonoe at last submits to Appius, simultaneously accepting her occupation by Apollo, just as Metellus (at the temple of Saturn) and Caesar's soldiers (in the sacred grove) are eventually impelled to cooperate with Caesar's violation of sanctuary by the threat of his wrath.

What Phemonoe is condemned to suffer as a result of her double surrender to Appius and Apollo is the civil war in all its horrific entirety. This occurs on several distinct levels. First of all, as argued above, Phemonoe experiences a kind of sexual violation at the hands of the three males of the scene (Appius, the priest, and Apollo), of

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57 Caesar rejects quies at 2.650 and seeks to destroy the Pompeian soldiers' quies at 6.283, while the war in general is presented as a violator of quies at 6.326 and 6.781. The adjective quietus is applied to a condition of antebellum tranquility at 5.35 and 8.513.
the sort that (in a more literal sense) was commonplace in ancient warfare, and of whose association with the Roman civil war in particular Lucan gives several hints over the course of the poem. During the mutiny of Book Five, for instance, immediately after the Phemonoe episode, Lucan reports that Caesar would gladly have conceded the rape of the wives and daughters of senators to his soldiers (among other hypothetical outrages) if that had been demanded: *non illis urbes spoliandaque templaque negasset/Tarpeiamque Iovis sedem matresque senatus/passurasque infanda nurus* (5.305-307).\(^{58}\)

More significantly, as narrated at 5.177-182, Phemonoe must endure a perfect knowledge of the civil war (along with the rest of the history of the cosmos), a burden shared with the frenzied Roman matron at the end of Book One (1.674-695).\(^{59}\) It is true that the detailed recital of the specific disasters of the war attributed to the matron is a very different kind of prophetic vision from the grand vista of past and future time inflicted on Phemonoe; at first the latter can barely perceive the civil war, let alone Appius' humble place within it, amidst the general maelstrom of events (5.183-189). As Masters has argued, however, Phemonoe's vision (with its compression of the expanse of history into the agonizingly narrow confines of a human mind) in fact expresses an essential truth of Lucan's conception of the civil war, namely the narrowing of all space and time into the single catastrophic point of Pharsalus:

in the moment of Pharsalus, not only is the population of the earth assembled and decimated, but the whole of history is annulled, the whole of the future changed (7.387ff). Pharsalia is a true crisis point: one place, one time, containing the resources, histories, possibilities, of all places, all times. Everything converges...What Phemonoe

\(^{58}\) As will be discussed in Chapter Three, the threat of sexual violence against Cornelia is also implied in two passages (5.782-783 and 9.276-277).

\(^{59}\) Specific parallels between the two scenes include the facts that, like Phemonoe, the matron endures possession by Apollo (1.677-678), that like Phemonoe, she is described as a Maenad (compare 1.674-675 to *bacchatur* at 5.169), and that where the matron *attonitam rapitur...per urbem* (1.676), the priest *corripuit* Phemonoe (5.127).
sees...is what the *Bellum Civile* is all about: civil war, everything. The strands of history and fate are collected into one place, one time, one poem of total significance. (p. 147)

Finally, the specific language describing Apollo's possession of Phemonoe serves to colour the episode with the violence of civil war: *tandem...potitus/ pectore Cirrhaeo non umquam plenior artus/ Phoebados inrupit Paean mentemque priorem/ expulit atque hominem toto sibi cedere iussit/ pectore* (5.165-169). Just like Amyclas, Phemonoe suffers a total loss of identity. Masters comments,

As Phemonoe is forced, on Appius' orders, to 'break into' the temple (*inrumpere*, 127), so Apollo 'breaks into' Phemonoe (*inrupit*, 167), 'expelling' (*expulit*, 168) the mind from the body of one who had been 'impelled' (*inpulit*, 146) into the temple. Clearly there is a parallel to be drawn between the physical violence done to Phemonoe by Appius, and the spiritual violence done by Apollo. (p. 144)

The repetition of *inrumpere* is in particular significant; this verb occurs on four other occasions in the poem, and three of those four occurrences describe the invasion of some previously sheltered space by the rumour, violence, or uproar of Caesar in particular or of the civil war in general. Moreover, by forcing Phemonoe into the temple and Apollo into Phemonoe, Appius doubly reenacts Caesar's attempt to break into the treasury of Saturn through the barrier of the sacrosanct Metellus, since Appius engineers an invasion both of a sacred space (the temple) and of a sacred body (Phemonoe). Insofar as the fall of the temple of Saturn embodies in microcosm the fall of Rome as a whole, Phemonoe is aligned with Rome as an object of violation by a Caesarian figure.

This alignment is further reinforced by the use of the phrase *maestus...ululatus* to describe the sound uttered by the possessed Phemonoe (5.192), for it recalls the dismal lamentations of the Roman matrons in Book Two in anticipation of the imminent arrival

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60 See 1.470, 2.441, and 7.478. *Inpellere* and *expellere* are also suggestive; the former, for instance, describes the Roman people's insane drive for civil war at 1.69 and Caesar's relentless ambitions at 1.149, while the latter describes two significant expulsions from Rome: of Caesar's tribunes by the senate (a *casus belli* for Caesar) and of the senate itself by the news of Caesar's advance (at 1.266 and 2.574 respectively).
of Caesar's forces: *crebris feriunt ululatibus aures* (2.33): these are the only two occurrences of the noun *ululatus* in the poem. The crucial term, however, is *furor*. As Masters has demonstrated (pp. 142-143), the madness of civil war from which Delphi was supposed to have constituted a pristine sanctuary in fact contaminates every step of the proceedings, and the occurrences of this word in the Delphi episode (as listed by Masters) merit closer attention. Even as early as 5.118, less than twenty lines after his emphatic statement of the oracle's immunity from *furor*, Lucan characterizes the state of mantic possession as *stimulus fluctusque furoris*. In other words, only if the oracle is not consulted can it remain truly free of *furor*. The absence of signs of madness then gives the lie to the pretense of Phemonoe's first feigned trance: *nullo confusae murmure vocis/ instinctam sacro mentem testata furore* (5.149-150). It is precisely Phemonoe's freedom from genuine *furor* that provokes Appius' own rage: *sensit tripodas cessare furensque/ Appius...ait* (5.157-159). Finally, intimidated by the threats of Appius *furens*, Phemonoe submits to madness, to *rabies vaesana* (5.190); like *furor*, *rabies* is often used in Lucan to denote the madness of civil war. The term *furor* itself is applied to the Sibyl in a simile describing Phemonoe's activity (5.184). Through the inquiry of Appius (a protagonist in the civil war) about the civil war, the *furor* inherent to the civil war has infected both the innocent Phemonoe and (by extension) Delphi as a whole; the latter can offer no more refuge from the universal madness than could Massilia in Book Three, whose inhabitants began by eschewing *furor* but ended up dismantling their own ships in a fit of suicidal frenzy.

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61 Phemonoe's trance is also described with *rabies* at 5.210. For *rabies* as the frenzy of civil war, see 1.666, 2.544, 5.262, 6.224, 6.63, 7.51, 7.245, 7.474, and 7.557, as well as 4.240 and 7.551 (where *rabies* is joined with *furor*).
Although Appius inflicts the disturbances of the civil war on the previously inviolate calm of Delphi and on the innocent Pythia, just as Caesar does on the sacred spaces of Rome and Massilia and on the innocent Amyclas, their goals are exactly opposite: where Caesar pursues the vigorous prosecution of his beloved war, Appius hopes instead to evade both Caesar and the war. If, however, even Delphi is susceptible to invasion by the malign spirit of civil strife, how can Appius expect to find a personal refuge from it?

Lucan introduces the episode with a criticism of the selfishness inherent in Appius’ fears for his own safety:

\[
iam turba...arma petit...quae cum populique ducesque/casibus incertis et caeca sorte pararent,/solus in ancipites metuit descendere Martis/Appius eventus (5.64-68).\]

Solus is a key term in the language of rejected or failed escapism in Lucan: in Book Two, Cato employs it (2.295) to dismiss the lofty neutrality with which Brutus tempts him as both impractical and immoral. 62 Appius does claim to be inquiring about the stricken world as a whole, de...orbis trepidi tanto...tumultu (5.160). Nevertheless, the narcissism of his concerns becomes apparent when he goes away satisfied with an answer touching only his own fate, since Apollo prevents the Pythia from revealing more. The ostensibly reassuring oracle runs as follows:

\[
effugis ingentes, tanti discriminis \textit{expers},/bellorum, Romane, minas, \textit{solusque quietem}/Euboici vasta lateris convalle tenebis (5.194-196).\]

Once again solus is a crucial piece of diction, and the promise of quietes is likewise significant, for this is precisely what was denied to the inhabitants of Ariminum; indeed, in his prospect of quietes, Appius can consider himself more fortunate than Phemonoe herself, whose struggle to retain a \textit{pectus quietum} (5.148)

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62 Similarly, the fact that the shrine of Delphi has hitherto remained solum (5.103) in its freedom from human furor does not prevent Appius himself from inflicting the madness of civil war on the oracle in the manner outlined above.
is frustrated by Appius' own persistent threats. Another important term is *expers*, for Cato refuses to remain *expers...metus* (2.290) while the universe collapses, but Appius can rejoice at the news that he alone will be *tanti discriminis expers* (5.194); these are the only two occurrences of the form *expers* in the poem, and on both occasions it is placed at an emphatic position in the line (at the beginning or the end).

Appius' reaction to this oracle is one of joyous optimism. In spite of the mighty crisis still hanging over the world, his sole thought is for the apparent guarantee of his own escape to Euboea: *iure sed incerto mundi subsidere regnum/ Chalcidos Euboicae... parabas* (5.226–227). Appius is, however, not only selfish but deluded, deceived by an ambiguous oracle (*ambiguis frustratum sortibus* at 5.225); his hope to escape the war unscathed is thus in vain (he is described as *vana spe rapte* at 5.227), just as was Phemonoe's attempt to evade her own destruction by deceiving Appius (*cassa fraude* at 5.130). Indeed, in his blissful ignorance, Appius' state of mind now bears a striking resemblance to that of Phemonoe at the start of this episode, when she wandered *curis vacans* through an idyllic grove; Amyclas proves similarly naive in his initial assumption that the violent knocking on his door is unrelated to the civil war currently

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63 These lines precisely recall Lucan's initial criticism of Appius' motives in consulting the oracle at 5.65-70, particularly 5.65-66, *quaes [sc. arma] cum populique ducesque/ casibus incertis et caeca sorte pararent*. *Incerto* at 5.226 thus points back to *incertis* at 5.66 (occupying the same metrical *sedes*), while *parabas* closes 5.227 just as *pararent* does 5.66; at the same time as Rome's leaders are preparing to fight in the face of the world's uncertain fate, Appius prepares to flee to apparent safety. Ahl comments, "If we are outraged by the oracle's refusal to deliver any pertinent information about the future of Rome, we are no less put out by Appius' reaction to the revelation. The governo of Greece does not register any anger or disappointment at the outcome; on the contrary, he goes on his way content with the opportunity, as he thinks, to save his own life...Despite the fact that he came to Delphi for the purpose of finding out what the future had in store for Rome, and is prepared to use violence to gain this knowledge, he is not really much concerned about the city" (p. 128).

64 Phemonoe's short-lived *securitas* at this point is bound up with the term *error* (5.126), which expresses not only her physical act of wandering but also her erroneous assumption that she is beyond the reach of the civil war (an assumption shared with the unfortunate Amyclas); similarly, Appius Claudius' joy is premised on an erroneous interpretation of Phemonoe's oracle.
raging in the vicinity of his little hut. Just like Phemonoe and Amyclas, Appius is in for a rude awakening.

The passage therefore concludes with a long apostrophe by Lucan in which he explains to the foolish Appius that the only possible refuge (secreta)\textsuperscript{65} from this war is in death: *heu demens! nullum belli sentire fragorem,/ tot mundi caruisse malis, praestare deorum/ excepta quis Morte potest? secreta tenebis/ litoris Euboici memorando condite busto* (5.228-231). Ahl observes that *Euboici* can be taken as referring to Cumae (i.e. the Sibyl) as well as to Chalcis, with the result that the phrase *secreta tenebis/ litoris Euboici* can be read either as "You will grasp the secrets of the shore of Euboean Cumae" or as "you will gain a hidden place on the Euboean shore."\textsuperscript{66} Ahl interprets the relationship between these alternative readings in terms of the failure of Appius’ quest for oracular enlightenment, since "instead of knowledge he will find a grave", but another analysis is possible, one in which the two readings complement rather than contradict one another. When he dies in Euboea instead of living happily ever after there, Appius will finally appreciate the truth of Phemonoe's riddling oracle (Phemonoe is compared to the "Euboean" Sibyl at 5.183-186), just as Lucan explains it in his final admonition on the impossibility of escape from the civil war except in death; Phemonoe herself has already grasped the full ubiquity of the war, both through her sweeping oracular vision and through her personal experience of the onslaught of the war's *furor* at Appius' hands. In Euboea, Appius will consequently end up knowing what the Sibyl-like (and hence

\textsuperscript{65} This is another key term in the language of futile escapism in Lucan, as in the speech by the Massilians (3.314).

\textsuperscript{66} See p. 129; these are Ahl’s translations. Masters observes that *Euboicus* is in fact used precisely to denote Cumae only fifty lines previously, at 5.183 (p. 149).
Euboean/Cumaean) Phemonoe now knows, and in this sense he will in fact "grasp the secrets of the shore of Euboean Cumae."67

Although he was responsible for forcing the nightmare of civil war upon Phemonoe in his eagerness to find a personal refuge from it, Appius will end up joining her in an awareness that all such evasions are in vain, at least during life. For both Appius and Phemonoe, the only possible exit from the civil war is in death, the death that Appius has brought upon Phemonoe (by compelling her to endure the life-shortening trauma of mantic possession), and that Phemonoe has (obliquely) predicted for Appius; this is in accordance with a philosophical tradition, represented by such writers as Lucretius and Seneca, that celebrates death as a general sanctuary from earth-shattering calamities, including world wars.68 Indeed, Phemonoe actually enjoys a foretaste of the peace of final oblivion when her trance comes to an end: *dumque a luce sacra, qua vidit fata, refertur/ ad volgare iubar, mediae venere tenebrae./ inmisit Stygiam Paean in viscera Lethen,/ quae raperet secreta deum* (5.219-222). With the references to *tenebrae* and Stygian Lethe, Phemonoe's death is clearly foreshadowed, and the effect of her loss of consciousness is to erase her knowledge of future events, i.e. of the civil war.69 A metaphorical death therefore restores Phemonoe to the condition of carefree ignorance of

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67 After all, Appius' end was not sudden, since he died of disease (according to Valerius Maximus 1.8.10); he would therefore have had ample time to reflect on the error of his oracular interpretation.

68 See e.g. Lucretius 3.830-842 and Seneca, *Consolatio ad Marciam* 26.4, *Naturales Quaestiones* 6.32.7, and *Agamemnon* 589-610.

69 For the phrase *Stygiam...Lethen*, Barratt suggests as a comparandum 6.768-770, where Erictho promises to use her magic arts to grant permanent oblivion (along with freedom from necromancers like herself) to a dead Pompeian soldier as a reward for his cooperation in disclosing future events: *nec verba nec herbae/ audebunt longae somnum tibi solvere Lethes/ a me morte data*. These are the only appearances of the noun *Lethe* in the poem, and on both occasions it falls emphatically at the end of the line. As Masters has shown (on pp. 192-193 and 200-201), Phemonoe is aligned with the unfortunate corpse of Book Six in various ways; an additional alignment thus consists in the fact that both are ultimately to be liberated by deathly oblivion from the agony of entanglement in the affairs of the living (i.e. in the world of civil war), an entanglement that has been inflicted on an unwilling oracular body (Phemonoe or the soldier) by a Pompeian partisan in search of future knowledge (Appius or Sextus).
the outside world that she enjoyed at the beginning of the episode, just as a more literal
death will bring Appius the only *quies* he can know in midst of civil war. Of course,
even death is not necessarily an impenetrable refuge in Lucan's universe; in Book Six, the
revived corpse of a fallen Pompeian soldier reveals that the *quies* of the underworld (like
the *rupta quies* of Ariminum at 1.239) has been broken (*ruperunt*) by the clamour of war:

*effera Romanos agitat discordia manes,/ inpiaque infernum ruperunt arma quietem*
(6.780-781).

**Ilerda**

Appius' fate helps to clarify an episode of Book Four that would otherwise appear
somewhat out of place in Lucan's poem. When the defeated Pompeian forces at Ilerda in
Spain surrender to Caesar, all that their general Afranius asks is that they now be
permitted to leave the civil war behind and live out the remainder of their years in peace:

*nec magna petuntur:/ otia des fessis, vitam patiaris inermes/ degere quam tribuis*
(4.356-358). In his dialogue with Brutus in Book Two, Cato has already denounced such pursuit
of private *otium* as shamefully selfish in a time of civil war; Afranius evokes Cato's
rebuke through the repetition of *otia* at the beginning of the line. Book Two presents
not only Cato but also Caesar as an enemy to *otium*, since the term (again as the plural
*otia*) is used to describe Domitius' vain attempt to delay Caesar's inexorable advance
through Italy by blocking the approach to Corfinium: *hoc limite bellum/ haereat, hac
hostis lentus terat otia ripa* (2.487-488). What is more, in Book Five Caesar will angrily
deny to his own mutinous soldiers the same release from the trials of war now sought by

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70 The form *otia* occurs in this emphatic *sedes* on only three occasions in Lucan, in Afranius' petition and
twice in the dialogue of Brutus and Cato (with Brutus' advice to Cato at 2.267 and Cato's chastisement of
Brutus at 2.295).
Afranius. Nevertheless, Afranius' prayer is readily granted (4.363-364), and Lucan accords the Pompeians a happy ending that is described in loving detail:

heu miseri, qui bella gerunt! tunc arma relinquens
victori miles spoliato pectore tutus
innocuusque suas curarum liber in urbes
spargitur. o quantum donata pace potitos
excussis umquam ferrum vibrasse lacertis
paenituit, tolerasse sitim frustraque rogasse
prospera bella deos!...
felix, qui potuit mundi nutante ruina
quo iaceat iam scire loco. non proelia fessos
ulla vocant, certos non rumpunt classica somnos.
iam coniunx natique rudes et sordida tecta
et non deductos recipit sua terra colonos.
hoc quoque securis oneris fortuna remisit,
sollicitus menti quod abest favor: ille salutis
est auctor, dux ille fuit. sic proelia soli
felices nullo spectant civilia voto. (4.382-388, 393-401)

These men are now free to take their rest in quiet domestic seclusion from the world collapsing around them (mundi nutante ruina), rest both from the actual physical toil and danger of battle and from the anxiety (sollicitus favor) attendant upon a partisan attitude towards the outcome of the war; Appius' assault on Delphi is described with the verb sollicitare (at 5.69 and 123), while Caesar's ominous approach of the peaceful hut of Amyclas occurs sollicito...gressu (5.508), but the Ilerda Pompeians are now immune to the ubiquitous sollicitudo of civil war. Again, in contrast to the inhabitants of Ariminum in Book One, whose slumber is broken (rupta quies) by the noise of classica in their forum (1.237-239), the clamour of battle will not disturb the sleep of the discharged soldiers of Book Four: certos non rumpunt classica somnos (4.395). Even though Cato refuses to rest securus while Rome falls (2.297), the Pompeian can now return home curarum liber (4.384) and securus (4.398). Moreover, unlike Cato, Lucan represents this mindset as a thoroughly desirable condition (with the contrast of miser at 4.382 and soli/
felices at 4.400-401). On the surface, then, the conclusion of the Ilerda episode appears to contradict the message hammered home again and again over the course of the poem: that escape from the war is both immoral and impossible.

The exact nature of the release to which these soldiers can now look forward is, however, decidedly ambiguous. Lucan's account of their future beatitude begins with the exclamation, felix, qui potuit mundi nutante ruina/ quo iaceat iam scire loco (4.393-394). As noted by Thompson and Bruère (p. 163), this is an obvious reference to the grave: unlike the victorious troops, who are condemned to spill their blood over all the globe in fulfilment of Caesar's insatiable ambitions (4.391-392), the Pompeians can at least be sure of their final resting place (as denoted by iacere), just as Appius receives the certain promise of a Euboean tomb (if he could only decipher the oracle). Similarly, the sole concrete hope voiced by Caesar's soldiers during the mutiny of Book Five is to be allowed to die at peace, at home, and in the arms of their wives (5.276-283). Lucan goes on to comment on the soundness of the sleep awaiting the Pompeians: non proelia fessos/ ulla vocant, certos non rumpunt classica somnos (4.394-395). Especially in the context

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71 Solus is once again an important term here: Cato employs it (at 2.295) to eschew any desire for individual tranquility in the midst of a public disaster, but the Pompeians are to be soli in their serene detachment from the conflict.

72 The contradiction between Lucan's blessing of the Pompeians in Book Four and Cato's speech in Book Two is briefly noted by Ahl (p.197), who explains the inconsistency as an unfortunate byproduct of Lucan's desire to present the Pompeian forces in the best possible light, given the unflattering historical record of their actual conduct at Ilerda: "in order to extoll the blessings of the republican army and blur the shame of their defeat, [Lucan] ventures into an apostrophe, praising the joys of disinvolve..." With regard to this line of argument, Masters trenchantly comments, "So the inconsistencies proliferate; [Ahl] cannot control them all, and here finally he must appeal to the paradox that one inconsistency (the flat contradiction) is the price that must be paid for a consistency (pro-Pompeianism); or to phrase the absurdity more plainly, Lucan has sacrificed the overall consistency of his theme in a vain attempt to maintain the overall consistency of his theme. Ahl is tying himself up in knots" (p. 82). According to Masters, the solution lies in Lucan's own fractured authorial voice and divided loyalties; as will become clear, my own approach is rather to question whether the apparent inconcinnity of the Ilerda episode is in fact as grievous as Ahl supposes.

73 For this meaning of iaceo, see the OLD (entry 6). Lucan employs it in this sense on numerous occasions, particularly with reference to Pompey's death (e.g. at 8.315, 8.714, 8.837, and 8.861).
of the preceding *iaceat*, these words carry a strong suggestion of the unbroken rest of the dead, which is often expressed through the image of sleep in ancient literature, and which is likewise associated with silence. During the necromancy scene of Book Six, for instance, as a reward for compliance with her demands, the witch Erictho promises (6.763-770) to bestow perpetual slumber (*somnum*) upon the ghost of a Pompeian soldier, who will be as deaf to the sound of magicians' incantations (*ut nullos cantata magos exaudiat umbra*, 6.767) as the Pompeians of Book Four will be to the noise of trumpets. There is also a somewhat ominous ring to the ensuing prediction that the Pompeians will be received by their own land and loved ones, *iam coniunx natique rudes et sordida tecta/et non deductos recipit sua terra* (4.396-397), for this can easily be taken as a reference to burial, particularly given the funerary resonances of the phrase *recipit sua terra*, which recalls the Republican-era epitaph of one Publius Scipio: *lubens te in gremiu, Scipio, recipit terra* (*Carmina Latina Epigraphica* 8.6). Compare also *CLE* 1245.3, which stresses the idea of death in one's native land, *h]unc Libuae genuit tellus eademq[ue recepit*, as well as *CLE* 809, *mater [i.e. terra] genuit materque recepit*. Even where the earth is not specifically mentioned, *recipere* is commonly applied to the deceased in such inscriptions. The account of the soldiers' homecoming is thus bracketed by verbs that

74 Compare the picture of the sleeping Medusa at 9.671-672: *quam sopor aeternam tracturus morte quietem/ obruit haud totam*. *Quies* is a frequent term for death in Lucan and other Latin authors; see the *OLD* (entry 3). For a development of the image of death as the ultimate sleep, see e.g. Lucretius 3.919-930. For the association of death with silence, consider the common epithet of *silentes* for the dead (e.g. at Lucan 3.29, on which see Hunink's note). These two attributes of posthumous existence, sleep and silence, are often combined in funerary inscriptions, e.g. *aeterna quies, Ditisq[ue silentia maesti* (*Carmina Latina Epigraphica* 1551c.1), *nunc silet et tacito contentus sede quiescit* (*CLE* 573.2), and *hic tumulata silet aeterno munere somni* (*CLE* 1997.8).

75 See also *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* 6.20459: *si quis titulo manus intulerit, non illunc recipiat tellus*. Lucan employs similar language to describe the ultimate destiny of the fallen at Pharsalus: *placido natura recepta/ cuncta sinu* (7.810-811), and *capit omnia tellus quae genuit* (7.818-819). Compare Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 17.4.8: *in hac quippe uita suam terram quisque circumfert, quam moriente homine recipit terra communis*.

76 See e.g. *CLE* 615.1, 1362.5, 1551c.3, 1580.6, 1589.4, and 1848.1.
would be perfectly at home on a gravestone, *iacere* and *recipere*. In addition to the corpus of Latin funerary inscriptions, a further instructive context for 4.396-397 is supplied by Lucan's poem itself, which is much concerned with the issue of final resting places, often contrasting the exile's death with the happier fate of one who ends his days on his native soil, attended by family members (as in the above-mentioned petition by Caesar's mutinous troops in Book Five). In the light of such unsettling hints, the overall implication is clear: although Afranius asked for the grant of a peaceful *life* (*vitam* at 4.357), the only escape from civil war that is in practice available, whether for the Pompeians of Book Four or for Appius Claudius in Book Five, is through a peaceful *death*.

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77 It should be noted that Lucan's initial blessing of the discharged Pompeian soldier as *innocuus* and *curarum liber* at 4.384 is likewise not inconsistent with the language of funerary inscriptions: compare *CLE* 437.1 (*liber...curis*) and, for *innocuus*, *CLE* 108.6, 378.4, 441.1, 465a.4, 490.6, 560c.5, 1061.12, 1189.8, 1245.2, and 1702.1.

78 The main example of this motif in Lucan's poem is the unfortunate Pompey, fated to die and receive burial so far from his beloved Rome and apart from his equally beloved Cornelia (see e.g. 7.29-36, 8.831-850, and 9.55-68).

79 Bruère and Thompson (pp. 161-163) detect two chief Virgilian models underlying Lucan's blessing of the Pompeian soldiers: the *laudes vitae rusticae* at the end of *Georgics* 2 (458-540) and Aeneas' wistful contrast of his own laborious destiny with the happy lot of Helenus and Andromache in *Aeneid* 3 (493-499). In contrast to Lucan, however, both of the Virgilian passages cited here are celebrations of life. Where Aeneas emphatically opens his address with the words *vivite felices* (3.493), the *felicitas* attributed by Lucan to the Pompeians consists not in the way they will live but in the place they will be buried: *felix, qui potuit mundi nutante ruina/ quo iaceat iam scire loco* (4.393-394). As for the conclusion to the second Georgic, Virgil paints a countryside that is all liveliness and bustle, devoid of respite from labour (*nec requies*, 2.516), but Lucan's Pompeians are not represented as actually *doing* anything once they attain their placid retreat; they do not even kiss the wives and children who receive them, unlike Virgil's ideal farmer (*Georgics* 2.523). The essential contradiction in ethos between Lucan and Virgil on the pleasures of country life is noted by Bruère and Thompson, who comment, "Lucan's veterans, as they vegetate in rural squalor (*sordida tecta*, 397) surrounded by their uncouth wives and children (*coniunx natique rudes*, *ibid*.), are happy only in that they no longer have to fight and now know where their bodies will lie when they die. They are described in terms that recall and thereby suggest a contrast with the bucolic felicity of Lucan's Virgilian model...Virgil asserts that the sturdy virtues developed in Rome's citizens by the rustic life he exalts were a prime factor in her rise to supremacy...No such development is to be expected in the case of Lucan's apathetic ex-soldiers, whom the poet abandons in a state of moribund rustication, *au dessous de la mêlée*, happy in their indifference to the outcome of the civil cataclysm" (p. 163). I would simply take this analysis one step further: through his account of the lifeless "life" that awaits the returning Pompeians, Lucan's goal is to suggest not merely slothful torpor but death itself. Even if, upon first encountering these lines, the reader will not necessarily arrive at such an interpretation (although, as I have argued, the passage contains several strong hints to that effect), the Ilerda episode can be reconsidered in the light of subsequent
If the doomed Appius supplies a useful parallel for the apparent "happy ending" of the Ilerda episode, the Massilian narrative of Book Three sheds light on Lucan's surprising decision to highlight Caesar's magnanimity in releasing the Pompeian soldiers from the ordeal of participation in civil strife. When the Massilians send their embassy to Caesar, they are as yet uncontaminated by Caesar's war and wish to remain so; this rejection of his essential raison d'être is what most offends Caesar. The Ilerda Pompeians, by contrast, have already experienced the full horror of civil war by the time Afranius begs Caesar for discharge. After the soldiers of both sides come together in joyous fraternization within the Pompeian camp, it is the Pompeians who violate the temporary manifestation of Concordia (4.190) by turning on their erstwhile companions with savage ferocity; this is in response to a speech by their general Petreius, who thereby recalls them to the love of criminal warfare, scelerum...reduxit amorem (4.236). Like the sacred grove, an oasis of tranquility (the scene of fraternization) is invaded by the madness of civil war, and this occurs precisely because the minds of the Pompeians themselves are similarly invaded, for Lucan compares them to half-tamed beasts that turn savage at the taste of a drop of blood and surrender themselves to rabiesque furorque (4.240). Now that the guilt of civil war has been shared through this civilis crimen belli passages, such as the oracular consultation and mutiny of Book Five, which combine to promote the idea of death as the sole release from civil war.

80 Masters shows (p. 85) that Lucan has designed an explicit contrast between Caesar's responses to the Massilians and the Pompeians, through the shared motif of a focus on Caesar's facial expression, found at both 4.363-364 (from the Ilerda episode) and 3.363-364 (at Massilia). The "problem of Caesar's clementia" in the Ilerda episode has much exercised scholars. As in their solutions to the problem of the escapist "happy ending" uniquely bestowed on the Pompeians (see n. 72 above), Ahl and Masters attribute Lucan's uncharacteristically favourable portrait of Caesar in this passage, respectively, to the factual constraints of Lucan's historical material and to Lucan's discordant authorial persona (see Ahl, pp. 193-197 and Masters, pp. 78-87). Once again, my approach is rather to establish the fundamental consistency of Lucan's Caesar, by pointing to the special circumstances that, here and only here, could induce such an otherwise implacable character to grant release from his war; see also Leigh's analysis of the unsavoury whiff of absolutism detectable in Caesar's exercise of venia in this episode (pp. 53-68).

81 Compare the close of the episode, when Lucan records the Pompeians' joy in their crimes: velut occultum pereat scelus, omnia monstra/ in facie posuere ducum; iuvat esse nocentes (4.251-252).
(4.258), Caesar can rejoice that he will henceforth be dux causae melioris (4.259), while the Pompeians themselves are indelibly stained, polluta nefanda/ agmina caede (4.259-260). It is a crime for which they pay dearly, since Caesar immediately cuts them off from both water and hope. Responding with the suicidal frenzy characteristic of civil war, the Pompeians first slaughter their own horses (just as the Massilians dismantled their own ships) and then attempt to hurl themselves on their enemies' weapons (4.268-271). Caesar, however, does not yet permit them the release of death from the war that they helped to inaugurate. Instead, they are forced to submit to all the agonies of a siege. Where the Massilians declared themselves ready undarum raptos aversis fontibus haustus/ quae rer et effossam sitientes lambere terram (3.345-346), the Pompeians inopes undae...tellure refossa/ occultos latices abstrusaque flumina quaerunt (4.292-293). Finally, after having experienced so much evil both as perpetrators and as victims, they suffer the ultimate fate of Rome itself in the civil war (as prophesied by the astrologer Nigidius Figulus in Book One), namely submission to Caesar, the barter of libertas for pax: iam domiti cessere duces, pacisque petendae/ auctor damnatis supplex Afranius armis/ semianimes in castra trahens hostilia turmas/ victoris stetit ante pedes (4.337-340). Consequently, even though they can now depart the battlefield, the Pompeians have already drained the bitter cup of civil war to its last dregs. Far from escaping the conflict, they have in fact enacted it in microcosm all the way from its beginning in bloodthirsty furor to its end in Caesar's unchallenged dominion. Indeed, as

82 Consequently, even though the Pompeian soldiers, once they have been released from military service, are now harmless, miles...innocuus (4.383-384), their actions have already rendered them guilty of war crimes, nocentes (4.252).

83 Although he does not list specific verbal parallels, Hunink compares 3.345 to 4.292-336 (in his note on the former) as an example of "[t]he motif of maddening thirst".

84 Compare 4.337, iam domiti cessere duces, pacisque petendae, with line 1.670 from Nigidius' prophecy of the rise of the Principate, cum domino pax ista venit. duc, Roma, malorum etc.
Leigh demonstrates in his analysis of the Ilerda scene (1997, pp. 53-68), the very act of *venia* whereby Caesar releases the Pompeian soldiers is itself a hallmark of imperial despotism. Like Metellus in Book Three, they are afforded a glimpse of life under the Principate, in which "the acts of forgiveness and the acts of brutality are two sides of the same absolutist coin. All depends on the emperor's whim and mood" (Leigh, 1997, p. 68). The Pompeians are now free of cares, *curarum liber* (4.384), but they will never hereafter be free of Caesar.
Part One: Pompey (Book Eight)
Chapter One: Pompey's Escapism

It is in the context of the continual striving and failure of Lucan's characters to find sanctuary that his Pompey should be read, for the latter is presented throughout the De Bello Civili as a habitual fugitive. In Book One, Lucan describes the groups composing the panicked exodus from Rome in ascending order of importance (and thus of culpability for their cowardice). The terror of the common people is a fortiori understandable given the flight of the senators: nec solum volgus inani/ percussum terrore pavet; sed curia et ipsi/ sedibus exiluere patres, invisaque belli/ consulibus fugiens mandat decreta senatus (1.486-489). Even the fugiens senatus, however, is not the prime mover of the exodus: danda tamen venia est tantorum, danda, pavorum:/ Pompeio fugiente timent (1.521-522). Pompey's war thus begins in flight: urbe relicta/ in bellum fugitur (1.503-504). After an anxious and hasty retreat (trepido...agmine, 2.392) as far as Capua, Pompey resolves to make it his base of operations for the defence of central Italy. He gives a rousing speech to his soldiers in which he attempts to recast the abandonment of Rome as a sign of the strength and unity of the Roman people under his leadership: an vanae tumuere minae, quod fama furoris/ expulit armatam patriis e sedibus urbem?/ heu demens! non te [i.e. Caesar] fugiunt, me cuncta secuntur (2.573-575). This is the first of several defensive justifications of Pompey's escapist tendencies made in the poem (both by Pompey and by Lucan),¹ but his soldiers are unimpressed, and their lack of enthusiasm prompts another retreat, this time from Capua to Brundisium. The desperation of this move is suggested by the application of the term profugus (2.608)

¹ Compare Pompey's defence of his abandonment of both Rome and Italy at 6.319-329 and Lucan's extensive apologia for Pompey's decision to leave the field of Pharsalus at 7.647-697.
to Pompey, since in addition to its general sense of "fugitive" it frequently carries a specific reference to victims of exile and banishment.\(^2\)

Pompey's intentions in retreating to Brundisium are summed up by Lucan in a revealing simile: *pulsus ut armentis primo certamine taurus/ silvarum secretat petit vacuosque per agros/ exul in adversis explorat cornua truncis/ nec redit in pastus, nisi cum cervice recepta/ excussi placuere tori; mox reddita victor/ quoslibet in saltus comitantibus agminas tauris/ invito pastore trahit* (2.601-607). Like the defeated bull, Pompey craves *secretata*, a hidden refuge where he can lick his wounds and regather his strength; here as elsewhere, his escapism takes the form of the futile quest for some safe haven from war, such as the Massilians hope to find in their own city, and Appius in Euboea.\(^3\) Given Pompey's comparison to an old oak tree in the introductory simile of Book One, it is furthermore appropriate for the bull of this new simile to seek refuge in a forest. For now, Pompey believes that he will obtain such sanctuary in Brundisium: *sic viribus inpar/ tradidit Hesperiam profugusque per Apula rura/ Brundisii tutas concessit Magnus in arces* (2.607-609). On the face of it, Brundisium is a suitable choice; as Ahl points out (pp. 77-79), Lucan's description of Brundisium is clearly designed to portray it as an ideal haven, both for the exiles from Crete who founded it (termed *profugos*, like Pompey, at 2.611) and for the sailors who now take shelter there from the storms of the Adriatic (Brundisium is thus the endpoint of *fuga nautarum*, 2.625). The idea of shelter from stormy weather is particularly important, since (as discussed in the introduction) the

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\(^2\) See the *OLD*, entry 2. As Fantham observes (note on 2.608-609), Pompey himself has just applied the term *profugum* to Mithridates (at 2.580) in describing the latter's panicked flight from his own pursuit: the hunter has become the hunted. Pompey also reverses the direction of the flight of Aeneas, who is termed *profagus* at *Aeneid* 1.2; whereas Aeneas' flight establishes Rome, Pompey's abandons it to destruction.

\(^3\) Appius thus hopes for *secretata...litoris Euboici* (5.230-231), while the Massilians state that their only contributions to the civil war are to be *lacrimae* and *secretum* (3.313-314).
Roman civil war is portrayed both by Lucan and by other writers precisely with the image of a storm at sea. As the destruction of the sacred grove at Massilia in the subsequent book will make clear, however, silvarum secreta (whether metaphorical or literal) can provide no real hiding place from Caesar's war machine, and the apparent safety of Brundisii arces is immediately negated by Caesar's swift and implacable pursuit: Caesar in omnia praeceps, nil actum credens, cum quid superesset agendum, instat atrox et adhuc, quamvis possederit omnem/Italiam, extremo sedeat quod litore Magnus,/communem tamen esse dolet (2.656-660). When Caesar begins to block the harbour, Brundisium is transformed from perfect refuge into deadly trap; there can be no security anywhere in a world that Caesar claims entirely for his own, and that he is willing to wage civil war with terrifying vigour and alacrity to acquire. Compelled to attempt a hasty and undignified evacuation, Pompey sails furtively away like a thief in the night; his silent prayer to Fortuna is merely to be allowed to leave Italy, and even this he scarcely manages: dux etiam votis hoc te, Fortuna, precatur,/quam retinere vetas, liceat sibi perdere saltem/Italiam. vix fata sinunt (2.699-701). The only form of victory Lucan is prepared to grant Pompey is successful escape, the temporary evasion of his enemies, as in Pompey's penetration of Caesar's encircling fortifications at Dyrrachium in Book Six, by which he gains freedom of movement, mutandae...licentia terrae (6.271).4

4 Although it can be argued that Pompey did not, as a matter of historical fact, enjoy much of any other kind of success in the civil war than that of escape from Caesar, Lucan considerably downplays the extent of Pompey's one major victory, at the battle of Dyrrachium. By all historical accounts, this was a fairly humiliating defeat for Caesar (see e.g. Appian, Civil Wars 2.61-63). Caesar himself reports the loss of 960 men, 32 officers, and 32 military standards, in addition to Pompey's acclamation as Imperator (Bellum Civile 3.71); in Plutarch, we find the further unflattering detail that Caesar came close to being killed by one of his own fleeing soldiers (Pompey 39.6-7). Caesar also describes the jubilant exploitation of the victory by Pompey and his followers for propaganda purposes: per orbem terrarum fama ac litteris victoriam eius diei concelebrabant (B.C. 3.72, and compare Appian, Civil Wars 2.63 and Plutarch, Pompey 66). The result of this propaganda campaign was the defection of a number of towns in Thessaly to Pompey's side (B.C. 3.80-81, Plutarch, Pompey 41.6, and Cassius Dio 41.51.4). Moreover, both Appian
It is significant that Pompey's escape from Italy is endangered not merely by Caesar's whirlwind of activity (praecipiti cursu at 2.706) but by the collapse of fides among the inhabitants of Brundisium, who admit Caesar's forces within their city on the night of Pompey's departure: ergo hostes portis, quas omnes solverat urbis/ cum fato conversa fides, murisque recepti/ praecipiti cursu flexi per cornua portus/ ora petunt (2.704-707). This betrayal is part of a larger struggle between Pompeian fides and Caesarian fortuna (another term for the fatum of 2.705) through all the towns of Italy: pronior in Magnum populus, pugnatque minaci/ cum terrore fides...facilis sed verte
mentes/ terror erat, dubiamque fidem fortuna ferebat (2.453-461). Brundisium therefore fails Pompey as a refuge both through the external factor of Caesar's unrelenting cursus and through its own moral weakness.

Cornelia

Pompey's desperate search for secreta, for tutae arces, is undertaken not only for himself but for his wife Cornelia. Massilia and Brundisium may have proved inadequate refuges against Caesar, but Pompey announces at the end of Book Five that Cornelia will find safe harbour in Lesbos, where he must deposit her now that the critical battle is approaching. George treats this decision as a sign that Pompey is behaving like a Stoic

and Caesar portray the victory at Dyrrachium as an important factor motivating Pompey's followers to push for battle at Pharsalus (see Appian, Civil Wars 2.67 and Caesar, Bellum Civile 3.87); Pompey's speech to his troops before battle also ends in Appian with a reference to Dyrrachium (Civil Wars 2.72). In Lucan, however, there are only two passing references to Caesar's losses (at 6.315 and 7.315-317) and no notice at all of the awarding of the title of imperator, the global proclamation of the victory, or the consequent defection of the Thessalian towns; Lucan is concerned to emphasize not what Pompey achieved at Dyrrachium, but what he failed to achieve (6.299-313). Immediately after the battle, in private conversation with his followers, Pompey terms himself victor (6.326), but this is the last we hear from him on the subject; in Book Seven, at Pharsalus itself, although Lucan's Pompey is never shy of recounting his own triumphs, neither Pompey (in either of his speeches) nor Cicero (when he calls for a decisive confrontation with Caesar) makes any mention of Dyrrachium; indeed, Pompey implies that no blood has yet been shed on either side (7.92-96). For Lucan, all of Pompey's real victories are firmly located in the remote past, so that success in the present civil war can be seen as the exclusive prerogative of his adversary Caesar.
proficiens, since he is taking steps to remove the source of his unhealthy amorous παθος far away from him in order to be able to focus exclusively on his proper responsibilities as a military commander (pp. 385-387); George asserts that Pompey acts "partly because he recognizes his duty to the state and partly to save his wife from danger" (p. 386).

Neither in Lucan's introduction to the scene nor in Pompey's own speech, however, is there any indication that Pompey is motivated primarily (or indeed at all) by Stoic duty to the state. Lucan records,

undique conlatis in robur Caesaris armis
summa videns duri Magnus discrimina Martis
iam castris instare suis seponere tutum
coniugii decrevit onus Lesboque remota
te procul a saevi strepitu, Cornelia, belli
occulere. heu quantum mentes dominatur in aequas
iusta Venus! dubium trepidumque ad proelia, Magne,
to quoque fecit amor; quod nolles stare sub ictu
Fortunae, quo mundus erat Romanaque fata,
coniunx sola fuit. (5.722-731)

There is no suggestion in these lines that Pompey shares Lucan's concern regarding the excessive dominatio of iusta Venus over his own mind: rather, Lucan demonstrates the force of Pompey's love for Cornelia by the very fact that he is now intent on keeping her procul a saevi strepitu...belli, on seponere tutum/coniugii...onus, even while the rest of the world (including Rome) is falling sub ictu Fortunae.

Similarly, Pompey begins and ends his speech with an insistence on the need to isolate Cornelia in the remote fastness of Lesbos (and Cornelia alone, separate from populi and reges): venit maesta dies et quam nimiumque parumque/distulimus; iam totus adest in proelia Caesar./cedendum est bellis; quorum tibi tuta latebra/ Lesbos erit (5.741-744); and tutior interea populis et tutior omni/ rege late, positamque procul fortuna mariti/ non tota te mole premat. si numina nostras/ inpulerint acies, maneat pars
optima Magni (5.754-757). These two passages are closely connected by the language of
escapism, as expressed in the terms tuta/tutior (compare tutum at 5.724) and latebra/late,
and the moral ambiguity of Pompey's motivations is neatly encapsulated in the phrase
cedendum est bellis at 5.743. Translators of these words tend to assume that bellis is a
dative of indirect object, and that cedere here carries the sense "to yield to", as with
Braund's "to warfare we must yield".\(^5\) Another reading is, however, possible: if bellis is
an ablative of separation, the phrase can signify, "You must withdraw from wars." After
all, although Lucan most often employs cedere with the dative (21 times over the course
of the poem), he does sometimes combine it with a simple ablative of separation (at
3.107, 3.141, 7.530, 7.698, and 8.750); in particular, of the two examples in De Bello
Civili of the combination of cedere with bellis cited as comparanda for cedendum est
bellis (in Barratt's note on 5.743), in only one of them is bellis dative (6.21), while at
7.698 not only is bellis ablative, but the phrase describes Pompey's own withdrawal from
the field of Pharsalus (7.698-699): nonne iuvat pulsum bellis cessisse nec istud/
perspectasse nefas? The fact that, in his speech to Cornelia, Pompey immediately
qualifies bellis with the relative clause quorum tibi tuta latebra/ Lesbos erit certainly
suggests that it is not dutiful submission to the demands of the war but desperate escape
from it that is now uppermost in his mind. Pompey also associates Cornelia (together
with her love for him, tuus amor) with a reluctance to look on civil war: meque tuus
decipit amor, civilia bella/ si spectare potes (5.748-749). In essence, he is striving to
distance the idea of their lovers' paradise from the idea of civilia bella as mental
categories, to assert Cornelia's fundamental incompatibility with the civil war, just as he
seeks to distance Cornelia herself from the looming clash by her sequestration in Lesbos.

\(^5\) Compare Duff ("war cannot be resisted") and Viansino ("Bisgona far posto alla battaglia").
Consequently, although Pompey's decision involves an element of self-denial (at 5.745-746 he implores Cornelia, desiste preces temptare, negavi/ iam mihi), he is merely denying one selfish urge (the desire to be close to Cornelia) for the sake of another (the desire to exempt his own wife from the civil war even while Rome itself is crashing to ruin); this is not the behaviour of a responsible Roman statesman.\(^6\) Moreover, it is not only Cornelia that Pompey is protecting: his hope for escape from disaster is fundamentally as egocentric as was Appius' (the Appius episode occurs only five hundred lines before this sequence). Not only does he regard Cornelia as in fact the best part of himself (pars optima Magni), but he actually envisages his own personal use of Lesbos as a welcome refuge in case of defeat: si numina nostras/ inpulerint acies, maneat pars optima Magni,/ sitque mihi, si fata prement victorque cruentus,/ quo fugisse velim (5.756-759). Like any prey animal, Pompey is concerned primarily for his own escape route.\(^7\)

George states that, "by sending away Cornelia and placing the interests of the state foremost in his mind, he [Pompey] is acting in a way that is similar to Cato" (p. 386); on the contrary, Pompey's narcissistic desire to insulate a cherished extension of his own self from the effects of the civil war offers a sharp contrast with Cato's resolute embrace of the trials of Rome and rejection of escapism, as manifested in his speech to Brutus in Book Two. After all, while Pompey hopes to exempt Cornelia from the general

\(^6\) The only place in Pompey's speech where he shows any awareness of higher responsibilities is at 5.749-753: nam me iam Marte parato/ seuros cepisse pudet cum coniuge somnos,/ eque tuo, quatiunt miserum cum classica mundum,/ surrexisse sinu. Even here, however, Pompey is not actually asserting that Cornelia distracts him from his duties as a Roman commander, merely that he is ashamed to enjoy her company while the world is shaking.

\(^7\) It is true that, as George argues, Pompey is transformed into a more resolute and responsible leader in Books Six and Seven, after his parting from Cornelia (pp. 386-387); the removal of the source of Pompey's amorous πάθος may thus indeed be said to have wrought a moral improvement in him in accordance with Stoic doctrine. Where George misleads is in suggesting that such moral improvement was any part of Pompey's original intentions (as represented by Lucan and by his own words) in dispatching Cornelia to Lesbos.
peril (as Lucan indicates at 5.729-731 and Pompey himself at 5.754-755), Cato vehemently eschews the urge to look on from a safe distance while the world collapses (2.289-297), and he shows not the slightest concern for his own wife Marcia's safety at any point in the poem, behaving like the husband of Rome as a whole rather than of any individual Roman woman: *urbi pater est urbique maritus* (2.388). The true analogue for Cato in Book Five is not Pompey but Cornelia, who refuses to entertain selfish hopes for her own personal preservation (expressed once again with the key term *tutus*) while her husband remains in danger (5.768-769): *credisne aliquid mihi tutius esse*/*quam tibi? non olim casu pendemus ab uno?*

Cornelia denies not only that escape is desirable but that it is even possible. Her banishment will simply leave her alone, defenceless, and exposed to all the perils of a disintegrating world (5.770-771): *fulminibus me, saeve, iubes tantaeque ruinae/ absentem praebere caput?* In Lesbos Cornelia sees not a refuge but a trap (like the one Brundisium turned out to be for Pompey), where she can fall easy prey to Caesar even if he is defeated: *nec solvent audita metus mihi prospera belli,/ cum vacuis proiecta locis a Caesare possim/ vel fugiente capi* (5.782-784). Cornelia's very presence will render Lesbos unsafe, whether for Cornelia or for Pompey himself in the event of his own

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8 Fantham (note on 2.388) rejects the interpretation of this line (first given by the *Commenta Bernensia*) that reads Cato as the father and husband of Rome; rather, she takes *urbi* as a dative of advantage signifying that Cato is "father and husband only for the city, not for himself", in other words that Cato's participation in family life is undertaken solely for the good of the Republic, to breed new citizens and soldiers. Fantham is correct to point out that such a reading is in harmony with the general theme of the entire passage (2.387-391). Cato himself, however, has already likened himself to Rome's father a little earlier in the scene (at 2.297-300), and Viansino cites the parallel of the orphaned Andromache in the *Iliad*, for whom Hector is father, mother, brother, and spouse (6.429). The two readings are in any case not mutually exclusive: precisely because Cato considers himself *in loco parentis* (and *in loco mariti*) to the entire Republic, he refuses, within the sphere of his private family relations, to indulge in selfish pleasures that carry no public benefit.

9 Cornelia's sense of duty to (and refusal to desert) her husband is both analogous to Cato's sense of duty to the Roman state and exactly mirrored in Marcia's sense of duty in pleading to be allowed to remain by Cato's side (Marcia actually claims Cornelia as her exemplum at 2.348-349, and on p. 222 Bruère observes that "Marcia's plea is strikingly similar to that of Cornelia").
defeat: *notescent litora clari*/*nominis exilio, positaque ibi coniuge Magni/* *quis

*Mylilenaes poterit nescire latebras?/* *hoc precor extremum: si nil tibi victa relinquent/
tutius arma fuga, cum te commiseris undis,/ *quolibet infaustam potius deflecte carinam:/*
*litoribus quaerere meis* (5.784-790). With the term *latebras* at the end of 5.786, Cornelia rejects Pompey's promise that Lesbos will serve her as a *tuta latebra* (5.743-744).

Pompey's hope for a Lesbian refuge is self-defeating, just as his hope for an Egyptian refuge will prove to be in Book Eight. Indeed, when she is forced to watch her husband die, Cornelia actually connects the failure of Lesbos as a refuge to that of Egypt: *o coniunx, ego te scelerata peremi:/ 
letiferae tibi causa morae fuit avia Lesbos,/ et prior in Nili pervenit litora Caesar* (8.639-641). The remoteness of Lesbos (*avia*) is transformed in Cornelia's mind from a source of illusory safety for her into a source of very real and fatal danger to Pompey. Moreover, even though Cornelia is, strictly speaking, mistaken in her belief, for Caesar has not yet reached Egypt, it remains true that "as a result of his [Pompey's] stopping at Mytilene to take her with him, the news of Pharsalia reaches Egypt before he does" (Bruère, p. 232); given that the decision to murder Pompey (at least as it is represented by Lucan in Book Eight) is entirely premised on the Egyptians' knowledge of Pompey's defeat, Cornelia thus has some justification in attributing the murder to her Lesbian retreat.

In any case, Lesbos is not far enough away to shield Cornelia from the horrors of civil war. Because Cornelia could not accompany Pompey to Thessaly, Thessaly has come to her instead, as Lucan makes clear when he describes her state of mind in the period leading up to Pompey's arrival in Lesbos after Pharsalus: *conscia curarum secretae in litora Lesbi/flectere vela iubet, qua tunc tellure latebas/ maestior, in mediis*
quam si, Cornelia, campis/ Emathiae stares. tristes praesagia curas/ exagitant, trepida 
quatitum formidine somnus,/ Thessaliom nox omnis habet (8.40-45). This passage begins 
with an emphasis on Lesbos' remoteness (secretae) and its provision of safe concealment 
(latebas), in accordance with Pompey's designation of Lesbos as a tuta latebra (5.743-
744). The impression of security is, however, immediately contradicted by the 
juxtaposition of maestior with latebas, and by the statement that her sequestration has 
offered Cornelia no more peace of mind (indeed even less) than if she had been standing 
in the middle of Pharsalus. Moreover, the disruption of sleep by the noise or thought of 
war is a very significant form of violation of sanctuary over the course of the poem. As 
noted in the introduction, Caesar's first impact upon the people of Italy after the crossing 
of the Rubicon is to wake the inhabitants of Ariminum with a noisy assembly of troops in 
the town forum (1.236-239). It is therefore highly significant that the disaster of 
Pharsalus has already invaded Cornelia's dreams (8.44-45), just as, according to Lucan's 
prediction at 7.26-27, it is destined to invade Pompey's.

Mental Escapism: Two Dreams

In addition to his continual and doomed flight (and attempt to protect Cornelia) 
from Caesar's pursuit on the physical plane, Pompey engages in frequent mental 
escapism, and here the past is his sanctuary of choice, a retreat to the heady epoch when 
he earned the name of Magnus. Such retrospection is indeed at the heart of Pompey's 
characterization. In the famous simile of Book One, he is a venerable old oak, laden with 
the trophies of ancient victories but now lacking the strength to withstand a violent storm 
(1.135-143). His address to his soldiers at Capua thus concludes with a long catalogue of 
his triumphs at every point of the compass (2.576-595), and his instructions to his son
Magnus to summon the peoples of the east to his standards are likewise premised on the recollection of former victories (2.632-644). Moreover, if his conscious speech serves to remind his listeners (and himself) of his erstwhile greatness, his subconscious mind is also shown to be firmly rooted in a happier past. This is obviously true of the second of his two dreams recounted in the poem, on the eve of Pharsalus, when he imagines himself receiving the people's applause in his own theatre (7.9-12). So far, Lucan is drawing on a widely reported story that Pompey gave his friends false encouragement before the battle with his report of a dream of future victory celebrations; in Plutarch's account these include an image of himself dedicating a temple to Venus Victrix as well as the ovation in the theatre (Appian only describes the dedication).\(^\text{10}\) By omitting the dedication of the temple (which is unambiguously located in the future), Lucan contrives to suggest that Pompey is here taking comfort not from the hope of future victory but from the recollection of his former adulation by the Roman people; after all, in Lucan's initial description of the two leaders in Book One, he says of Pompey, *famae...petitor* / *multa dare in volgus, totus popularibus auris/ inpelli, plausuque sui gaudere theatri* (1.131-133).\(^\text{11}\) The dramatic date for the dream would thus fall sometime after the theatre's foundation in 55 BC and before the onset of the civil war: the Pompey at war looks back to the Pompey at peace.

At this point in his account of the dream, however, Lucan engineers a very striking shift in temporal perspective, for now the Pompey of the recent, peaceful past in turn looks back to the military glories of his long-distant past (indicated by *olim* at 7.14)

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\(^{10}\) See Plutarch, *Pompey* 68.1 and Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.68. Stok (pp. 50-53) provides a very thorough discussion of the historiographical tradition for this dream.

\(^{11}\) Dilke (1960) connects 7.9 to 1.132-133 (in his note on the former).
in the form of his first youthful triumph. The ensuing description of the triumph actually constitutes the bulk of the dream as narrated by Lucan, for it receives seven lines as compared to the four devoted to the historically attested dream of applause in the theatre (7.13-19).

Lucan has therefore transformed what was originally reported as a dream about the future into a dream about two different levels of the past, with the result that Pompey is characterized as not only escapist but also nostalgic; Lucan renders this characterization explicit with the first of the three possible explanations offered for the dream: *fine bonorum/ anxia [sc. quies] venturis ad tempora laeta refugit* (7.19-20). As his doomed campaign draws to its close, Pompey returns in spirit to two distinct but equally blissful epochs: the period of peaceful hegemony over the Roman people during the 50's BC, reflected in the applause of the theatre that he experiences in the "primary" dream; and the prior period of military triumphs, which Pompey's embedded dream within a dream is designed to celebrate. Because Pompey has thereby attained a temporary respite from his immediate predicament, Lucan begs the camp's watchmen not to wake their leader, not to disturb this last moment of tranquility and felicity: *ne rumpite somnos,/ castrorum vigiles, nullas tuba verberet aures./ crastina dira quies et imagine maesta diurna/ undique funestas acies feret, undique bellum* (7.24-27). The unhappy thought of war will dominate Pompey's nights soon enough, just as the noise of war

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12 Mudry comments, "il s'agit...d'une sorte de rêve dans le rêve ou de rêve au second degré" (p. 79). Narducci simply attributes this shift to "l'indeterminatezza temporale che è typica delle situazioni oniriche" (p. 291), but Lucan's scheme is both precise and subtle: the Pompey of the present looks back on the Pompey of the recent past, who in turn looks back on the Pompey of the distant past.

13 The third possible explanation also involves nostalgia of a sort (spatial rather than temporal): *seu vetito patrias ultra tibi cernere sedes/ sic Romam Fortuna dedit* (7.23-24).
invaded the slumber of the inhabitants of Ariminum in Book One. At least for this night, then, Lucan seeks to silence the noise of war, so that the *tuba* will not violate the sanctuary of Pompey's dream in the way that Ariminum was filled with *stridor lituum clangorque tubarum* (1.237).

As many commentators have observed, the embedded dream at 7.13-19 contains a puzzling anomaly: Lucan seems to be confusing Pompey's second triumph (awarded for his victory over Sertorius in Spain) with his first (awarded for his campaign in Numidia). To account for the inconsistency, Mudry points to the fundamental timelessness of a dream designed to present not a factually accurate narrative of the different stages of Pompey's career but a composite picture of the immense popularity that he enjoyed from beginning to end, so that the impressively young age of his first triumph merges with splendour of his second (and both merge with the applause in the theatre): "Dans cette perspective, les acclamations du peuple de Rome au théâtre se confondent avec celles qui accompagnaïrent les triomphes de Pompée, et ces triomphes eux-mêmes se fondent en un seul qui devient comme le symbole d'une vie" (p. 83). The temporal anomaly thus permits the incurably nostalgic Pompey to indulge simultaneously in the recollection of each of his first two triumphs, which (as Mudry points out) are each sources of comfort and encouragement in different ways.

Moreover, it is not merely the splendour of Pompey's second triumph that is evoked by the recollection of his victory over Sertorius. As Lucan embarks (at the

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14 In his note on 7.26, Gagliardi points out the striking oxymoron of the description of Pompey's future *quies as dira* and *maesta*. The sleep of the victors (especially Caesar) will likewise be disturbed by the ghosts of their slain countrymen (7.764-786).

15 Gagliardi excuses this apparent mistake on the grounds that Lucan was a poet and not a historian (note on 7.14), while according to Pichon, Lucan regarded the campaign in Numidia for which Pompey was awarded his first triumph as too insignificant to count as Pompey's first great exploit (p. 6). With regard to Pichon's theory, Gagliardi observes (note on 7.14) that Lucan obviously does "count" Pompey's victory over Numidia as a proper triumph, since he refers to *tres...triumphos* at 7.685.
beginning of Book Five) on the narrative of the decisive clash between Pompey and Caesar, he sums up the vicissitudes of the war so far: *sic alterna duces bellorum volnera passos/ in Macetum terras miscens adversa secundis/ servavit fortuna pares* (5.1-3).

These *alterna volnera* include Caesar's victory over the Pompeian forces in Spain and the defeat of Caesar's lieutenant Curio in Numidia, both recounted in Book Four. In other words, Pompey still keeps a firm hold on Numidia and would require no subconscious reassurance on that score. Spain, however, is another matter entirely. In the dream, Pompey's victory is linked to the river Ebro (*post domitas gentes, quas torrens ambit Hiberus, 7.15*), but the Ebro also played a key role in Lucan's account of the hostilities at Ilerda, since it (along with the river Sicoris) taunted the parched and waterless Pompeians with its proximity: *inter/ stagnantem Sicorim et rapidum deprensus Hiberum/ spectat vicinos sitiens exercitus annaes* (4.334-336). The epithet *torrens* at 7.15 corresponds to *rapidus* at 4.335, while at the same time (through the primary meaning of *torrere*) hinting at the parching thirst of the Pompeian soldiers who were forced to endure the sight of the nearby Ebro, a thirst that Lucan describes with *torrere* at 4.324 (*torrentur viscera flamma*). The capitulation of Afranius follows immediately upon the demoralizing spectacle of the Ebro at 4.334-336: *iam domiti cessere duces* (4.337), with *domiti* pointing forward to *domitas* of 7.15. It is now not the nations (*gentes, 7.15*) of Spain that are subdued by Pompey but Pompey's generals that are subdued by Caesar, and those same nations are now handed over to Caesar by the surrendering Afranius (*tradimus Hesperias gentes, 4.352*), which frees Caesar to face Pompey in the east: *aperimus Eoas [sc. gentes]./ securumque orbis patimur post terga reliicti* (4.352-353). The language of Pompey's dream also closely recalls Lucan's summary of Caesar's Spanish victory in
Book Five: compare line 5.327, *interea domitis* Caesar remeabat *Hiberis*, with line 7.15, *post domitas gentes, quas torrens ambit* *Hiberus*. Through these correspondences, it becomes clear that Pompey is mentally turning back the clock on his present misfortunes, retracing the steps of his career back to the point that will most effectively serve to cancel out the recent disaster of Ilerda and restore him to his former eminence.

The nostalgia of the dream in Book Seven is both obvious and explicitly signaled, but the motif of nostalgic escapism can also help to explain the much more ambiguous and mysterious dream at the start of Book Three. As he flees the trap of Brundisium, Pompey looks wistfully upon his homeland for what will prove the last time (3.4-7). Overcome by sleep (3.8-9), he experiences a terrifying nightmare of his deceased wife Julia, who boasts of the good luck that she brought him while alive and threatens a dire change in fortune through his remarriage to the ill-starred Cornelia. Her appearance is that of a menacing fury: *diri tum plena horroris imago/ visa caput maestum per hiantes Iulia terras/ tollere et accenso furialis stare sepulchro* (3.9-11). Not only does Julia invade Pompey's sleep on this night, but she promises to keep up her nocturnal harassment of him for the duration of the conflict; she thereby co-operates with her father, Caesar, the ultimate invader of quiet sanctuaries, to rob Pompey of the *securitas* for which so many of the characters of the *De Bello Civili* strive in vain: *haereat illa [i.e. Cornelia] tuis per bella, per aequora, signis,/ dum non securos liceat mihi rumpere somnos/ et nullum vestro vacuum sit tempus amor./ sed teneat Caesarque dies et Iulia noctes* (3.24-27). This cooperation between father and daughter is indeed neatly illustrated in the juxtaposition of the end of Book Two with the beginning of Book Three: Caesar has driven Pompey out of the physical refuge of Brundisium, and now Julia
operates to deprive Pompey of the mental refuge of an unbroken slumber. Of course, Caesar himself is also portrayed throughout the poem as an enemy to sleep, for instance through his waking of the inhabitants of Ariminum at 1.236-243, or through his rage at the temporary pax, quies, and somnus enjoyed by the Pompeian soldiers when they penetrate his fortifications at Dyrrachium (6.282-283). Julia is not only complementing but also imitating her relentlessly disruptive father.

Nevertheless, despite the horrific nature of Pompey's vision, despite the fact that Julia aligns herself with Caesar in threatening Pompey's incessant quest for sanctuary from the civil war, and despite the obvious pleasure he takes in the company of his new bride Cornelia, the first, instinctive response of Pompey is to try to embrace the elusive shade: sic fata refugit/ umbra per amplexus trepidae dilapsa mariti (3.34-35). Pompey thereby joins a long line of characters in Roman poetry, like Orpheus at Georgics 4.499-502 and Aeneas at Aeneid 2.790-794, who react with this gesture of futile nostalgia to the departure of the ghosts of their wives or other loved ones.

Although Julia connects herself to Pompey's previous military successes (coniuge me laetos duxisti, Magne, triumphos, 3.20), in fact all three of Pompey's triumphs predate their marriage in 59

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16 The phrase rupta quies (1.239) in the account of the waking of the people of Ariminum corresponds to Julia's rumpere somnos (3.25).
17 According to 2.738, Cornelia is at least on board ship with Pompey at this point in the narrative; if the scene at the end of Book Five is any indication of Pompey's customary domestic arrangements (see e.g. 5.734-738), she also lies asleep beside him throughout the dream of Julia.
18 Hunink (note on 3.35) observes that "the topos of 'trying to embrace a ghost' is traditional in epic," and gives a long list of precedents, including the two Virgilian ones cited here; he accordingly argues that psychological explanations of the embrace are unnecessary and invalid, because "[t]he attempt to embrace the ghost simply belongs to the topos of the appearance of a ghost." Poets are, however, free to include or exclude this conventional element from their account of a ghostly visitation. In Book Two of the Aeneid, for instance, Aeneas tries to embrace Creusa's apparition but not Hector's, while in Book Six, he attempts the same with Anchises but not with Dido. Consequently, the attempted embrace of Julia is a choice on Lucan's part, and a surprising choice that demands a deeper explanation than literary convention; in Aeneid 6, Virgil thus exploits this motif to suggest that Aeneas has successfully divested himself of any unwholesome nostalgia for the passionate love affair of Book Four, and that he now feels only a pious and properly Roman longing for his father's guidance.
Instead, what Julia most obviously evokes is the time of peace immediately before
the civil war, for, in Lucan’s analysis of the events leading up to the conflict, it was she
who interposed an uneasy truce between father-in-law and son-in-law during life (1.111-
120); Julia now forcibly reminds Pompey of this connection (3.31-32). In Julia, then,
Pompey is simultaneously embracing both his former victories (for which she
anachronistically takes credit) and the antebellum tranquility that she guaranteed while
alive, and to which he has grown too accustomed (as Lucan observes at 1.130-131).
Paradoxically, although she presents herself as an invader of sanctuary (since she
promises to disrupt Pompey’s slumbers), Julia in fact constitutes a very alluring mental
refuge for the nostalgic Pompey. The latter accordingly returns in spirit to the same two
happier periods of his life as in the dream of Book Seven: the recent era of peace and the
prior one of military glory.

The dream of Julia is relevant to an analysis of Pompey’s escapist tendencies in
other ways as well. Although his first response is a nostalgic embrace, he seems upon
waking to cast aside his escapism, throwing himself into the struggle with redoubled
strength of purpose even in the face of Julia’s ominous warnings: ille, dei quamvis cladem
manesque minentur,/ maior in arma ruit certa cum mente malorum (3.36-37). In order to
achieve a certa mens20 and assuage the anxieties prompted by the dreadful appearance
and predictions of Julia, Pompey engages in Epicurean speculation on the question of life
after death: quid...vani terremur imagine visus?/ aut nihil est sensus animis a morte

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19 Hunink points out this anomaly in his note ad loc.
20 I take certa cum mente malorum as “with a mind made up for calamity” (Duff’s translation) rather than as
“though well aware of calamity to come” (the reading of Hunink in his note on 3.37), for Pompey’s remarks
make it clear that he does not believe (or at least does not want to believe) Julia’s warnings of future
disaster; rather, he is now sufficiently fortified in mind to confront whatever evils the future may bring.
See the OLD (entry 10) for this sense of certus with the genitive.
The two chief assertions of this brief monologue, namely the denial of any sensation to the soul after death (\textit{nihil est sensus animis a morte relictum}) and the concomitant denial of the reality of ghostly apparitions of the dead (\textit{vani...imagine visus}), are also the main themes of Lucretius' two central books (Three and Four respectively). This is an appropriate response for Pompey, since Julia's speech clearly invites an Epicurean refutation of the fear of death, a fear that she evokes on several distinct levels. First of all, by the mere fact of her grim appearance (3.9-10) and by her threat to haunt Pompey (3.28-31), she appeals to the Roman terror of ghosts. This is the fear refuted by Lucretius through his analysis of images at 4.722-822, in which he explains \textit{quae res nobis vigilantibus obvia mentes/ terrificet morbo adfectis somnoque sepultis,/ cernere uti videamur eos audireque coram,/ morte obita quorum tellus amplexit ossa} (1.132-135). Next, Julia seeks to inspire dread through her lurid picture of an underworld that is now being prepared for the coming slaughter, and in which Tartarus has now prevailed over Elysium as the dominant motif:

\begin{quote}
\textit{sedibus Elysiis campoque expulsa piorum ad Stygias...tenebras manesque nocentes post bellum civile trahor. vidi ipsa tenentes Eumenidas, quaterent quas vestris lampadas armis; praeparat innumeras puppes Acherontis adusti portitor; in multas laxantur Tartara poenas; vix operi cunctae dextra properante sorores sufficiunt, lassant rumpentes stamina Parcas.} (3.12-19)
\end{quote}

Moreover, while the doom of the combatants in general is suggested by the reference to the wearied Parcae, Julia alludes specifically to Pompey's coming defeat and death with her claim that Pompey's new wife Cornelia will bring him as little success as she did Crassus before him (3.20-23), as well as with her ominous closing remark, \textit{bellum/ te}

\footnote{For the Epicurean tenor of Pompey's denial of posthumous sensation, see Schotes (p. 67 and pp. 79-80).}
faciet civile meum (3.33-34).

Julia also insists on Pompey's guilt in this conflict, a guilt ensuing from the kinship with Caesar of which she stands as a painful reminder:

numquam tibi, Magne, per umbras/ perque meos manes genero non esse licebit:/ abscedis frustra ferro tua pignora (3.31-33). Through these various elements of her speech, Julia not only predicts Pompey's death but also implies his eternal damnation in Tartarus afterwards as one of the guilty parties to the civil war (just as she herself is dragged to Tartarus post bellum civile); in this she directly contradicts the world view of Lucretius, who devotes Book Three of the De Rerum Natura to dispelling both the fear of death per se and also the fear of all the grisly apparatus of the conventional underworld. Although it occupies only two and a half lines, Pompey's reasoning on the soul's condition after death is therefore very precisely targeted, for it employs a Lucretian argument to confront both the fact of Julia's apparition and the content of her message. If the spectre itself is unreal (because there is no sentience after death), then any predictions it makes must be similarly without substance, and those predictions themselves (by asserting an afterlife of eternal torment) run afoul of the same basic premise that nihil est sensus animis a morte relictum. Pompey's imminent death is consequently not a certainty, and in any case death is nothing to be feared, because it entails only oblivion and not suffering in some mythical Tartarus.

22 As Hunink notes ad loc., this concluding remark was read by ancient critics as well as modern as a reference to Pompey's imminent death.

23 This is the reading of Narducci, who argues persuasively that the phrase nihil est sensus animis a morte relictum can apply both to the apparition of Julia and to Pompey's own afterlife (other commentators have tended to treat the two readings as mutually exclusive): "se dopo la morte non vi è più possibilità di sentire, non possono esservi spettri che portano rivelazioni ai viventi, né questi ultimi hanno niente da temere da una futura condizione di totale mancanza di sensibilità" (pp. 289-290). The claim of posthumous insentience is an especially suitable rebuttal to the spectre of Julia because the latter goes out of her way to insist on her exceptional retention of memory after death: me non Lethaeae, coniunx, obvia ripae/ inmemorem fecere tui (3.28-29).
It is such coolheaded reasoning that permits Pompey to suppress his anxieties:

ille, dei quamvis cladem manesque minentur,/ mai in arma ruit certa cum mente malorum (3.36-37). In other words, Pompey's scientific discourse effectively combats the same two fears, of the gods and death (dei and manes), that are the principal banes of human happiness in Lucretius. In his reaction to the combined threats of dei and manes, Pompey sharply differentiates himself from the panicked response of the Roman people to such portents in Book One, when superi...minaces/ prodigiis terras inplerunt, aethera, pontum (1.524-525); these portents include the apparition of various ghosts (manes at 1.581) as well as a Fury (1.571-577), in a foreshadowing of the dreadful phantom of Julia (furialis, 3.11). What Epicurean science thus allows Pompey to escape is not the war itself (for he now rushes all the more eagerly in arma) but the widespread panic associated with the war; in other words, he escapes his own inveterate escapism, which has marked his actions from the very start of the poem (when he led the desperate exodus from Rome) all the way to his hasty nocturnal evacuation from Brundisium, which immediately precedes the apparition of Julia.

In the Epicurean argumentation that affords Pompey the firmness of mind to reject escapism and confront the dangers of war, there is nevertheless apparent an escapist craving for a refuge from war. Julia has implied not only that Pompey will die, but that, when he does, he will descend into an underworld that is convulsed by the strife of the world above, and that is prepared for the eternal punishment of all those responsible for the impious conflict (presumably including Pompey himself). In

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24 Haskins comments ad loc. that "manes refers to the ghost of Julia, dei to the reges silentum who have allowed her to return to haunt Pompeius." Hunink, however, observes ad loc. that "Dei...may also be used in a more general sense. In BC, the Gods are usually no less evil than Fortune." After all, in the proem to Book Two, Lucan specifically blames the gods for the infliction of portents of disaster (presumably including the ghosts that terrified Rome in the previous book) on a hapless human race.
response, Pompey appeals to an alternative model of death that strips it of all sensation, that is, of all ability to feel the pain of civil war. Such insensibility is a powerful attraction in the De Bello Civili. Although he mocks Appius Claudius’ hope for an escape to Euboea in life, Lucan at least allows him the gift of permanent oblivion in death (5.228-230): *nullum belli sentire fragorem,/ tot mundi caruisse malis, praestare deorum/ excepta quis Morte potest?* Lucan’s *nullum sentire* here corresponds exactly to Pompey’s *nihil sensus* in Book Three, suggesting that both Appius and Pompey can hope for a certain measure of peace when they have passed beyond the travails of this world.\(^{25}\)

Since Epicureanism bears the promise of an eventual, final escape from all earthly distress in the unshakeable *quies* of the dead, it is understandable that Pompey should now fortify himself with Epicurean reasoning as he ventures into the uncertain perils of the civil war. It is the contemplation of this ultimate refuge from war that affords Pompey the mental strength to embrace the war here and now.\(^{26}\)

Pompey’s ostensibly Epicurean argumentation is, however, disturbingly vague. The essential problem lies in the *aut...aut* construction employed: *aut nihil est sensus animis a morte relictum/ aut mors ipsa nihil.*\(^{27}\) After his long sequence of proofs of the mortality of the soul and the consequent insensibility of death, Lucretius triumphantly

\(^{25}\) The Pythia’s promise of *quies* to Appius at 5.195 suggests both Epicurean *στασις ζου* (as in the gods’ *sedes quietae* at Lucretius 3.18) and a standard Roman euphemism for death (see the OLD entry 3); Appian presumably hopes for a life of Epicurean withdrawal in his Euboean retreat, but only death can bring such peace to an inhabitant of Lucan’s universe.

\(^{26}\) Pompey’s longing for the refuge of death may also be suggested by his attempted embrace of Julia, if he thereby reveals not (as I have argued above) a longing for bygone felicity but, as Hübner argues (p. 233), an *amor mortis*, a willingness to embrace death itself along with his dead wife.

\(^{27}\) For the long history of ancient and modern attempts at exegesis of this difficult *sententia*, see Stok’s thorough treatment of the various (often bizarre) interpretations (pp. 42-46) and also Narducci’s briefer discussion of the *status quaestionis* (p. 290). I do not propose to duplicate the work of Stok and Narducci in describing the different suggestions and refuting (or dismissing) the more implausible ones.
concludes, *nil igitur mors est ad nos neque pertinet hilum* (3.830). An even more striking parallel is found in Seneca's *Troades*, when the chorus of Trojan women respond to the terrifying apparition of the ghost of Achilles (who demands the blood sacrifice of Polyxena to serve him as a bride in death), just as Pompey does to that of Julia (who threatens to reclaim her former husband after the latter's imminent death in civil war), with an Epicurean negation of the afterlife: *post mortem nihil est ipsaque mors nihil* (397). The phrase *nihil est* is thus found in both Seneca and Lucan, along with *mors ipsa nihil* (in some order). Where Lucan's Pompey differs significantly from both Seneca and Lucretius, however, is in his chosen connective word. For Lucretius, the nullification of death is the logical corollary of the posthumous insensibility of the soul (*igitur*), while Seneca's chorus uses the straightforward conjunction *-que* to similar effect. In Lucan, by contrast, the two elements of Pompey's statement are presented not as premise and conclusion but as two separate alternatives (*aut...aut*), which must be at least reasonably distinct from one another. Even though he is employing Epicurean language, Pompey has therefore violated the conventional Epicurean chain of reasoning: with what intention, and to what effect?

Although Pompey's language strongly suggests the Epicurean assertions made by Seneca's chorus, the use of *aut...aut* hints instead at a very different commonplace of the *consolatio philosophiae* on the subject of human mortality, which may be summed up as

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28 Hunink cites this line as a comparandum for Lucan 3.39-40 (in his note on 3.39).  
29 This parallel is given by Haskin, who cites Oudendorp (note on 3.40). Stok points out the appropriateness of the allusion, given the similarities between the descriptions of the apparitions of Achilles and Julia, and given the association of death and marriage in each scene (pp. 47-48).  
30 On the basis of the treatments of *aut* found in Lewis and Short, the *OLD*, and Gildersleeve (section 493), it appears simply untrue for Stok to assert, "*aut...aut* non implica di per sé che le due spiegazioni proposte debbano essere alternative" (p. 46); the most that can be said is that *aut* does not necessarily require that the two alternatives in question be logically exclusive (merely that they be distinct), although *aut* (as opposed to *vel*) certainly carries a connotation of absolute logical exclusivity as its primary meaning.
follows: "Either there is no sensation after death (in which case there is no prospect of pain and hence nothing to fear), or the soul retains its sensation in death and experiences nothing more than a transmigration to another plane of existence (in which case death represents no drastic change, except perhaps for the better, and is again not to be feared)."\(^{31}\) It is on the basis of these two alternatives that Socrates rejects the fear of death in Plato's *Apology* (40C-41C), as does Seneca in the *Epistulae Morales*: *mors quid est? aut finis aut transitus. nec desinere timeo, idem est enim, quod non coepisse, nec transire, quia nusquam tam anguste ero* (65.24).\(^{32}\) In fact, in his account of the Druidic teachings on reincarnation in Book One, Lucan has already shown that a belief in death as transition rather than terminus has the power to remove the fear of mortality and thereby promote martial fervour (1.450-462).\(^{33}\) It is therefore appropriate for Pompey to derive the *certa mens* needed to propel himself *maior in arma* from such a doctrine. It has also been observed that Pompey's two alternatives (as here glossed) correspond to the opposing standpoints of the Epicurean and Stoic schools of thought;\(^ {34}\) in his inability to choose between these two fundamental ideologies, Pompey is joined by Lucan himself, who opens Book Two with an acknowledgment (expressed in a *sive...sive* pairing) that the universe may be governed either by Stoic *ratio* or by the *fors incerta* of the

\(^{31}\) As Stok points out (p. 43), this is the basic suggestion of the *Commenta Bernensia* on Lucan 3.39 and the *Adnotationes super Lucanum* on 3.40.

\(^{32}\) The passages from Plato and Seneca are suggested by Stok (pp. 42-43); Schotes (p. 81) points to a similar conception in Marcus Aurelius (8.58). Compare also Seneca, *Epistulae Morales* 71.16 (again with an *aut...aut* construction).

\(^{33}\) Schotes cites Lucan's Druids in connection with 3.39-40 as an example of the idea of death as a mere *μετοίκησις* and (in consequence) as an *ανείπωτον* (p. 68, and see also pp. 77-79).

\(^{34}\) This correspondence is observed by the *Commenta Bernensia* (on 3.40). The Stoic conception of posthumous existence is far less dogmatic and univocal than that of the Epicureans, but in general the Stoics seem to have agreed on some sort of (at least temporary) afterlife, although not necessarily for every soul (see Wildberger, pp. 223-225).
Epicureans. Consequently, Pompey's statement is in harmony with both the traditions of the *consolatio philosophiae* and the general stance of philosophical ambivalence frequently adopted in Lucan's poem.

Nevertheless, this does not account for Pompey's use of Epicurean language to cast doubt on the fundamental assumptions of Epicureanism through the second of his two alternatives. It is also difficult to see how this particular form of *consolatio* is applicable to Pompey's current predicament. Under normal circumstances, of course, given the widespread fear of the idea of permanent oblivion, the possibility that sensation might in fact persist after death could indeed have been a source of comfort and encouragement, as with the Druidic teachings mentioned above. Julia's horrific appearance and her narration of the convulsions of the underworld, however, suggest that posthumous awareness is indeed to be dreaded in Lucan's universe, at least for those (like Pompey) who share in the guilt of civil war. After all, neither Socrates (in the *Apology*) nor Seneca (in *Epistula 65*) is framing his philosophical exhortation in response to a terrifying ghost bearing terrifying tidings; such is rather the context for the chorus of

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35 Hunink cites various examples of the pairing by Lucent of *aut*...*aut*, *vel*...*vel* and the like in scientific or philosophical contexts and notes that "[b]eing a didascalic device it is favoured by Lucretius too" (note on 3.39). What Lucretius never does, however, is to cast any doubt on the mortality of the soul; for Epicureans, this is core dogma, not merely one of several viable possibilities.

36 Narducci states the problem but offers no solution (p. 290). Stok suggests that both the "Epicurean" and the "Stoic" readings of *mors ipsa nihil* are operating simultaneously (although in asserting the validity of the "Epicurean" reading, he must disregard the fact that the *aut*...*aut* construction demands two distinct alternatives). In support of this contention, he makes the excellent point (pp. 49-50) that the *Troades* itself, to which Lucan so obviously alludes in these lines, contains references at various points to very different conceptions of the afterlife; indeed, even the tragedy's chorus, who offer an Epicurean refutation of the spectre (and message) of Achilles at 397, appeal in a different context (at 157-163) to a completely opposite model in their celebration of the dead Priam's blissful new existence in Elysium. In other words, the characters of the *Troades* are prepared to believe in whatever form of posthumous existence (or non-existence) seems most reassuring in a given context. Nevertheless, such inconsistency over the course of the entire play does not explain why Pompey, who alludes not to the *Troades* as a whole but specifically to *Troades* 397 in a context (the terrifying apparition of Julia) that demands the same unequivocally Epicurean response that Seneca's chorus makes to the terrifying apparition of Achilles, appears to offer two contradictory conceptions of the afterlife within a single scene (and indeed within a single breath).

37 This is the fear that Lucretius, for instance, tries to assuage at 3.972-977.
Seneca's *Troades*, who employ not only Epicurean language but also an exclusively Epicurean line of argument to counter their fear of the ghost of Achilles. In Lucan's world as in that of *Troades* 397, the doctrine of posthumous oblivion is clearly a preferable option, for it not only disproves the reality of the grim spectre of Julia but also assuages the fear of the imminent death with which she threatens Pompey, just as (in the *Troades*) it both denies substance to the ghost of Achilles (and hence denies the Greeks' need to sacrifice Polyxena to appease him) and offers the hope that, if slain, Polyxena will at least not have to endure an afterlife yoked in marriage to such a terrifying enemy of her family and people. The undesirability of the soul's survival in Lucan is then confirmed by the grotesque necromancy at the end of Book Six, when the witch Erictho violates the peace of the dead by dragging a departed soul back into his recently vacated corpse, thus inflicting *sensus* of the most horrific kind; in apparent confirmation of Julia's account, this wretched figure proceeds to report on the massive reverberations of the conflict of the world above among the inhabitants of the world below (6.777-802).38 The greatest gift Erictho can bestow on the corpse as a reward for his cooperation is a truly permanent oblivion beyond the reach even of necromancers like herself (6.762-770).39 By admitting the possibility of posthumous sensation (where Lucretius and Seneca's chorus firmly bar the door to it), Pompey is admitting the possibility of a double invasion of his *quies* (both in sleep and in death) by the nightmare of history: if the Epicurean view of death is invalid, and the spectre of Julia is not a mere *vani imago visus* (3.38),

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38 The correspondence between the accounts of the dead soldier and of Julia is not exact, however, for, according to the former, the torments of Tartarus are being readied only for the victor Caesar, while Pompey and his sons are to be welcomed into Elysium (6.799-805).

39 In Book Seven, Lucan specifically invokes the torment of *sensus* after death as a punishment for guilt in civil war (directed against one Crastinus, who threw the first javelin at Pharsalus): *di tibi non mortem, quae cunctis poena paratur,/ sed sensum post fata tuae dent, Crastine, morti* (7.470-471).
then Pompey's nights will continue to be troubled by Julia's dire apparition in fulfilment of her promise to keep haunting him (since ghosts are real), while in the imminent death that she predicts for him all the torments of Tartarus await his guilty soul (which will be sentient and able to feel pain).

What can explain this curious mismatch between language, concept, and context? An answer may lie in Lucan's consistent attribution of the related qualities of indecision and escapism to Pompey over the course of the poem. In the events leading up to the dream of Julia, Pompey shows himself completely incapable of resolving upon any one course of action, constantly flitting from one option to the next; this is of course in sharp contrast to the supremely decisive and goal-oriented Caesar. To begin with, Pompey chooses Capua as his base of operations, a decision that Lucan describes with the terminology of a settled resolution (*placuit*): *haec placuit belli sedes, hinc summa moventem/ hostis in occursum sparsas extendere partes* (2.394-395). This resolution is not as firm as it first appears, however, for after a disappointing response to his initial address to his troops, Pompey immediately changes his mind and decides (once again with the form *placuit* at 2.598) to retreat instead from Capua to Brundisium (2.598-600). Simultaneously with his physical retreat from Caesar's forces and avoidance of a decisive confrontation, Pompey has therefore been engaged in the mental avoidance of a final decision on the best means of opposing Caesar. Pompey's initial goal in making for Brundisium is simply to find a refuge from Caesar, a safe place (*tutae arces*) where he can lick his wounds like the bull of the simile of 2.601-607. At 2.628-649, Lucan presents as an entirely new plan Pompey's decision to use Brundisium instead as a base of

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40 *Placere* is a formal term for a resolution of the senate (see the OLD, entry 5b), which lends an air of august finality to Pompey's decision that is then belied by his rapid change of heart.
operations to rally support from the eastern Mediterranean: *ergo, ubi nulla fides rebus post terga relictis/ nec licet ad duros Martem convertere Hiberos,/ cum mediae iaceant inmensis tractibus Alpes,/ tum subole e tanta natum, cui firmior aetas,/ adfatur* (2.628-632). Lucan's Pompey simply changes his mind in response to changing events or perceptions (as indicated by the coordination of *ubi* and *tum*). The particular strategy that Pompey now adopts is also revealing, for in essence it entails keeping his options as widely open as possible: he instructs his son to seek help from every corner of the earth still accessible to his forces (2.632-649). Pompey's greatest fear is to be boxed in, to be confined to a single space or tactic and lose his cherished freedom of retreat, which is why he reacts with such alarm to Caesar's attempted blockade of the harbour, taking this as the cue for his hasty departure: *Pompeius tellure nova conpressa profundi/ ora videns curis animum mordacibus angit,/ ut reseret pelagus spargatque per aequora bellum* (2.680-682). It is significant that Caesar himself (in the *Bellum Civile*) assigns two possible reasons for Pompey's abandonment of Brundisium: *Pompeius sive operibus Caesaris permutos sive etiam quod ab initio Italia excedere constituerat... profectionem parare incipit* (1.27). Caesar thus admits the possibility that his enemy was acting rationally, in accordance with a predetermined strategy. Lucan, by contrast, only depicts Pompey reacting in panic to the tightening of Caesar's net; once again, Pompey changes his mind to preserve his freedom of escape.

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41 Fantham comments, "L. represents Pompey's decision as a fall-back, implying that the transfer of activities to Greece was not his original strategy, but compelled by lack of confidence in Italian support and the impossibility of reaching the two Spains" (note on 2.628-630).
42 Pompey's own inner conflict and vacillation are thus to be mirrored in the heterogeneous and polyglot nature of his armada (as detailed in the catalogue of Book Three); Caesar, by contrast, relies only on a single coherent band of veteran legionaries who (by and large) share his single-minded devotion to the pursuit of his own power and glory.
43 Appian (*Civil Wars* 2.38-40), Cassius Dio (41.10-12), and Plutarch (*Pompey* 62-63) all represent Pompey's decision to sail from Brundisium as a considered strategic decision taken long in advance, not a panicked reaction to Caesar's blockade.
This combination of indecision with a desperate quest for refuge is also apparent in the speech of Book Eight in which Pompey makes the case for a Parthian alliance to his followers assembled at Syhedra after the defeat of Pharsalus (8.262-327). The ethical dimensions of such an alliance will be discussed in Chapter Three; for now, the only issue to be considered is the state of mind revealed by Pompey's manner of argumentation. Pompey begins decisively enough, selecting Parthia from a list of three possibilities (the others being Libya and Egypt) and bombarding his audience with a slew of arguments in support of this preference. Nevertheless, he then goes on to acknowledge the possibility that the treacherous Parthians will fail him, in which case he proposes to fall back on the remote and uninhabited regions of the world as an alternative refuge:

\[ quod si nos Eoa fides et barbara fallent/ foedera, volgati supra commercia mundi/ naufragium fortuna ferat \] (8.311-313). Finally, Pompey concludes his speech in the same way that he concludes his response to the apparition of Julia, by employing an aut...aut construction to assert (not very persuasively) the equal desirability of two completely opposite and mutually exclusive alternatives, namely the Parthian defeat of Caesar and Caesar's defeat of the Parthians: 

\[ cum Caesaris arma/ concurrent Medis, aut me fortuna necesse est/ vindicet aut Crassos \] (8.325-327). It is therefore entirely in character for Pompey to be reluctant to rely too exclusively on a single conception of death and the afterlife as an antidote to the terrors evoked by the apparition of Julia, for his deeply ingrained instinct is to hedge his bets, to attempt to keep open every possible avenue of mental escape from his current predicament that is afforded by the conventions of the consolatio philosophiae.
A further instructive parallel can be found in Pompey's dialogue with Cornelia at the end of Book Five. On the escapism inherent in his decision to dispatch her to the safety of Lesbos, enough has been said above. As for indecisiveness, Pompey postpones the painful separation that he has resolved upon as long as possible, just as he postpones the hard decision to abandon Italy (in Book Two) or to face Caesar in battle (in Books Six and Seven): Lucan thus records, *mentem iam verba paratam/ destituunt, blandaeque iuvat ventura trahentem/ indulgere morae et tempus subducere fatis* (5.731-733), while Pompey himself prefaces his speech to Cornelia with an admission of his anguished procrastination over this difficult task: *venit maesta dies et quam nimiumque parumque/ distulimus* (5.741-742). Moreover, even Cornelia's transfer to Lesbos does not entail a decisive rejection of her presence in Pompey's life, for (as discussed above) Pompey makes it clear that he is only making this temporary sacrifice in order to preserve Cornelia as a secure avenue of retreat for him in the event of his defeat. It is very difficult for Pompey to bid a final farewell to his wives, as is of course also apparent from his attempted embrace of the dreadful spectre of Julia in Book Three. Consequently, even though Julia herself, like the afterlife that she describes, is so obviously horrific, Pompey finds himself incapable of rejecting her through a wholehearted endorsement of the Epicurean view of death; in the end, he simply cannot bear the thought of his beloved Julia's non-existence, nor can he contemplate the permanent severance of their relationship, which (provided that the soul survives death) can continue both while he remains alive (through the dreams that she threatens to inflict on him over the course of his campaigns) and when he joins her in death (as she ominously predicts at the close of her speech).
Lucan's manipulation of the philosophical clichés thus sheds considerable light on Pompey's state of mind. Pompey's first instinct is to embrace the ghost of Julia in a fit of nostalgia. Rather more rationally, he then proceeds to a logical refutation both of her own reality and of the ominous content of her address. Pompey's gesture and speech therefore constitute two opposite responses and in themselves betray a certain indecisiveness; Caesar's reaction to the apparition of Roma on the bank of the Rubicon at 1.185-212 provides an instructive contrast, since Caesar's words and deeds there converge on the single endpoint of the crossing of the river and the initiation of civil war. Pompey's indecision is not restricted to a divergence between word and deed, however, for even within his philosophizing speech, although he starts from the Troades model of a straightforwardly Epicurean refutation of a frightening ghost, he cannot resist the temptation to introduce an element of doubt by the simple expedient of replacing an et...et pairing (which would have been suggested by the -que of Troades 397) with aut...aut.\textsuperscript{44} As in Book Five, when Pompey seeks simultaneously to keep Cornelia by his side and to send her to safety, so here he attempts at one and the same time both to throw aside his fear of the spectre of Julia and to console himself with the possibility of her continued presence in his life. In the process, of course, Pompey completely negates the protective value of the Epicurean philosophy whose language he borrows, since only an afterlife that is exclusively and undeniably Epicurean can possibly offer any shelter from the pervasive convulsions of the Roman civil war (including the menace constituted by Julia herself).

\textsuperscript{44} It should be noted that the two expressions would be metrically equivalent here, since each aut is followed by a word beginning with a consonant.
Generic Escapism

In his article on "Lucan's Cornelia", Bruère has shown that "Lucan continually identifies Cornelia with various of Ovid's heroines; often she is assimilated in his imagination to Alycone and Ariadne to a degree that blurs and distorts the character that properly is hers in the poem" (p. 232). Elaborating and refining Bruère's thesis, Hübner demonstrates that Lucan's portrait of Cornelia draws heavily not only on Ovid but also on the conventions and language of Roman love elegy generally (particularly in the scene at the end of Book Five).\(^45\) In Pompey's wish to delay as long as possible the inevitable moment of parting from Cornelia (5.731-733), he thus reveals a longing to tarry in the world of love elegy and postpone his return to the grim political and military realities of historical epic; these realities are frequently contrasted with the goals of elegy in the programmatic statements of elegiac poets, just as Pompey presents his relationship with Cornelia (and Cornelia herself) as incompatible with a military context at 5.748-752.\(^46\) Although Pompey ultimately chooses epic over elegy in sending Cornelia away from the front lines, this choice is only temporary, for he hopes to return to her as soon as he is released by defeat from his epic responsibilities as a commander. Pompey's phraseology in expressing this wish is significant: *si numina nostras inpulerint acies, maneant pars optima Magni, si sitque mihi, si fata prement victorque cruentus, quo fugisse velim* (5.756-759). If Pompey considers the elegiac Cornelia as his own *pars optima*, it follows that he regards the epic half of his identity, the half that actually stays behind to prosecute the war, as less crucial to his sense of self. Indeed, not only does the phrase *pars optima*

\(^{45}\) See Bruère's Ovidian analysis of 5.722-815 (pp. 223-225) and Hübner's elegiac refinement (p. 235, n. 29); as Hübner points out (p. 234, n. 28), even Ovid's epic *Metamorphoses* (especially the portions that Lucan exploits for his portrait of Cornelia) are strongly coloured by the conventions of erotic elegy; see Tränkle on "Elegisches in Ovids Metamorphosen".

\(^{46}\) See e.g. Tibullus 1.1 and especially 1.10 for the tension between the world of elegy and that of warfare.
Magni suggest Pompey's preference for the world of elegy, but it is actually drawn from the language of elegy: Bruère cites the parallel of Ovid's Ariadne, who speaks of Theseus as pars nostri...maior (Heroides 10.58). Pompey is thereby assimilating himself into the elegiac identity of Cornelia, since (as Bruère has shown) the latter is likewise aligned with Ovid's Ariadne in this scene. After her sorrowful departure, Cornelia takes up Pompey's pars optima with her resolution to preserve the empty space in their marital bed for her absent husband: non iuvat in toto corpus iactare cubili:/ servatur pars illa tori (5.812-813). As Hübner observes (p. 235, n. 29), the allocation of pars tori to an absent lover is an elegiac motif; Lucan therefore employs the language and imagery of elegy to describe Cornelia's efforts to ensure that her husband will always have a place in the world of elegy, insofar as that is embodied in their lovers' bed.

Over the course of the De Bello Civili, Cornelia is not the only elegiac figure in whose embrace Pompey seeks a blissful (if temporary) escape from the war. In the dream of Book Three, although she aligns herself with the epic Caesar in forcing awareness of an epic war on the sleeping Pompey, Julia also incorporates numerous elegiac motifs, as Hübner demonstrates (pp. 235-239). In particular, Julia's closing threat, bellum/ te faciet civile meum (3.33-34), corresponds to the prediction that comes at the end of the speech of the ghost of Cynthia in Propertius 4.7 (Hübner, p. 237): nunc te possideant aliae: mox sola tenebo:/ mecum eris, et mixtis ossibus ossa teram (4.7.93-94). Julia thus ends by claiming Pompey not only for herself but also for the world of elegy, and Pompey immediately responds in kind: sic fata refugit/ umbra per amplexus trepidi dilapsa mariti (3.34-35). As Hübner points out (p. 237), although the topos of the

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47 As Hübner notes (p. 237), Cynthia's nunc te possideant aliae (4.7.93) corresponds to Julia's contemptuous haereat illa [i.e. Cornelia] tuis per bella, per aequora, signis (3.24).
attempted embrace of a ghost is traditional in epic, Lucan's language associates Pompey's reaction very closely with Propertius' response to the ghost of Cynthia, which follows immediately on the above-quoted lines: *haec postquam querula mecum sub lite peregit,/ inter complexus excidit umbra meos* (4.7.95-96). Just as in his representation of Cornelia as his *pars optima* in Book Five, Pompey's first response to Julia is to pledge his allegiance to an elegiac figure through an action described in elegiac language. He must then have recourse to a different genre, that of the scientific didactic epic of Lucretius on the mortality of the soul, in order to shake off Julia's elegiac influence and recover the necessary fortitude to return to the world of military epic.
Chapter Two: Escape to the Stars

Escape from Pharsalus

It is above all the disaster of Pharsalus that unleashes Pompey's escapist predilections. He spends the first six books of the poem desperately postponing any final, decisive confrontation with Caesar, even to the extent of refusing to press home a considerable military advantage in the clash outside Dyrrachium in Book Six (6.300-313). Although Pompey then follows Caesar to Thessaly, so that the consummate fugitive for once becomes the pursuer (as indicated at 6.316-317), he remains reluctant to join battle even after his hand is forced by the combined clamour of his troops and eloquence of Cicero (his reluctance is evidenced by his speech of grudging acquiescence at 7.87-123); as discussed in the previous chapter, Pompey's nostalgic dream on the eve of battle is further evidence of his unwillingness to contemplate the looming clash.¹

Given that Pompey instinctively turns away from the harsh realities of civil war even while he remains undefeated and the issue is still in doubt, it comes as no surprise to find that he immediately embarks on a course of desperate and unremitting escapism once the struggle is lost, with an escape route that begins on the battlefield itself in Book Seven and continues all the way to the shores of Egypt in Book Eight and thence (at least in spirit) to the stars. This escape is doomed from the outset, however, because Lucan represents Pharsalus (in all its ramifications) as inevitable in the fullest and worst sense of

¹ Both Pompey's refusal to deliver the coup de grace at Dyrrachium and his unwillingness to join battle at Pharsalus are matters of historical record (see e.g. Appian, Civil Wars 2.62 and 67-68), although Cassius Dio shows Caesar and Pompey at first equally reluctant to meet in battle (41.53) and then equally eager to do so (41.56). Lucan is, however, unique in attributing Pompey's reluctance on each occasion not (or at least not primarily) to pragmatic, strategic considerations but rather to a pious aversion to civil bloodshed: with regard to Dyrrachium, Lucan laments, dolet heu semperque dolebit/ quod scelerum, Caesar, prodest tibi summa tuorum,/ cum genero pugnasse pio (6.303-305); and in his speech of acquiescence at Pharsalus, Pompey complains of his followers' criminality in demanding battle during a civil war, quis furor, o caeci, scelerum? civilia bella/ gesturi metuant, ne non cum sanguine vincant (7.95-96). Lucan therefore shows Pompey shying away not merely from a formidable adversary but from the very idea of civil strife.
the word. All the nations of the east are gathered into its clutches, as Lucan makes clear in his catalogue of Pompey's allies in Book Three: *acciperet felix ne non semel omnia Caesar,/ vincendum pariter Pharsalia praestitit orbem* (3.296-297). On the day itself, dark presentiments announce the battle to Romans everywhere, because all share equally in its disastrous consequences (7.187-191), and a series of worldwide portents proclaims the event to the entire human race (7.201-204). Pharsalus thus casts a vast shadow in space, and it also does so in time: at the moment the battle is joined, Lucan interrupts the narrative to deliver a long and bitter lament for the day's momentous long-term consequences, from the depopulation of Italy to the rise of the hated Caesars (7.385-459). As a result, future generations too must feel the full pain of Pharsalus when they read of it (7.207-213).

Although Pompey will never escape such a universal catastrophe, he nonetheless makes the attempt, taking the first step with his decision to flee the battleground. Like his abandonment of Rome in Book One and of Italy in Book Two, this action requires a rhetorical defence, which Lucan provides at length (7.647-697), offering various unconvincing rationalizations (so that Pompey's presence would not inspire his soldiers to throw away their lives for him, so that the senators could prove that they fought for themselves and not for him, etc.). In spite of such half-hearted justifications, however, Lucan goes on to register his disapproval in Book Eight through his unflattering description of Pompey's timorous demeanour while in flight: *pavet ille fragorem/

*motorum ventis nemorum, comitumque suorum/ qui post terga redit trepidum laterique
timentem/ examimat* (8.5-8).

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At this point in the narrative, Pompey is merely running away from Pharsalus, haphazardly and without plan or direction, in accordance with his characteristic indecisiveness: *Haemoniae deserta petens dispendia silvae/ cornipedem exhaustum cursu stimulisque negantem/ Magnus agens incerta fugae vestigia turbat/ implicitasque errore vias* (8.2-5). A clue to his future intentions is, however, apparent in the phrase *Haemoniae deserta petens dispendia silvae*, for this recalls the comparable behaviour of the vanquished bull in the simile applied to Pompey's retreat from Capua: *silvarum secreta petit* (2.602). Like the bull, Pompey hopes to recover his strength in some distant retreat and then make a triumphant return from exile as Marius did from Carthage (which is the ideologically dubious precedent cited by Pompey in his speech to his followers at 8.269-271).

Pompey acknowledges that there is no safety to be found in familiar places. In the immediate aftermath of Pharsalus, he refuses the generous offer of support from the people of the nearby town of Larisa (7.712-727). His next concrete destination is Lesbos, and this is perhaps the most plausible of the explanations offered by Lucan for Pompey's decision to leave the battlefield: *sed tu quoque, coniunx,/ causa fugae voltusque tui fatisque negatum/ parte absente mori* (7.675-677). If Housman's conjecture of *parte absente* at 7.677 is correct, Pompey's eagerness to return to Cornelia's side is expressed precisely in the language that described his affiliation both with Cornelia and with the elegiac genre in Book Five (with *pars optima Magni* at 5.757).

This retreat from military epic to erotic elegy is then confirmed in the scene of reunion with Cornelia in Book Eight, which (like her other scenes in the poem) is coloured with Ovidian (and hence ultimately elegiac) allusions from start to finish, as
Bruère has shown (pp. 226-228); as in Book Five, Cornelia is aligned both with Ovid's Ariadne and with his Alycone. Moreover, in thanking the people of Lesbos for their hospitality towards his beloved Cornelia, Pompey makes a surprising profession of devotion: *nullum toto mihi...in orbe/ gratius esse solum non parvo pignore vobis/ ostendi: tenuit nostros hac obside Lesbos/ affectus; hic sacra domus carique penates,/ hic mihi Roma fuit* (8.129-133). This is a striking perversion of the properly Roman view, expressed by Lentulus at 5.23-30 in his speech to the senators assembled in exile at Epirus, that Rome is wherever the senate is; indeed, Pompey himself voices a similar sentiment in the more properly epic context of his speech to the council of Syhedra a little later in Book Eight (at 8.263). Pompey then proceeds to stress the primacy of Cornelia and Lesbos in his thoughts after Pharsalus, even at the expense of historical accuracy, for in fact he landed first at Amphipolis: *non ulla in litora puppem/ ante dedi fugiens* (8.133-134). During this elegiac scene, Pompey's patriotic feelings are therefore entirely monopolized by his elegiac wife; he feels no sense of duty or loyalty to the Roman state and departs from the epic paradigm of Virgil's Aeneas, who (like Pompey in Book Eight) is responsible for the leadership of a ragtag band of survivors from a catastrophic defeat, although even Aeneas temporarily loses sight of his statesmanlike duties in his brief dalliance with Dido. Pompey's escapism is thus closely bound up with his wives, along with the elegiac genre that informs their representation. In the dream of Julia in Book

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3 See Trankle (pp. 465-476) for the elegiac tone and background of the Alcyone narrative in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

4 Postgate offers 5.29, *illic Roma fuit*, as a comparandum for 8.133, *hic mihi Roma fuit* (a phrase that occupies the same emphatic metrical *sedes* at the start of the line).

5 Mayer offers 8.263 as a comparandum for 8.133 (in his note on the latter).

6 Postgate notes the inaccuracy of this assertion (note on 8.134 and p. xxvii), and Mayer comments (in his note on 8.133-134), "What Pompey is here made to say is untrue, for he had gone to Amphipolis first, but Lucan ignores this in order to place emotional considerations before policy (in despite of ancient sailing practice)."
Three, however horrific her present manifestation may have been, Pompey could recall the period of his vanished felicity, which (as I argued) explains why he vainly sought her embrace; now he runs back to Cornelia and away from his responsibilities as the commander of a defeated army, returning to the lovers' paradise that he has kept safe from the civil war (for his own sake as much as for hers) by depositing her in Lesbos.

While Cornelia herself may offer Pompey a psychological and generic refuge from his present misfortunes, he no longer believes that he will find any lasting security in Lesbos as such. When the Lesbians offer the same pledge of continued loyalty in adversity as the citizens of Larisa, Pompey rejects their aid as well, even though he earlier voiced the hope that he might be able to take refuge in Lesbos along with Cornelia in the event of defeat (5.758-759). His refusal is phrased as diplomatically as possible, but in his words there is an unmistakable echo of Cornelia's own warning in Book Five that her presence would render Lesbos dangerously suspect to Caesar and thereby unsafe for Pompey: *non ulla in litora puppem/ ante dedi fugiens, saevi cum Caesaris iram/ iam scirem meritam servata coniuge Lesbon,/ non veritus tantam veniae committere vobis/ materiam. sed iam satis est fecisse nocentes* (8.133-137). As for his new destination, Pompey can speak only in the most general terms: *fata mihi totum mea sunt agitanda per orbem* (8.138). After all, what is far enough away from Caesar's reach to constitute true sanctuary?

**Escape through Astronomy**

On the night following his departure from Lesbos, Pompey finds himself assailed by sleepless doubts over his future course of action, for he is no more able to settle on a single choice of refuge now than during his headlong retreat through and from Italy in
Book Two: *vigiles Pompei pectore curae/ nunc socias adeunt Romani foederis urbes/ et varias regum mentes, nunc invia mundi/ arva super nimios soles Austrumque iacentis* (8.161-164). As he did in the wake of the frightening apparition of Julia in Book Three, Pompey now resorts to scientific discourse in order to assuage his anxieties, this time in the form of an interrogation of his helmsman about the stars and their navigational uses: *saepe labor maestus curarum odiumque futuri/ proiecit fessos incerti pectoris aestus,/ rectoremque ratis de cunctis consulit astra,/ unde notet terras, quae sit mensura secandi/ aequoris in caelo, Syriam quo sidere servet,/ aut quotas in Plaustro Libyam bene derigat ignis* (8.165-170). In Book Three, (ostensibly) Epicurean speculation on the promise of a refuge from war in the insensibility of death allowed Pompey to remain *certa cum mente*; now he seeks to calm *fessos incerti pectoris aestus* through astronomy, a Stoic preserve from Aratus onwards, at least in terms of astronomical poetry. Where Lucretius was then the obvious didactic influence on the language and content of Pompey's reasoning, the Stoic Manilius is now uppermost. Of course, in Book Three Pompey employed Lucretian reasoning in order to propel himself back into the struggle; now, however, he seeks only to escape his political responsibilities through astronomical inquiry, that is, to escape from the bleak realm of military epic into the more utopian domain of scientific didactic poetry, just as he effected a temporary escape into the genre of erotic elegy through his reunion with Cornelia a hundred lines earlier.

The use of astronomy as a source of spiritual comfort is well-grounded in ancient philosophy, particularly (although not exclusively) among the Stoics. In the Stoic conception, the stars are a visible and irrefutable proof of the providential administration of the cosmos, for by the very fact of their continual, intricate, and regular motion, they
require belief in some supremely rational guiding hand.\textsuperscript{7} Because this complex interplay has come to be progressively better understood, the stars also bolster faith in cosmic perspicuity, in a universe designed to be transparent to human \textit{ratio}; the human soul both derives from the stars and returns to them in contemplation.\textsuperscript{8} The same orderly revolution delivers a comforting display of permanence as the stars proceed along their appointed paths year after year, millennium after millennium, unaffected by the upheavals of the world below.\textsuperscript{9} In this whole magnificent array, the permanently visible polar constellations stand as the culmination and crowning glory, defining the axis around which the heavens perpetually turn;\textsuperscript{10} Aratus thus begins his catalogue of the stars with the two Bears (24-44), and Manilius does likewise after a brief survey of the signs of the zodiac (1.294-307).

The spiritual value of the contemplation of the celestial system in its own right is complemented and reinforced by the consideration of the stars' practical utility, since a providential care for human welfare is thereby made manifest. By virtue of their regularity, the stars assign the appropriate times for different agricultural activities as well as for navigation, and it is no accident that this should be so. Aratus, for instance, opens his poem with an invocation of the Stoic Zeus, who has coordinated the celestial phenomena to serve as seasonal signs to farmers (1-16); his catalogue of the constellations also includes many specific references to the use of the stars to determine

\textsuperscript{7} See e.g. Manilius 1.247-251 and 2.67-73 and Cicero, \textit{De Natura Deorum} 2.37 (95), 2.38 (97), 2.40-44 (101-115), and 2.46 (117-119). Although the proof of divine providence through appeal to the beauty and regularity of the heavens predates the Stoics and can be traced back to Aristotle and Plato, the astronomical focus of the speech ascribed to the Stoic Balbus in \textit{DND} 2 shows that, at least by the Roman period, this was regarded as a characteristically Stoic mode of argumentation.

\textsuperscript{8} See e.g. Manilius 1.25-50, 2.105-127 and 4.866-935 and Cicero, \textit{DND} 2.62 (155) for the idea of astronomy as a divinely ordained vocation; see also Salemme's discussion (pp. 27-45).

\textsuperscript{9} See e.g. Manilius 1.185, 1.474-531, and 2.70-72 and Cicero, \textit{DND} 2.37 (95) and 2.38 (97).

\textsuperscript{10} See Manilius 1.275-293 for an extended description of the celestial axis as defined by the polar constellations.
safe times for sailing. Moreover, the stars offer spatial as well as temporal guidance to seafarers, most obviously through the northward orientation of the reliably fixed polar constellations, Ursa Major and Minor. Aratus thus serves as a model for Manilius not only in his emphatic placement of the Bears at the head of his stellar catalogue but also in his praise for their usefulness in navigation. Manilius in fact goes further than Aratus in explicitly presenting celestial navigation as a very concrete illustration of that tight bond between human life and the stars that his whole poem is intended to celebrate, for he speaks of *gubernandi studium, quod venit in astra/ et pontum caelo vincit* (4.279-280). Indeed, for an astrological poet like Manilius, navigation is doubly intertwined with the heavens, since the sailor who steers by the stars is actually implanted with the urge to sail by the signs of Pisces (4.273-289) and Argo (5.40-56); the *studium* has accordingly both reached the stars through human knowledge (*venit in astra*) and descended from them through astrological determinism.

Lucan's Pompey has already been twice characterized as the helmsman of the metaphorical ship of state in a crucial sequence at the beginning of the previous book. In the face of the strident demands of his followers (voiced by Cicero) for immediate battle, Pompey reluctantly abandons his prudent delaying tactics and agrees to face Caesar on the field of Pharsalus. Pompey regards his army's folly as proof of a divine malevolence and treachery that he is powerless to resist, and it is in the context of his abject acquiescence to an evil fate that he is termed *rector*, which is usually translated as

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11 See Aratus 147-155, 282-299, and 406-435. Compare Virgil's *Georgics* (1.231-258), Manilius' catalogue of seasonal activities (including navigation), correlated with the cycle of the constellations, at 3.625-665, and Cicero's (or rather the Stoic Balbus') attribution of human knowledge of the seasons to the divine gift of the stars at *DND* 2.62 (155). In the second section of his poem, Aratus also speaks (like Virgil) of Zeus' kindness in setting weather signs in the sky (771-772).

12 See Manilius' adaptation of Aratus' account of the navigational use of the pole-stars at 1.294-307 (to be discussed further below), as well as the translations of the Aratus passage by Cicero, *DND* 2.41 (106) and Germanicus (24-47). Hunink (note on 3.218) gives other instances of this theme in Latin literature.
"leader" in this context, but which carries "helmsman" as its primary, literal meaning: 

_ingemuit rector sensitque deorum/ esse dolos et fata suae contraria menti_ (7.85-86).¹³ A deeply pessimistic speech of concession follows, concluded by a simile that likens Pompey's abdication of political leadership to the abandonment of a ship's rudder by a sailor during a storm (7.125-127).¹⁴ The ensuing disaster of Pharsalus can therefore be said to result directly from a double failure of guidance, both Pompey's guidance of the Roman state and the gods' guidance of the universe, and this failure is expressed in nautical terms.

At the beginning of Book Eight, in the aftermath of Pharsalus, as he seeks to repair his shattered confidence both in his own leadership and in the providential ordering of the cosmos, it is consequently highly appropriate for the _rector_ Pompey to take comfort in the promise of heavenly aid for navigation. His physical flight from Caesar is accompanied by an attempted intellectual escape to a higher plane, one that is presumably untouched by the terrestrial conflict (in accordance with the Stoic doctrine of stellar imperturbability), and that can offer proof of a more benevolent disposition of the universe than is evidenced by the nightmare of civil war currently being played out here on earth. The content of Pompey's request is accordingly informed by the ideal of a stable, intelligible, and well-governed cosmos, with (indirectly reported) wording suggestive of rational order (_mensura_), observational clarity (_notet_ and _servet_), and effective guidance (_bene derigat_). Note that _derigat_ aligns the operation of the stars with

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¹³ See the definition of _rector_ in both Lewis and Short and the _OLD_. Cato subsequently describes Pompey as _rector...senatus_ in his eulogy (at 9.194).

¹⁴ The image of the storm-tossed ship of state (although not with specific reference to Pompey) also occurs in a simile at 1.498-504. This is an appropriate image for Lucan, since, as discussed in the introduction, it seems to have first been introduced into Latin literature in the specific context of the civil strife attendant on the fall of the Republic. Plutarch (_Pompey 67.4_) also compares Pompey's dereliction of duty at Pharsalus to that of a ship's master.
that of the helmsman himself, the *rector ratis* (8.167), to whom Pompey's questions are addressed in his capacity as a learned observer of the heavens (8.171). The word also serves as a reminder that the stars in turn are guided by a navigator of their own, the omnipotent Stoic godhead, who is often termed *rector* in Roman poetry. Pompey's helmsman thus operates as the stars' (and by extension God's) representative on earth in two respects: both as the stars' agent, inasmuch as he reenacts their gubernatorial function by steering the ship, and as their diligent observer and the repository and interpreter of their lore. By questioning him, Pompey must therefore be expecting a heartening confirmation of the permanence and reliability of a celestial system in which the helmsman plays such an integral role under the aegis of the supreme divine *rector*, and in which Pompey hopes to play an analogous role as the *rector* of the Roman state.

Moreover, the stars (along with their representative the helmsman) offer Pompey more than the prospect of an intellectual escape into the comforting vision of a well-ordered cosmos, for he also hopes to secure their guidance in effecting his physical escape from Caesar. In addition to a broad inquiry *de cunctis astris* (at 8.167), Pompey thus makes a specific request for information on the stars that lead to Syria and Libya.

As Postgate observes (in his note on 8.169), Pompey's choice of hypothetical destinations points forward to his address to his assembled followers at Syhedra a hundred lines later, in which he proposes both Juba's kingdom of Numidia (termed *Libye*) and Parthia (which is reached through Syria) as potential avenues of alliance for the defeated partisans (8.277). As indicated by 8.161-164, Pompey is already contemplating specific refuges in defeat, although he has not yet arrived at a final decision; he now looks to the helmsman for a guarantee of the stars' assistance in reaching these potential sanctuaries. Pompey's

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15 See e.g. Lucan 2.4 (*rector Olympi*) and Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.668 (*superum rector*).
purpose is therefore twofold: to reassure himself both of the continued functioning of the celestial system in its totality and of the stars’ availability to light his own personal way to safety.\(^\text{16}\)

The Speech of the Helmsman

In his response to Pompey, out of all the stars, the helmsman selects as his preferred reference point the permanently visible constellations of the polar region: *qui non mergitur undis/ axis inocciduus gemina clarissimus Arcto,/ ille regit puppes* (8.174-176). On the face of it, this statement seems designed to satisfy Pompey's craving for reassurance. As noted above, the polar constellations serve both as evidence of a steadfast and well-ordered cosmic mechanism and as great practical aids to sailors; in other words, they are in an excellent position to promote each of the two types of escape (mental and physical) that Pompey is here attempting. Indeed, Pompey's final question assumes the navigational relevance of a polar constellation (*Plaustrum* or *Ursa Major*), for he asks which of its stars *Libyam bene derigat* (8.170). Pompey already knows from which region of the heavens to seek solace in his confusion, and the helmsman's response seems to confirm Pompey in this belief, with his emphatic *ille regit* neatly answering the *quotus...derigat ignis* of Pompey's query.

\(^{16}\) Mayer sees the latter as the only goal of Pompey's questions (in his note on 8.167), where I see a double goal: "Pompey...gradually builds up to his real question, 'can we get to Syria or Libya?'" By this analysis, neither Pompey’s initial inquiry *de cunctis astris* (at 8.167) nor his investigation of the general principles of celestial navigation (at 8.168-169) has any purpose other than to "build up" to the issue of his escape plans. Lucan, however, attributes Pompey's interrogation of his helmsman precisely and explicitly to his *odium futuri*, to a desire to shake off his agonized brooding over his future options with some diversion (at 8.165-166); Pompey must therefore be hoping for something more from his astronomical inquiry than information about his escape routes, since he is actively attempting not to think about them. If anything, Pompey's "real" question is his first one, on the stars in general, which offer a temporary respite from his immediate predicament; it is only at the end of his inquiry that his present anxieties resurface in his questions about Syria and Libya.
Any encouragement to be derived from the helmsman's assertion of the navigational use of the pole-stars is, however, considerably weakened by the preceding lines, in which he issues a grim warning against the treacherous unreliability of all the other stars: *signifero quaecumque fluunt labentia caelo/ numquam stante polo miserorum fallentia nautas,/ sidera non sequimur* (8.172-174). Pompey can expect no more *fides* among the stars than he found among the inhabitants of Italy and (in particular) Brundisium in Book Two. Moreover, just as the refuge of Brundisium was externally invaded by Caesar's forces in addition to suffering an internal collapse of its own *fides*, so the heavens (as depicted by the helmsman) are contaminated by language and imagery associated with Caesar himself elsewhere in the poem. The phrase *numquam stante polo* recalls Lucan's characterization of Caesar's restless ambition with the phrase *nescia virtus/ stare loco* at 1.144-145, and the same verb is elsewhere employed to the same effect. Again, the verb *fallere* is frequently applied to Caesar's deceitful actions (at 4.30, 5.512, 5.679, and 9.1062). The verb is never used of Pompey's own actions (or

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17 Although (in his translation of Aratus) he introduces the idea of deception (with *fefellit*) into his treatment of Cynosura (Ursa Minor), which he describes as turning around *fido...cardine* (46), Germanicus only does so in order to assert that the faithful Cynosura does not deceive sailors without suggesting that the other stars do: *certior est Cynosura tamen sulcantibus aequor;/ quippe brevis totam fido se cardine vertit/ Sidoniamque ratem numquam spectata fefellit* (45-47). Aratus himself does not employ any language of deception (or lack of deception) in his own account of the polar constellations (37-44), nor does his translator Cicero (*DND* 2.41 (106)) or his successor Manilius (1.294-307). The idea of stellar deception in this context is thus unique to Lucan. König briefly comments (p. 471, n. 29) that the image of stars deceiving sailors refutes Eichberger's interpretation (made on p. 67) of the effect of this scene as one of simple contrast between the anxious and traumatized Pompey "und dem ewig ruhigen Heer der Sterne". 

18 *Stare* is thus a key term in Domitius' attempted defence of Corfinium against Caesar in Book Two. Domitius urges his men to destroy the only bridge across the river Aternus, portraying the delay that would be thereby imposed on Caesar's relentless advance as a considerable victory: *praecipitem cohibete ducem:/ victoria nobis/ hic primum stans Caesar erit* (2.489-490). In response, Caesar boasts, *non si tumido me gurgite Ganges/ summoveat, stabit iam flumine Caesar in ullo/ post Rubiconis aquas* (2.496-498). Fantham notes the recurrence of this word in her note on 2.497; she also compares 1.144-145 (in her note on 2.489-490).

19 At 6.64, although Caesar himself is not the subject of *fefellit*, it does refer to his erection of the massive siegeworks at Dyrrachium. The verb also occurs three times in Caesar's speeches (at 7.289, 7.290, and 9.1081). In one form or another, Caesar thus accounts for eight of the word's fifteen occurrences in the poem. The paired occurrences at 5.512 and 5.679 are particularly significant, for they form part of a
indeed of the actions of any other specific individual in the poem), while, in Book Nine, the virtuous Cato explicitly refuses to deceive his soldiers about the dangers of a proposed march through the desert: *neque enim mihi fallere quemquam/ est animus tectoque metu perducere volgus* (9.388-389). The heavens to and by which Pompey hopes to effect his escape from Caesar are thus shown to be tainted by a distinctively Caesarian shiftiness and untrustworthiness.

The immediate context for the helmsman dialogue (both the preceding and the following scenes) is concerned precisely with the question of the strength of *fides* in adversity. Upon his departure from Lesbos (the previous scene), Pompey announced that he was embarking on a quest to probe the world's loyalty, in search of a people as faithful as the Lesbians to shelter him from Caesar (8.139-146). As these lines indicate, Pompey is prepared for the possibility that, among all the nations on earth (*in terris*, 8.142), Lesbos may turn out to be the sole surviving bastion of old-fashioned *fides*. Nevertheless, Pompey must be unpleasantly surprised to discover from his helmsman (only 30 lines after his speech to the Lesbians) that even the stars of heaven are similarly divided between the treacherous (*fallentia*) and the reliable, with the former vastly outnumbering the latter.

Another notable failure in Pompey's quest for *fides* occurs immediately after his exchange with the helmsman. Lucan opens the scene by commenting on Pompey's broader scheme in Book Five that seeks to present Caesar as a shameless practiser of deception: he deceives his mutinous soldiers by pretending that he is unalarmed by the prospect of their desertion, and that he can win the war without them (5.235-358); back in Rome, he deceives the Roman people by cloaking his tyranny in the titles of constitutional office and by holding sham elections (5.381-402); in Brundisium, taking advantage of his soldiers' ignorance of seafaring (*expertes animos pelagi*, 5.412), he deceives them by grossly misrepresenting the dangers of a winter crossing of the Adriatic (5.413-423), which nearly results in disaster (5.430-455); and, finally, he once again deceives his troops by sneaking out of his camp in Epirus by night to attempt a personal crossing of the Adriatic back to Italy, in a scene that is bracketed by lines that characterize Caesar's behaviour towards his men precisely with the verb *fallere*. 
illustrious company in exile, the *turba fidelis* (8.205) of his royal and senatorial followers; at this point, however, Lucan makes the surprising choice to illustrate the continued *fidelitas* of Pompey's magnificent retinue through the example of the Galatian king Deiotarus, whom Pompey entrusts with a crucial embassy to Parthia at 8.209-238 and addresses as *fidissime regum* (8.212). Although, at least within the confines of the poem, Deiotarus promptly sets out to perform this commission, Lucan could count on his readers' knowledge (from Cicero's *Pro Deiotaro* and the Pseudo-Caesar's *Bellum Alexandrinum*, among other sources) of Deiotarus' extremely swift desertion to Caesar's cause after his parting from Pompey (the first of several such opportune defections by the wily king over the course of the next decade). What is more, the very manner in which Lucan's Deiotarus sets about fulfilling Pompey's instructions is designed to showcase his deceitful nature, since he emulates the arch-trickster Odysseus by disguising himself as a pauper: *positis...insignibus aulae/ egreditur famulo raptos indutus amictus* (8.239-240).

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20 See *Pro Deiotaro* 13 and *Bellum Alexandrinum* 34; the chronology of the latter makes it clear that Deiotarus must have pledged material support to Caesar by the time of the early stages of the latter's Alexandrian campaign. See Cassius Dio 47.48.2 for the desertion of Deiotarus' forces from Brutus to the triumvirs at a crucial juncture during the battle of Philippi (although Deiotarus was not in personal command of these at the time).

21 Deiotarus' disguise has received no satisfactory explanation from previous scholars of Lucan. Mayer simply states that "[i]t was a commonplace that servile or inconspicuous dress preserved the prominent from harm" (note on 8.239-240), citing a couple of literary precedents, but he does not explain why Lucan has chosen to represent Deiotarus alone (along with Caesar and Brutus, as will be discussed below), out of all the characters embroiled in the perilous events of his poem, as resorting to such a "commonplace" device. After all, the Asian territories through which Deiotarus must now venture are surely not more dangerous than the many other more active theatres of war that Lucan has depicted over the course of the poem. In Book Six, for instance, Sextus Pompey, who is otherwise portrayed by Lucan as an abject coward, nevertheless dares to traverse the No man's land of Pharsalus on the eve of battle in search of the witch Erichtho without the aid of any such disguise (see 6.569-572); neither does the timorous Pompey adopt any disguise in his flight from Pharsalus at the beginning of Book Eight (8.1-32), even though Lucan states that he would have preferred to go unrecognized (8.19-21). From whom, in short, is Deiotarus seeking to conceal himself? Postgate acknowledges the problem - "it is hard to divine why the king should dress up as a slave...for the purpose of this mission to Parthia" (p. xxxv) - but his proposed solution, that Deiotarus "may yet have found some disguise a convenience to screen his departure from the eyes of the Pompeians at Ephesus" (p. xxxv), seems insufficient, especially given that Pompey himself does not instruct Deiotarus to conceal the mission. The disguise can therefore be better understood as a carefully chosen means of conveying Deiotarus' fundamental untrustworthiness.
Indeed, Deiotarus' replacement of his royal vestments with humbler attire evokes not only Odysseus but also the historical account (given in the *Bellum Alexandrinum*) of Deiotarus' craven supplication of Caesar upon the latter's arrival from Egypt in 47 BC, when he sought and obtained Caesar's grudging forgiveness for his former support of Pompey: *depositis regiis insignibus neque tantum privato vestitu sed etiam reorum habitu supplex ad Caesarem venit oratum ut sibi ignosceret* (*Bellum Alexandrinum* 67). Note the close correspondence between Lucan's ablative absolute phrase *positis...insignibus aulae* and the *depositis regiis insignibus* of the *Bellum Alexandrinum*, which suggests a reminiscence not only of the historical incident but even of the actual text. 22 Deiotarus' disguise thus at once highlights his innate untrustworthiness and, more specifically, serves to remind the reader of his imminent defection from Pompey's cause. Moreover, as with the helmsman's description of the stars as *fallentia*, Deiotarus is aligned thereby with Lucan's Caesar, who is similarly disguised in humble garb, *plebeio tectus amictu* (5.538), when he ventures alone on his dangerous attempt to cross the Adriatic in Book Five (a scene in which Caesar is twice said to have engaged in *fallere*, at 5.512 and 689). 23

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22 Lucan's substitution of the genitive *aulae* for the original adjective *regiis* in this phrase can be explained by the latter form's inadmissibility in hexameter.

23 Viansino cites the disguise at 5.338 as a comparandum for 8.240 (in his note on the latter), although he does not infer any authorial disapproval of Deiotarus from the parallel. The two scenes are also connected by the shared motif of a rhetorical *laus paupertatis*, in which Lucan extols poverty as a guarantee of safety in wartime (compare 5.527-531 and 8.241-243); Caesar shares with Deiotarus the mere simulation of such poverty, in contrast with the genuinely poor man, who is exemplified by Amyclas in Book Five and by the generic *verus pauper* of 8.243. It is true that in Book Seven, the hero Brutus is shown as having disguised himself as a common soldier on the field of Pharsalus with the goal of reaching and killing Caesar (7.586-587). In the ensuing lines, however, in which (through an apostrophe) he seeks to dissuade Brutus from this reckless design, Lucan begins by addressing him as *o decus imperii, spes o suprema senatus, extremum tanti generis per saecula nomen* (7.588-589). The implication is clear: instead of hiding his light under a bushel through such an anonymous and underhanded tactic, Brutus must await the day when he can claim his birthright and acquire undying glory through an act of public vengeance committed under his own *nomen*. The apostrophe as a whole is accordingly framed by emphatic reminders of that name (at 7.587 and 7.595). This brief episode therefore serves to support (rather than contradict) the argument that Lucan
It should be noted that the mission of Deiotarus is a complete fiction, as Duff has demonstrated (pp. 128-129). If Lucan has invented this episode out of whole cloth, his intention must be to highlight Pompey's pathetic naiveté and misplaced trust in the things and people around him, as is also the case with the equally fictitious helmsman dialogue: in the chaos of civil war, neither cosmic phenomena like the stars nor human allies like Deiotarus can be relied upon to remain steadfast in adversity. Pompey's superlative expression *fidissime regum* at 8.212 accordingly takes on a bitter irony, for if Deiotarus is truly the most faithful of the world's monarchs, Pompey's future prospects are grim indeed; this fact is fully borne out by the sequel, namely his murder at the hands of another king, Ptolemy XIII, who owed him a considerable debt of gratitude. In fact, Pompey's speech to Deiotarus is doubly deluded: not only can he not depend upon the subservience of the Parthians, of which he vaingloriously assures himself on the basis of his former eastern victories (8.222-232), but he cannot even rely on this petty client king, this *fidissime regum*, to carry out his orders. Lesbos is therefore the last abode of *fides* that Pompey will encounter during life, for his departure from its shores is immediately followed by the helmsman's reference to stellar deceit, which precedes Lucan's subtle but unmistakable allusion to Deiotarus' defection, which in turn foreshadows Pompey's final (and fatal) betrayal by the despicable Ptolemy.

(like many of his compatriots) regarded disguise as unworthy of a Roman (and, conversely, typical of a decadent easterner like Deiotarus). See also Leigh's discussion of the Brutus scene (1997, pp. 103-109).

24 It is important to note that it is not Lucan himself but rather the pathetically deluded Pompey who thereby alludes to Cicero's praise of Deiotarus as *fidelissimi atque optumi regis* (*Brutus* 21).

25 Lucan actually connects Deiotarus to Ptolemy very directly by terming the former a *tyrannus* (8.241), a term that is overwhelmingly applied to Ptolemy over the course of the poem (Ptolemy accounts for 18 of the 29 occurrences).

26 Because all previous attempts to explain the invention of this episode have insisted on Lucan's desire to showcase Deiotarus' *loyalty* towards Pompey, all have failed adequately to address the matter of Deiotarus' historical record as a turncoat. Where Duff (pp. 129-130) and Mayer (pp. 112-113) simply ignore the issue, Postgate at least acknowledges the fact of Deiotarus' defection (p. xxxiv); he also notes perceptively (p.
The disquieting implications of the helmsman's opening lines are reinforced by a very strong (if previously undetected) echo of Manilius in 8.173-174, for Lucan's phrase *miseros fallentia nautas/ sidera* corresponds closely to a phrase in the introduction to Manilius' own account of navigation by the polar constellations: *summa tenent eius* [i.e. *axis*] *miseris notissima nautis/ signa* *per immensum cupidos ducentia pontum* (1.294-295). The words *miseri nautae* are repeated, with each placed at the same metrical *sedes* in both passages; a quadrisyllabic adjective (or verbal adjective) that ends in -a, and that

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xxxiv, n. 4) that Lucan has perhaps already alluded to this defection earlier in the poem, in Book Five, during the account of the honours voted to foreign allies by the senate in exile at Epirus, when Lucan describes Deiotarus as *fidum ... per arma* (5.54) rather than *per fugam*, in other words, as faithful during battle but not necessarily afterwards. According to Postgate, however, Lucan's account of the mission of Deiotarus in Book Eight is designed precisely to gloss over and cover up the king's lamentable lapse: "Lucan has got rid of it [Deiotarus' defection] in characteristic fashion. It was insupportable that the 'most trusty of monarchs' should leave his leader at the first convenient opportunity. So he is despatched on a dangerous and yet futile mission to Parthia, of which of course nothing further is heard" (p. xxxiv).

Pompey's address of Deiotarus as *fidissime regum* at 8.212 is thus for Postgate not a deliberate irony on Lucan's part but a case of Lucan "protesting too much" (p. xxxiv, n. 4) in order to rehabilitate Deiotarus as a faithful ally of Pompey. Nevertheless, Postgate offers no suggestion as to why Lucan would take such trouble (in composing an episode of more than thirty lines) to salvage Deiotarus' reputation, given that Lucan does not hesitate to report and condemn other instances of defection to Caesar, as in the case of the soldiers of Corfinium or the citizens of Brundisium in Book Two (see 2.507-509 and 2.704-705). Moreover, as Postgate himself points out (pp. xxxiv-xxxv), Lucan's fiction of the Parthian mission of Deiotarus is to some extent inspired by historical accounts (e.g. Caesar, *Bellum Civile* 3.82) that record Pompey dispatching the senator Lucilius Hirrus as an envoy to Parthia (albeit prior to Pharsalus); why would Lucan substitute the fair-weather friend Deiotarus, who was known to have deserted Pompey's cause upon arrival in Galatia, for Lucilius, who faithfully performed Pompey's commission (and suffered imprisonment for his pains, as indicated by Cassius Dio 42.2.5)? Another point is that, if Lucan had wished to portray Deiotarus as Pompey's loyal companion, he could have simply stuck to the historical fact that Deiotarus faithfully attended Pompey in his flight from Thessaly all the way to Cilicia, as expressed in Lucan's initial description of Deiotarus as *qui sparsa ducis vestigia legit* (8.210). After all, even though Deiotarus subsequently defected to Caesar, this must have occurred after Pompey's death and could not be considered a personal betrayal of his now-defunct commander (just as Tarcondimotus' attempted desertion of Cato in Book Nine is not a betrayal of Pompey but a response to Pompey's death). Instead, by inventing a scene in which Pompey entrusts Deiotarus with a vital mission upon the latter's departure from his side, Lucan has recast Deiotarus' pragmatic defection precisely as a personal betrayal, since Lucan's readers know that Deiotarus will in reality not carry out his doomed leader's final commission but will remain in Galatia to pursue a reconciliation with Caesar. What all three scholars share is a failure to appreciate Lucan's subtlety on this point (Lucan is in general too seldom credited with the virtue of subtlety). Book Eight is dominated by a very obvious example of Pompey's betrayal at the hands of a purportedly faithful king, Ptolemy XIII, against whose treachery Lucan inveighs repeatedly and explicitly in Book Eight and elsewhere. Lucan has chosen to complement and precede his brutally overt narrative of Ptolemy's act of betrayal with a delicate allusion to another royal betrayal, that of Deiotarus, an allusion that he carefully signals with his mythologically and historically resonant account of Deiotarus' disguise.
is grammatically connected to the *miseri nautae*\(^{27}\) is placed between the two words; and the next line starts with a neuter plural noun that agrees with that adjective, means "star" (or "group of stars"), and begins with *si*-. In addition, the participles *labentia* in line 172 of the helmsman's speech and *fallentia* at the corresponding position of line 173, which both describe *sidera*, recall the participle *ducentia* (which modifies *signa*) at the same place in Manilius' line 1.295; just as Lucan's *fallentia* has the direct object *nautas*, so the direct object of Manilius' *ducentia* is an implied *nautas* (suggested by the adjective *cupidos*, which refers back to *nautis* in the previous line).

Although the two passages are thus very intimately connected in both language and subject matter, they diverge sharply in their tone and effect. For Manilius, the fact that the *nautae* are *miseri* is merely a function of their desperate need for some reliable form of guidance in the absence of any visible landmarks on a deep-sea voyage:\(^{28}\) his account of celestial navigation concludes with a description of Phoenician sailors searching for an unseen shore with the steadfast (*certior*) help of Ursa Minor (1.301-302). Consequently, the adjective *miseri* serves simply to highlight providential benevolence, since the phrase *notissima...signa* not only is intertwined with the phrase *miseris...nautis* but actually announces salvation for the sailors' wretched plight in the unfailing clarity of the celestial signposts.\(^{29}\) Moreover, Manilius both opens and closes his catalogue of the constellations with a celebration of the providential administration of the cosmos (at 1.247-254 and 1.474-531). The polar stars follow shortly after the pious opening to the

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\(^{27}\) Lucan's *nautas* are the direct object of *fallentia*, while Manilius' *nautis* depend on *notissima* as a dative of personal interest.

\(^{28}\) Feraboli and Scarcia comment, "i naviganti sono *miseri* per le precarie condizioni di vita e per le difficoltà della navigazione, cui è vitale il soccorso delle stelle" (note on 1.294-301).

\(^{29}\) Manilius goes further than either Aratus or the latter's translators Cicero and Germanicus in emphasizing the sailors' desperate *need* for the polar constellations, without which they are utterly lost; Aratus et al. merely record that the sailors *use* the polar constellations. The phrase *miseris notissima nautis/ signa* is thus a uniquely Manilian expression of the sailors' dependence on the heavens.
catalogue, separated only by a brief listing of the signs of the zodiac (1.263-274) and a
description of the heavenly axis, whose northern endpoint is of course defined by the two
Bears (1.275-293). Given this context, it is natural to read Manilius' account of celestial
navigation as a concrete illustration of divine benevolence, in the Bears' helpfulness to
sailors.

Pompey's helmsman, by contrast, suggests that the stars in fact contribute to the
sailors' misery by deceiving them in their migration over the sky; here, the intertwined
phrase fallentia...sidera suggests not the salvation of the miserì nautae but the true source
of their wretchedness. Moreover, while Manilius' stars are ducentia, offering firm and
decisive leadership to benighted seafarers, the stars of the helmsman's account are both
labentia and (in consequence) fallentia, unstable and untrustworthy. The helmsman is
warning Pompey not to invest too much hope in any refuge, not even the stars that
constitute the highest ornament and proof of the harmonious Stoic cosmos. It is only
after this pessimistic caveat that the helmsman introduces the pole-stars (with sed) as a
lone exception to an otherwise universal rule of celestial ill-will towards a pitifully
struggling human race, the same ill-will that brought about the disaster of Pharsalus in the
previous book. Aratus and Manilius preface their accounts of the polar constellations
with praise for divine benevolence, Lucan's helmsman with an implication of divine
cruelty. The helmsman thus employs Manilian language to undermine Manilius' own
optimistic view of cosmic governance.

After this unsettling general introduction, the helmsman's speech continues on an
ominous note as he proceeds to sketch a specific, celestially guided itinerary in response
to Pompey's questions. As noted above, the hypothetical destinations proposed by
Pompey in his inquiry (Syria and Libya) correspond closely to the ones that he will suggest a little later to the council of Syhedra as possible allies in defeat (Parthia and Numidia). Nevertheless, there is a third choice put forward by Pompey there, the one in fact adopted by the council (with disastrous result): Egypt. If Pompey's eventual presentation of the choice of allies is foreshadowed in his questioning of the helmsman, Egypt is conspicuous by its omission. Consciously or not, Pompey shies away from the thought of the land that will prove his doom. Moreover, Pompey presents Syria and Libya to the helmsman as two distinct and separate destinations in two distinct indirect questions, which are separated by *aut*, a term that bears as its primary meaning the mutual exclusivity of two alternatives; this is only natural if Pompey regards each place as a gateway to a different potential ally. As in his ambiguous *aut...aut* response to the dream of Julia (discussed in Chapter One), Pompey is desperately intent on hedging his bets and keeping his options as open as possible; as Mayer shows, Pompey's trademark indecisiveness is also manifested in the adverb *saepe* that begins Lucan's account of the questioning (at 8.165).

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30 It is true that the name of Libya is often applied to the continent of Africa as a whole as well as (more precisely) to the territories associated with Carthage and Cyrene; it might therefore be thought that Pompey's request for information on the route to *Libye* at 8.170 could include Egypt as well as Libya proper. The ancients were, however, very uncertain of Egypt's exact relationship to the continents of Africa and Asia. Herodotus (like many other geographers) makes the Nile the boundary between Africa and Asia, with Egypt straddling the two (2.15-17). A geographer very close to Lucan in both time and cultural and social background, on the other hand, namely Pomponius Mela, unambiguously places Egypt in Asia rather than Africa (1.41), as does Pliny the Elder, at least with reference to the Delta region (5.9.47-48). Lucan himself uses the noun *Libye* on 38 occasions (in addition to 8.170), and none of these occurrences implies a reference to Egypt; indeed, Egypt or the Nile is often explicitly distinguished from *Libye* (as at 10.79 and 10.328), especially in connection with the listing of Pompey's options for refuge after Pharsalus (at 7.711 and 8.277). Lucan employs the adjective *Libycus* 36 times, and only once does this refer to Egyptian territory (at 2.417), while it often openly excludes a reference to Egypt, Egyptians, or the Nile (at 8.444, 10.129, and 10.291). It is therefore highly unlikely that Lucan's readers would have inferred a reference to Egypt from Pompey's question at 8.170.

31 See Mayer's note on 8.167: "Saepe in 165 shows that after some thought he asks one question and then relapses into brooding silence; then another followed by silence; and so on, until the helmsman begs for clear orders." Where I depart from Mayer is with regard to the sentence that follows: "The certain fixity of the stars and their movements well contrasts with Pompey's indecision." It is more accurate to say that
In the helmsman's account, however, Pompey's cherished freedom of choice is emphatically blocked off, with no genuine alternatives, for Syria is the gateway not to Parthia but to Libya. What is more, in spite of Pompey's omission, the helmsman puts Egypt at the very centre of the celestially aided course that he plots. With *inde* at 8.181, he connects the route to Syria and the route to Libya as two legs of the same journey, and between them lurks Egypt, the spider at the centre of the web in which Pompey now finds himself inextricably entangled: *inde Canopus excipit...illa quoque perge sinistra/ trans Pharos* (8.181-184). The imperative *perge* in line 183 is the only instance of the second person in the helmsman's account of celestial navigation; although this is presumably an example of the generic use of the second person in didactic exposition, the imperative may also hint at a more personal connection between the imagined traverse of the Egyptian coast and the helmsman's specific auditor Pompey. Nevertheless, if the helmsman is in fact enjoining such a journey upon Pompey, he has overlooked basic geography, since a voyage to Libya from Pompey's current position off Lesbos has no need to involve either Syria or Egypt: Cato, for instance, is shown making an easy passage direct from Crete to Libya in the following book (9.36-44). The insertion of Egypt is therefore gratuitous; just as he did in his disquieting preface, the helmsman insists on frustrating Pompey's craving for reassurance, this time by setting him against his will on the path to a country he will never return from.

Egypt casts a brooding shadow over the proposed route to Libya, and so does Canopus, the star that (according to the helmsman) points the way there. As noted above, Pompey's final question at 8.170 (*quotus in Plaustro Libynam bene derigat ignis*) implied

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Pompey *hopes* to find in the stars a "certain fixity" to relieve his anxiety, but that the stars of the helmsman's response are far from fixed or reliable.
an expectation that the comfortingly steadfast polar constellations would be enough to see him all the way to Libya, and the helmsman's emphatic *ille regit puppes* (8.176) appeared to confirm his optimistic assumption. Now, however, in what must come as an unwelcome surprise to Pompey, the helmsman flatly contradicts his earlier statement, explaining that, when the polar constellations sink below the horizon (a process implied at 8.179-180), voyagers to Libya will be forced to rely instead on Canopos; the helmsman unambiguously locates the latter within the class of mobile stars that (as he has just explained) slide across the heavens and thereby deceive wretched sailors, and to which he and his fellow helmsmen accordingly refuse to entrust themselves, *non sequimur* (8.174): *inde Canopus/ excipit, australi caelo contenta vagari/ stella* (8.181-182).  

32 *Vagari* is a rather startling piece of diction in this context. As the *OLD* points out, this verb (together with its companion adjective *vagus*), when applied to celestial bodies, is used overwhelmingly to refer not to the so-called fixed stars that revolve predictably through the highest region of the heavens but to the planets that roam within a lower sphere along obscure and convoluted paths.  

33 When the spirit of Lucan's Pompey reaches the heavens in a temporary apotheosis at the beginning of Book Nine, for instance, he gazes upon both *stellas...vagas* and *asta/ fixa polis* (9.12-13). The helmsman's language therefore serves to impose an even greater notional distance between Canopos and the encouragingly stable stars of the polar constellations on which Pompey had hoped to rely. Canopos not only rises and sets like the other stars that lie south of the pole (and unlike

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32 Janni (p. 464) notes the contradiction between the helmsman's rejection of the non-circumpolar stars at 8.173-174 and his recommendation of Canopos at 8.181-184, but he ascribes it to simple carelessness on Lucan's part rather than to the deliberate poetic design for which I argue here.

33 See the *OLD* entry 2b for *vagari* and 1c for *vagus*. The participle *vagantes* (like *errantes*) thus more or less directly translates the Greek *πλανητες*, just as the phrase *vagantes stellae* translates *πλανητες οστερες*; note that the words *vagari* and *stella* straddle lines 8.182 and 183 in Lucan.
the permanently visible pole-stars) but even "wanders" like the planets; it thus stands as an exceptionally unreliable member of an already unreliable category of stars. The omen is unmistakable: the treacherous Canopos will lead Pompey not to safety but to his equally treacherous murder on the Egyptian shore.

Even without such a jarring piece of diction, Canopos constitutes an inherently evil omen for Pompey, especially in the context of the helmsman's gratuitous insertion of Egypt into his itinerary. It is often presented in ancient sources as an example of a star whose visibility is limited to southern regions, including and especially Egypt, but the

34 In addition to 9.12, every other instance of *vagus* in Lucan as applied to a heavenly body is similarly used to refer to a planet or planets (including the moon and the sun): see 10.203 (the planets in general), 9.694 (the moon), 1.50 (the sun), and 6.578 (where the god Mars is described with language suggestive of the planet Mars). Gain (pp. 446-447), following Housman's notes on Manilius 2.71 and Lucan 7.423-425, cites three literary precedents in support of his contention that *vagus/vagari* can be used specifically to denote the rising and setting of the non-circumpolar stars, and that Lucan's characterization of Canopus as *contenta vagari* is therefore a conventional and uncontroversial means of differentiating Canopus from the never-setting polar constellations that preceded it in the helmsman's account. Of these three precedents, however, the two passages from Seneca, *Thyestes* 834 and *Octavia* 389, seem to refer in a general way to both stars and planets taken together (this is especially clear for the *Thyestes* passage); the same can be said of the use of *errare* in Lucan 7.423-425. As for the third precedent, Germanicus 17, although here the adjective *vagus* does seem to describe the stars as opposed to the planets, its point is not, as Gain argues, to distinguish the non-circumpolar from the circumpolar stars but rather to distinguish all the stars of either category from the invisible axis around which they perpetually wheel (it should be borne in mind that there was no single star in ancient times that was situated precisely at the pole like the modern-day Polaris, and that all the circumpolar stars therefore revolved around the axis just like the non-circumpolar stars, albeit in a narrower circuit). Similarly, Ovid, *Fasti* 1.310, cited by Garrod (in his note on Manilius 2.71), embraces all the *signa* together as *vaga*. Aside from these few vague or doubtful cases (which in any event all concern the adjective *vagus* rather than the verb *vagari*), and whenever it is applied to the motion of a *specific* celestial body, the terminology of wandering is only ever used to refer to the planets (once again including the sun and moon). Consequently, *vagari* remains a highly unusual (although not necessarily completely unheard-of) way of expressing the movement of a specific star like Canopus; after all, Lucan has his choice of a variety of less ambiguous verbs for stellar motion that would carry no risk of confusion between stars and planets, such as *volvi, verti, ferri, labi, and volare/volitare*. For instance, when the helmsman wishes to characterize the motion of the non-circumpolar stars as a whole, he uses the orthodox term *labentia* at 8.172. In other words, Lucan employs *vagari* not to present Canopus as a typical member of the class of non-circumpolar stars but for precisely the opposite reason, to signal Canopus' *exceptional* and planet-like degree of unreliability within the already unreliable class of non-circumpolar stars. Kidd is accordingly correct to observe that "it is the unreliability of Canopus as a guide to seamen that prompts Lucan to use *vagari* in this line" (p. 43), but he makes the same the mistake as Gain does in treating *vagari* as a suitable and unexceptionable choice of verb to describe the motion of a non-circumpolar star in Latin, in other words, in deriving Canopus' unreliability in Lucan solely from its status as a non-circumpolar star.

35 Eudoxus thus describes Canopus as ὁ ἐξ Αἰγύπτου ὀρὸμενος ὀστήρ (Hipparchus, *In Aratum* 1.11.6). Compare Vitruvius (9.5.4) and Pliny the Elder (2.178), who both link the visibility of Canopus to Egypt specifically, as does Manilius (1.216-217), at least if *donec Niliacas* is the correct reading and not
A link between Canopos and Egypt goes deeper than mere coincidence of geography. Both the star and the Egyptian city of Canopus were believed to have received their names from the same source, the helmsman who steered Menelaus from Troy to Egypt before dying on the latter's shore. The fact that it is precisely a helmsman who now cites this star in connection with a putative journey to (or at least past) Egypt brings star, journey, and city together and thereby colours the journey with all the negative connotations of the city. Canopus was notorious in the early empire as a centre for vice and luxury (κοινωμοσίας), and it was also closely associated with the nearby Alexandria, capital of the despised Ptolemaic regime. Lucan therefore specifically condemns it (referring contemptuously to Pelusiaci tam mollis turba Canopi at 8.543) for its share in Egypt's guilt over Pompey's death; the only other occurrence of the name in the poem is likewise extremely hostile and describes Egypt's second baneful intervention into the Roman civil wars, in Lucan's denunciation of Cleopatra: Romana petit inbelli signa Canopo (10.64). If Pompey is in fact trying to evade a premonition of his coming demise by omitting Egypt from his list of hypothetical destinations, the helmsman relentlessly drags him back to the contemplation of what Lucan terms noxia civili tellus Aegyptia fato (8.823).

Housman's conjectured donec ad Heliacas (i.e. Rhodian): nusquam invenies fulgere Canopon/ donec Niliacas per pontum veneris oras (see Liuzzi's note ad loc.). According to Janni (p. 464), the conventional association of Canopus with the southern sky is the sole reason for Lucan's surprising decision to include it in the helmsman's account; as the ensuing analysis will make clear, it is my opinion that Lucan's choice of Canopus is far less casual than Janni suggests.

36 See e.g. Plutarch, De Iside et Osiride 22 (359E) for the etiology of the star's name and Tacitus, Annales 2.60 for that of the city's.
37 See e.g. Strabo 17.1.16 and Seneca, Epistulae Morales 51.3 (on the luxury and decadence of Canopus). The city's association with Greek Alexandria is implied by Virgil's designation of Canopus as Pellaeus, that is, Macedonian (Georgics 4.287); Juvenal also distinguishes the Greek inhabitants of Canopus from the native Egyptians in Satire 15.44-46.
38 Another example of the linking of Cleopatra to Canopus in hostile Roman propaganda is Propertius 3.11.39.
since Canopos evokes not only Egypt in general but also Egypt's involvement in the fall of the Republic.

The fate of Menelaus' helmsman provides another grim omen for Pompey (as if another were needed); although his own helmsman will survive the journey to Egypt, Pompey himself, the rector of the Roman ship of state, will find his grave there just as Canopos did.\(^{39}\) Indeed, the literary and mythological motif of the dying helmsman seems to underlie the helmsman's speech to Pompey from start to finish.\(^{40}\) As has long been noted, lines 8.170 (in which Lucan introduces the helmsman) and 8.171 (the first line of the helmsman's speech) combine to produce a clear allusion to Aeneid 3.515, where Palinurus, the most famous doomed helmsman in Latin literature, employs his skills in celestial observation to forecast a safe voyage to Italy.\(^{41}\) Palinurus, it should be noted, was destined to meet his death in exactly the same manner as Pompey, that is, butchered by unfriendly natives upon arrival on a foreign shore. This motif may also inform the helmsman's puzzling assertion that, when Ursa Minor is seen to be rising above the sails (i.e. when the ship is facing north), *Bosporon et Scythiae curvament litora Pontum* / *spectamus* (8.178-179). After all, it is not the Bosporus (and certainly not the Black Sea) but the Dardanelles that are due north of Pompey's current position south of Lesbos; just as was the case with the helmsman's sketch of a route to Libya past Egypt (when a simple crossing from Crete would suffice), this represents a clear violation of geographical common sense. The explanation perhaps consists in the fact that the passage of the

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\(^{39}\) Canopos' identity is closely tied to his death, in cult as well as in myth. According to Plutarch (*De Iside et Osiride* 359E (22)), Canopos was the pilot of the archetypal dying god Osiris. Similarly, the dying god Adonis is termed Κόρος της by Parthenios (Martini fr. 37).

\(^{40}\) Lucan also draws on the motif in Book Three, when the expert helmsman Telo falls victim to the violence of civil war in the form of a hail of javelins during the Massilian sea battle (3.592-599); as Hunink points out in his note on 3.593, this theme can be traced as far back as *Odyssey* 3.279-283.

\(^{41}\) Hosius detected the allusion in Lucan 8.171 (1893, p. 395), while Pichon remarked on the additional allusion in 8.170 (p. 221, n. 7).
Bosporus was one of the Argonauts’ greatest feats (in their escape from the Symplegades), while the Black Sea that was thereby penetrated witnessed many of their other notable exploits, including of course the retrieval of the Golden Fleece itself; more importantly, the strait and the sea are also associated with the Argonauts’ gifted helmsman Tiphys, whose successful negotiation of the Symplegades was his greatest contribution to the project, and who soon thereafter perished on the southern shore of the Black Sea. Lucan has already aligned Pompey’s flight from Caesar with the voyage of the Argonauts, comparing the capture of two of Pompey’s ships in the evacuation of Brundisium to the loss of the Argo’s stern during its brush with the Symplegades (2.715-719). Given that Pompey’s current sea voyage began like the Argo’s from the Thessalian coast, the helmsman is in fact here envisioning a kind of recreation of the Argo’s route: Pompey’s course is beset by the omen of dying helmsmen in either direction, whether of Tiphys in the north or of Canopos in the south. What is more, the star Canopos itself points to the Argo, in whose constellation it is brightly embedded next to Tiphys’ rudder.\(^{42}\)

It should be stressed that the prominent role assigned to Canopus in the helmsman’s account of celestial navigation is without any scientific or literary foundation. Pompey is actually correct in his initial belief that the more reliable polar constellations can direct him all the way to Libya, since both of the Bears (and especially Ursa Minor) were clearly visible as circumpolar (i.e. never-setting) stars throughout the Mediterranean in ancient times. The relative navigational advantages of these two polar constellations could be and were debated through the poetic *topos* of the disagreement.

\(^{42}\) Another link between Canopus and the Argo lies in the fact that, according to Plutarch (*De Iside et Osiride* 359E (22)), the former was Osiris’ pilot and the latter his ship.
between Greeks and Phoenicians, which was initiated by Aratus, which is prominently featured in Manilius' account of the polar constellations, and to which Lucan alludes at 3.219-220; there was, however, absolutely no need to invoke any other star or constellation besides these as a navigational aid in Mediterranean waters, and no ancient source (besides Lucan) suggests the use of Canopos for celestial navigation in such latitudes. Pompey's question on the route to Libya, which specifically concerns the Great Bear (Plaustrum), thus leads the reader to expect a familiar disquisition from the learned (doctus) helmsman on the relative merits of the two Bears, not a wholesale rejection of the polar constellations in favour of a non-circumpolar star. What can explain this startling departure from literary tradition and astronomical fact? Since Lucan introduces the helmsman as a doctus...servator Olympi (8.171), the point is surely not to characterize him as ignorant of his craft. Nor should the error be attributed to Lucan's

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43 See Hunink (note on 3.218) for a list of instances in Greek and Latin literature of the topos of the disagreement between Greeks and Phoenicians on the proper choice of Bear. See Medas (pp. 158-169) for a discussion of the use of the Bears in ancient navigation and their ancient and modern ranges of visibility as circumpolar constellations (the ancient range being significantly wider than the modern); Janni remarks on the absurdity of the helmsman's implication that the Bears will no longer be visible at the latitude of the Egyptian coastline (p. 464). According to Ptolemy (Geographia 1.7.6), mariners voyaging from Arabia down to east Africa sailed towards the noonday sun and Canopos (by day and night respectively), but this route of course lies far to the south of the Mediterranean. Gain nevertheless seeks to salvage the astronomical credibility of the helmsman's statement; although he cannot (and makes no attempt to) demonstrate that Canopos was in fact used for navigation in the Mediterranean in ancient times, he seeks to show that this would at least have been theoretically possible: "Lucan is correct in stating that Canopos would be a reliable guide, for in his time it was never more than 4º above the horizon in the latitude of Pharos, and hence always nearly due south. If one sailed with it on the left, and at 90º to its direction, one would be sailing west" (p. 446). Even if it were possible to sail by Canopos, however, Gain does not explain why this would be preferable to relying on the ever-visible polar constellations all the way to Libya; after all, Canopos would only have been visible for part of the year from the latitude of Alexandria, and even then, as Janni notes, it would only have been above the horizon for a maximum of five and a quarter hours during the night in Lucan's era (p. 464, n. 30). What is more, the very fact cited by Gain in support of Canopos' navigational utility, namely its low position on the southern horizon (at 4º), in reality argues against its reliable use by sailors, since Medas observes as a general principle of celestial navigation that "[i]n realtà, l'effetto della foschia atmosferica rende spesso difficile scorgere le stelle molto basse sull'orizzonte; affinché risultino ben visibili, è necessario che siano elevate di alcuni gradi al di sopra di questo, mediamente 5º o 6º per le stelle molto luminose, di magnitude 1" (p. 159). Even at those times when it was theoretically visible, then, Canopos' low elevation would have rendered it vulnerable to obscuration by atmospheric haze. Even the southernmost star in Ursa Minor in Lucan's time (Polaris), by contrast, would always have been above the horizon at the latitude of Alexandria by 19.5º-42.5º, while the northernmost star (Kochab in Lucan's day) would always have been 22.5º-39.5º above the horizon.
own ignorance, as implied by Janni (p. 466), for Lucan elsewhere displays a clear understanding of the correct range of visibility of the two Bears. The anomaly must therefore be intended to convey a deliberate poetic effect. Neither the helmsman nor Lucan himself is at fault; rather, it is the universe of Lucan's poem that is fundamentally distorted in such a way as to deny Pompey any hope of a stellar refuge from civil war, just as he was denied a refuge in Brundisium in Book Two.

Both of the escapist purposes for which Pompey initially hoped to exploit the stars have been cruelly frustrated. First of all, his desire to escape intellectually in the awestruck contemplation of celestial wonders is thwarted by the helmsman's pessimistic reworking of Manilius 1.294-295, which implies that the same divine treachery that engineered (or at least permitted) the catastrophe of Pharsalus in Book Seven continues to dominate the heavens (with the single exception of the polar constellations). Next, on the more practical level of physical escape from Caesar's clutches, Pompey receives a portent of his approaching death from the helmsman's gratuitous insertion of Egypt into the route to Libya and equally gratuitous insistence on the use of the ominous Canopus as a navigational aid in reaching it. Like Appius Claudius, Pompey will only find refuge in his grave, the grave that the stars will inevitably guide him to.

Having laid out for Pompey his pessimistic model of celestial navigation, the helmsman now completes his denial of Pompey's escape to the stars by wrenching the conversation back (with the abrupt transition sed and the urgent nunc) to the unhappy military exigencies of the present, asking Pompey to what use he should put all his

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44 At 9.538-543, Lucan clearly (and correctly, at least as far as Ursa Minor is concerned) suggests that it is only in the equatorial regions (south of the Libyan desert) that the Bears forfeit their special status and are seen to rise and set (compare also 3.250-252, with Hunink's note ad loc.). As for Lucan's nautical expertise, Casson has observed that Lucan very accurately describes the physical process of steering a ship in the lines that conclude Pompey's exchange with the helmsman (p. 273, n. 14).
astronomical lore in steering the ship to a specific goal (8.185-186): \textit{sed quo vela dari, quod quo nunc pede carbas tendi/ nostra iubes?} This question is unprompted by Pompey, who embarked on his astronomical investigation in order to forget his own troubles and indeed in order to postpone exactly the decision here demanded of him. The helmsman therefore blocks Pompey's escape in three distinct ways, at the beginning, middle, and end of his speech: at the beginning by his hints of general stellar treachery, in the middle by his ominous references to Egypt and Canopos, and at the end by his sharp reminder to Pompey of the latter's unpleasant responsibilities as a defeated general in the civil war.

War in Heaven

The failure of the stars to offer Pompey any real escape from the nightmare of civil war might have been predicted from numerous suggestions over the course of the poem that the celestial realm has been contaminated by events here on earth and, specifically, by the events of the civil war. In Book Two, when he is (like Pompey in Book Eight) afflicted during the night by anxiety and uncertainty over Rome's dire situation, Brutus comes knocking on Cato's door for spiritual comfort. He pleads, \textit{tu mente labantem/ derige me, dubium certo tu robose firma} (2.244-245). \textit{Derige} suggests the cooperation of stars and helmsmen in guiding ships; as noted above, Pompey employs \textit{derigat} of the star that is to direct the ship to Libya, while the helmsman is termed \textit{rector}.\footnote{\textit{Derigere} is also used of the steering of a ship at 3.592.} There is also the hint of a nautical reference in Brutus' use of \textit{robur}, which Lucan (like many Latin writers) frequently applies to ships (to denote both the material of which the ships are constructed and, by extension, the ships themselves).\footnote{See e.g. 3.532, 3.563, 3.570, 3.584, and 3.664. Although the range of meanings of \textit{robur} extends far beyond the nautical, \textit{derige} encourages a nautical reading in this context.} Brutus is requesting the combination of expert steering with a well-built ship, in other words, a safe
passage through the stormy and uncertain waters of war and politics. Moreover, Brutus’ line of questioning suggests a desire for reassurance in the contemplation of celestial stability, in the knowledge that, whatever upheavals may rock the terrestrial plane, at least the heavens are sure to remain serenely untroubled, along with Cato himself, who stands (like Pompey's helmsman) as their symbol and representative on earth. In asking whether Cato intends to remain neutral (his own obvious preference), Brutus thus points to the example of the stars, which pursue their eternal courses unshaken by the disturbances of the world below: *melius tranquilla sine armis/ otia solus ages; sicut caelestia semper/ inconcussa suo volvuntur sidera lapsu./ fulminibus propior terrae succenditur aer./ imaque telluris ventos tractusque coruscos/ flammarem accipiunt: nubes excedit Olympus* (2.266-271).\(^{47}\) Cato, however, rejects Brutus' proposed isolationism as impossible (or at least morally repugnant) through the analogy of the Stoic apocalypse, with particular stress on the fall of the stars (2.289-292): *sidera quis mundumque velit spectare cadentem/ expers ipse metus? quis, cum ruat arduus aether,/ terra labet mixto coeuntis pondere mundi,/ compressas tenuisse manus?*\(^{48}\) Like the helmsman's account of stellar treachery, Cato's speech (although only in metaphor) overthrows all of Brutus' comfortable cosmic assumptions: in Cato's universe, the heavens are not far enough away to escape the global catastrophe.\(^{49}\) Indeed, Lucan actually begins his account of the civil war on a similar note, likening its destructive

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\(^{47}\) This is a conventional Stoic (and Hellenistic) doctrine, as Fantham observes (note on 2.267-268).

\(^{48}\) Fantham comments, “Brutus interpreted civil war as bringing *mundi ruina* (253) but leaving the stars undisturbed. Cato includes even the stars in world destruction” (note on 2.289-292).

\(^{49}\) Unlike Pompey, whose escapist predilections are only intensified by the helmsman's ominous speech, Brutus responds to Cato's pessimistic model of the universe by making a virtue of necessity and throwing himself wholeheartedly into the struggle (2.323-325); the message of cosmic entanglement in the civil war thus serves as a litmus test to distinguish Brutus from Pompey as a possessor of superior constancy and fortitude.
totality to that of the Stoic ἐκπυρωσίς, which includes the collapse of the firmament:

omnia mixtis/ sidera sideribus concurrent, ignea pontum/ astra petent (1.74-76).50

Where the assertions of celestial instability voiced by Lucan and Cato are confined to the level of simile or metaphor, the poem contains more concrete instances of the collision of astronomy with terrestrial history. In Book One, for example, after a succession of baneful omens, two expert interpreters are consulted.51 The first, a haruspex named Arruns, performs an extispicy on a liver. Terrified by what he sees, he refuses to divulge his findings and ends by disavowing his own profession and praying for his ars to be discredited: di visa secundent,/ et fibris sit nulla fides; sed conditor artis/ finxerit ista Tages (1.635-637). The historical figure of P. Nigidius Figulus, the famous Pythagorean astrologer, then enters the scene. Like the helmsman of Book Eight, Nigidius is a skilled watcher and interpreter of the stars, for Lucan introduces him as one cui cura deos secretaque caeli/ nosse fuit, quem non stellarum Aegyptia Memphis/ aequaret visu numerisque sequentibus astra (1.638-640). In spite of his unparalleled mastery of his vocation, however, Nigidius begins his speech with an implied wish (as Arruns ended his with an explicit one) that the basic assumptions of his chosen science will prove false, since otherwise disaster is brewing for Rome and the world: aut hic errat...nulla cum lege per aevum/ mundus, et incerto discurrunt sidera motu,/ aut, si fata movent, urbi generique paratur/ humano matura lues (1.642-645). Nigidius' first

50 See Lapidge's discussion of this passage in terms of Stoic ideology and terminology (pp. 360-363). See Gagliardi's argument (in his note ad loc.) for the inclusion in the text of the disputed phrase omnia mixtis/ sidera sideribus concurrent.

51 The advice of Arruns is explicitly sought by the terrified Roman populace at 1.584-585; the consultation of Nigidius is then implied by the fact that his own declaration follows immediately on that of Arruns, and by the fact that Lucan records the Romans' reaction to the dire warnings of both experts as a single, collective response to a single, collective set of forebodings: terruerant satis haec praesagia plebem (1.673). Nigidius can therefore be classed with the helmsman as an expert observer of the heavens who, although consulted in order to assuage fears for the future, instead delivers omens of impending doom.
alternative merits further consideration, however. This can be interpreted not as a wish that the universe will prove lawless and chaotic, but as a fear lest it will do so; after all, for a Pythagorean like Nigidius, a random cosmos would scarcely be preferable to the astrally predetermined destruction of the human race.\(^{52}\) By this reading, Nigidius is expressing an unpleasant choice between two equally undesirable options.

As Gagliardi observes (note on 6.142-144), Nigidius is opposing the two basic views of the cosmos, Epicurean and Stoic, with his *aut...aut* pairing, just as Lucan does at the beginning of Book Two with a *sive...sive* pairing. Interestingly enough, Nigidius actually expresses the alternative that is antithetical to Stoicism in the language of the Stoic Manilius. *Errat...mundus* of Lucan 1.642-643 thus corresponds to the unreal condition in which Manilius states that, if the universe were not governed by a wise providence, there would be no visible order to the heavens (but the reverse is true): *nisi cognatis membris contexta maneret/ machina et imposito pareret tota magistro/ ac tantum mundi regeret prudentia censum,/ non esset statio terris, non ambitus astris,/ erraretque vagus mundus standove rigeret,/ nec sua dispositos servarent sidera cursus* (2.67-72).\(^{53}\) By transforming Manilius' unreal subjunctive into the indicative of a pair of alternatives that are accorded equal grammatical weight, Nigidius, like Pompey's helmsman, uses Manilian language to compromise Manilian certainties, opening the door to a completely inimical vision of the cosmos.

At first sight, the second of Nigidius' stated alternatives, that the universe is governed by an order presaging destruction, is the one that seems to be confirmed, for

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\(^{52}\) Feeney thus speaks, with reference both to the Nigidius speech and to other passages in the poem (especially the proem of Book Two), of "the spring of anxiety which uncoils from the apprehension that a worse alternative exists than divine malevolence: it may be that there is no plan behind this disaster, merely randomness" (1991, p. 279).

\(^{53}\) Getty suggests Manilius 2.71-72 as a comparandum for Lucan 1.642-643 (in his note on the latter).
Nigidius speaks of the baneful predominance of Mars among the planets and of Scorpio among the constellations (1.660-663), with Mars of course being the planet of war and Scorpio likewise a sign of menace and belligerence.\(^{54}\) Nevertheless, as has been observed by scholars as early as Kepler, the apparent precision of this horoscope is misleading, for it violates the basic data of astrology; the stars and planets have been warped from their usual courses to reflect the civil war.\(^{55}\) Furthermore, in the next lines, doubt is explicitly cast on the very foundations of astronomy and astrology (6.663-665):

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\text{cur signa meatus/ deseruere suos mundoque obscura feruntur,/ ensiferi nimium fulget latus Orionis?}
\]

This image strikes at the heart of Manilius' belief system, for \textit{signa} undoubtedly refers to the fixed stars of the constellations, that is, to the most enduring and immutable region of Manilius' cosmos. As proof of a basic order to things, Manilius thus cites the fact that \textit{facies eadem signis per saecula constet} (1.185), and the constellations can be recognized by the permanence of their cycle of departure and return as part of a miraculous and smoothly functioning cosmic organization, one that obeys \textit{certae leges} (1.474-479). Most importantly, Manilius explicitly contrasts the mutability of human history with the immutability of the stars. Since the fall of Troy, countless empires have risen and fallen, but, by divine dispensation, the heavens have remained forever unchanged (1.501-531). According to Lucan's Nigidius, by contrast, \textit{certae leges} no longer govern the motions of the stars, which have suffered both a shift from their proper locations (\textit{meatus deseruere suos}) and a darkening of their proper level of illumination (\textit{obscura}), so that they no longer preserve the \textit{facies eadem} assigned them by

\(^{54}\) See Barrenechea (p. 314) for the ominous implications of Scorpio.

\(^{55}\) See Housman's discussion of Nigidius' apparent inaccuracies (pp. 325-327). Barrenechea explains these as thematically appropriate and explores a similar manipulation of astrological assumptions in Lucan's account of the constellations that accompany Pompey's nocturnal flight from Brundisium (pp. 315-317).
Manilius: the immutable stars have suffered change along with Rome. Indeed, the verb used to describe the constellations' abandonment of their posts, *deseruere* (1.664), is also applied twice to the abandonment of Rome by its inhabitants at the news of Caesar's approach (at 1.501 and, in the same emphatic metrical *sedes* as in Nigidius' speech, 1.520). The stars not only precipitate the panic of the Roman people by terrifying them with bad omens but also reflect that panic through an act of desertion.

Consequently, the first of the two alternatives posited by Nigidius now seems to hold true, with its simultaneous allusion to and contradiction of Manilius' providential creed: *hic errat...nulla cum lege per aevum/ mundus, et incerto discurrunt sidera motu*. 56 Nevertheless, the sentence of death is not lifted from the world by such astrological uncertainty, for in the midst of the general disorder of the heavens one constellation shines all too clearly: *ensiferi nimium fulget latus Orionis*. 57 Each alternative offered by Nigidius is equally right (and wrong), and he is confronted with the worst of both worlds. The reassuringly well-ordered cosmos of the Stoic and astrological traditions is thrown into confusion, but one certainty still remains in a universe of doubt: the coming devastation of Rome. Nigidius takes his confused astrological data as an unambiguous portent of disaster: *inminet armorum rabies, ferrique potestas/ confundet ius omne manu, scelerique nefando/ nomen erit virtus, multosque exibit in annos/ hic furor* (1.666-669).

As Nigidius' observations have revealed, this all-encompassing *furor* extends not merely in time (*multos...in annos*) but in space, into the heavens, confounding not merely human

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56 Nigidius' first alternative is therefore more than a conventional disclaimer that is not intended to be taken seriously (as asserted, for instance, by Narducci, who writes, "l'ipotesi della totale casualità è qui formulata solo per assurdo" (p. 108)), for the hypothesis of a random cosmos is in fact verified (at least in part) by Nigidius' observations.

57 Getty observes (in his note 1.664) that Orion seems to have been regarded as a threatening portent when appearing too clearly, as suggested by Seneca, *Hercules Furens* 12.
law (confundet ius omne) but the seemingly inviolable leges that govern the motion of the stars. Clearly, the sidereal sphere is no better fortified against the encroachments of civil war than Massilia or Brundisium, and the Roman people receive no more reassurance from their foremost astrologer Nigidius than Pompey from his learned helmsman, as is evident from their panicked reaction to his and Arruns' warnings: terruerant satis haec pavidam praesagia plebem (1.673).

Ominous stellar phenomena thus inaugurate the war, and they also accompany its final decisive clash. As the battle of Pharsalus is about to be joined, Lucan takes a moment to enumerate a whole host of portents visible not only to the opposing armies but all over the world (151-206); in particular, an augur at Padua is said to infer the day of crisis from (among other potential sources of the information) his observation of celestial discord that mirrors the war on earth: aethera seu totum discordi obsistere caelo/ perspexitque polos (7.198-199). Dilke (1979) argues that Books Seven and Eight run parallel in their narration of the two stages of Pompey's downfall; according to his scheme, the opening sections of each book (7.1-213 and 8.1-201) are designed to correspond, and "both end with what we may call cosmology: in Book VII it is first evil omens from heaven and then telepathy for distant Romans to watch the battle, illustrated by the story...of the augur near Padua. In Book VIII it is Pompey's questions and the pilot's answers on how to navigate from the stars. In one, Olympus is the source of these omens, in the other the sky which pilots must watch" (p. 178). The heavens to which Pompey looks for reassurance in Book Eight are the same ones that announced his overthrow in Book Seven.
Perhaps most significantly, during his narrative of the storm in Book Five, Lucan very deliberately signals a failure in providential governance of both heaven and earth. Here, the crucial term *rector* is employed twice within a few short lines, not only in a nautical context (Caesar's attempted crossing of the Adriatic) but also with particular reference to the confusion of the proper relationship between sea and sky, the very relationship on which celestial navigation depends. Lucan begins by speaking in orthodox terms of a supreme *rector* endowed with the power to unleash the violence of storms, as he did in the time of Deucalion's flood: *sic rector Olympi/ cuspide fraterna lassatum in saecula fulmen/ adiuvit, regnoque accessit terra secundo,/ cum mare convolvit gentes, cum litora Tethys/ noluit ulla pati caelo contenta teneri* (5.620-624). 58

It is important to note that the ensuing cataclysm was carefully restricted in scope, as denoted by the phrase *caelo contenta teneri*: the ocean swallowed the land (*regnoque accessit terra secundo*) but remained bound by the heavens, by the *Olympus* of which God is *rector*. Deucalion's flood, in other words, was both initiated by divine fiat and respectful of fundamental cosmic boundaries; this event was in perfect accord with the model of a providentially administered universe. 59 The new great flood of Book Five, on the other hand, is not attributed to divine causation (except in Caesar's own boastful words at 5.591-593 and 654-656). Instead, the *superum rector* is presented not as initiating the storm but as attempting to curb its full fury: *tum quoque tanta maris moles*

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58 As Morford notes (1967a, p. 42), these lines recall Ovid's account of the unleashing of Deucalion's flood by an angry Jupiter at *Metamorphoses* 2.274-275: *nec caelo contenta suo est Iovis ira, sed illum/ caeruleus frater iuvat auxiliaribus undis*. Ovid's entire narrative of the flood is designed to showcase Jupiter's absolute dominion, for Jupiter is the master of both destruction (through the flood that he first initiates and then brings to a close at 1.324-329) and subsequent creation (through the new race of human beings that he promises to the gods at 1.251-252); by my analysis, one of Lucan's goals in the storm scene is to undermine the Ovidian model of perfect celestial administration.

59 Even here, however, God's authority is to some extent called into question: both in flooding the earth and in refraining from an assault on the heavens, the ocean is said to be acting of its own volition (with *noluit* and *contenta*) rather than out of dutiful submission to a higher power.
crevisset in astra,/ ni superum rector pressisset nubibus undas (5.620-626). Here is an unsettling hint of weakness, as God is shown reacting to events rather than acting of his own volition. Nevertheless, as in Deucalion's flood, the elemental balance between water below and stars above appears to be preserved; the term superum, like the previous Olympi, suggests the deity's special responsibility for the upper realm that the waves are threatening, and for whose protection he strives. God thereby fulfills the providential function assigned him by the Stoics, to ensure that the cosmic mechanism over which he presides takes no harm. Barely five lines later, however, the storm has already grown far beyond any restraint by the celestial governor, for the heavens themselves (superum convexa, in the same sedes as superum rector) are shaken in spite of his best efforts to safeguard them, while nature fears the return of primeval chaos, with a rupturing of elemental barriers and the impious mingling of gods with ghosts: tum superum convexa tremunt, atque arduus axis/ intonuit, motaque poli conpage laborant./ extimuit natura chaos; rupisse videntur/ concordes elementa moras, rursusque redire/ nox manes mixtura deis (5.632-636). Lucan introduces the lofty rector only in order to cast doubt on his

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60 Superum can be read as the genitive of either superi, "the gods" (as translated by Duff and Braund), or supera, "the heavens" or "the heavenly bodies". I prefer the latter reading on account of the close proximity of the preceding astra, separated from superum only by ni; on the other hand, rex superum, in the sense of "king of the gods", is a common poetic designation for Jupiter and actually appears in Ovid’s account of Deucalion’s flood (Metamorphoses 1.251), on which Lucan is drawing here. In any event, whether he is conceived of as the ruler of the ones above or of the things above, the point is that God is here shown to be particularly concerned with the welfare of the skies.

61 See e.g. Seneca, Naturales Quaestiones 2.45.2, where Jupiter is equated with providentia on the grounds that est...cuius consilio huic mundo providetur, ut inoffensus exeat et actus suos expicit.

62 As Lucan bitterly observes in Book Seven, the civil war will in fact result precisely in the confusion of manes and dei through the imperial cult of the Caesars: bella pares superis facient civilia divos;/ fulminibus manes radiisque ornabit et astris/ inque deum templis iurabit Roma per umbras (7.457-459). In this as in many other respects, the storm is a perfect embodiment of the malign forces and consequences of civil war.
effective control of natural forces, and such doubts are fully borne out by the ultimate cataclysm of Pharsalus in Book Seven.\footnote{A similar subversion of the idea of a celestial helmsman occurs in the proem to Book Two, where Lucan begins by addressing the \textit{rector Olympi} (2.4) but proceeds to voice the possibility that \textit{ nihil positum est sed fors incerta vagatur/ fertque refertque vices, et habet mortalia casus} (2.12-14).}

Astronomy, the \textit{Proficiens}, and the Exile

Pompey has not escaped the civil war through astronomical inquiry; has he at least succeeded in escaping himself, his own anxieties and defects of personality? Philosophical debate over the moral utility of natural science, including astronomy, can be traced at least as far back as Socrates, of whom Cicero remarks in the \textit{Tusculan Disputations} that \textit{primus philosophiam devovavit e caelo et in urbibus conlocavit et in domus etiam introduxit et coegit de vita et moribus rebusque bonis et malis quaerere} (5.10).\footnote{Compare Cicero's \textit{Academica} 1.15, as well as Aristotle, \textit{Metaphysics} A 987b1-2 and \textit{Parts of Animals} 642a28-31. These passages are all given by Inwood (forthcoming).} Although, in the \textit{Timaeus}, Plato explains the divine gift of eyesight as designed to allow humans to observe the heavens and thereby derive the principles of time and number and philosophy itself (47a-c), he elsewhere represents the contemplation of the visible heavens as entirely useless for spiritual education, since only the invisible realm of ideas has the power to draw the soul upward (\textit{Republic} 529). This debate continued to rage in Lucan's own day, as is apparent from the many treatments of the issue found in the writings of his uncle Seneca. Seneca's views on science and morality will be explored more fully in Chapter Five. For now, it will suffice to consider the crucial preface to Book One of the \textit{Naturales Quaestiones}. There, in justification of the scientific project, Seneca exclaims (1.Pref.5), \textit{o quam contempta res est homo, nisi supra humana surrexerit!} He then advises Lucilius that however many particular vices he may avoid, he will not have escaped himself until he rises above himself in contemplation of
the heavens (ad cognitionem caelestium): multa effugisti, te nondum (1.Pref.6). The same idea informs the concluding section of the preface, where the beauty and immensity of the celestial regions are said to permit the observer to transcend the limits of his own mortality, transilire...mortalitatem suam et in meliorem transcribi sortem (1.Pref.17).

In addition to promoting spiritual progress, astronomy can be seen as affording significant comfort in adversity, as emerges very clearly from Seneca's consolatory treatises. In the Consolatio ad Marciam (18.2-3), for instance, he cites the wonders of the heavens as chief among the compensations afforded by the universe for the various afflictions and misfortunes of life. A more important example is the Consolatio ad Helviam, in which Seneca seeks to comfort his mother for his exile to Corsica under Claudius. After all, Pompey too is now an exile, barred by the catastrophe of Pharsalus from his beloved Rome and Italy, just as he predicted would be the case in his pathetic appeal to his troops before the battle: Magnus, nisi vincitis, exul./ ludibrium soceri, vester pudor (7.379-380). Lucan accordingly classifies him as exul once the day is lost (7.703-704). In fact, Pompey accounts directly for six of the word's thirteen occurrences in the

65 The importance that Lucan attached to the Ad Helviam can be inferred from the fact that he seems to allude to it in the very first lines of his poem. In a central section of the treatise, Seneca recalls the example of the Pompeian Claudius Marcellus, who, exiled to Mytilene after Pharsalus, was said to have relished his newfound freedom to devote himself to intellectual pursuits, bonae artes (9.4). Seneca then imagines Marcellus consoling himself with the thought of the trials and tribulations currently besetting his victorious adversary Caesar, in contrast with his own philosophical otium: nunc ecce trahit illum ad se Africa resurgentis belli minis plena, trahit Hispania, quae fractas et adflictas partes refovet, trahit Aegyptus infida, totus denique orbis, qui ad occasionem concussi imperii intentus est (9.8). In his proem, Lucan summarizes the events of the same period of strife with similar language: rupto foedere regni/ certatum totis concussi viribus orbis/ in commune nefas (1.4-6). Of course, where Marcellus is employing this language to remind himself that the civil war is now somebody else's (i.e. Caesar's) problem, from which he himself is happily sheltered by his exile, Lucan proceeds in his proem to emphasize the universal and long-lasting devastation wrought by the civil war, in other words to deny the possibility of any individual exemption from its consequences. Lucan's poem may thus begin on a note of implicit confrontation with the escapism of the Ad Helviam.
poem. If any character of the De Bello Civili stands in need of the gospel of Seneca's treatise, it is therefore Pompey.

In the scene immediately following the helmsman dialogue, Lucan engages very explicitly with the theme of compensation for exile, commenting on the remarkable number of companions willing to share Pompey's fate: terrarum dominos et sceptrā Eoa tennentes exul habet comites (8.208-209). As argued above, the ensuing account of the mission of Deiotarus is designed to show that even the most faithful of these regal comites cannot in fact be relied upon, for Deiotarus abandons Pompey's cause almost as soon as he leaves his side. Seneca, however, takes solace not in human associates but rather in the companionship of the stars (as well as in his own virtue). A lengthy and central section of the Ad Helviam (8.4-6) thus presents exile as a trivial inconvenience on the grounds that the exiled man is free to contemplate the intricate workings of the heavens from whatever part of the earth he currently inhabits; Seneca goes on to assert that the lavish palaces of the rich only serve to block the view of this magnificent and heartening celestial spectacle (9.1-2). In another passage (6.7-8), he provides a specific example of the encouragement now available to him from his meditation on the stars, whose own orderly and perpetual motion offers the salutary lesson that the dislocation of exile is inherently neither shameful nor unnatural for human beings descended from the stars; the essay concludes triumphantly on a similar note as Seneca rejoices in his newfound freedom to pursue the study of nature and (above all) of the heavens (20).

Lucan's helmsman scene is therefore well placed to offer a commentary on both the moral and the consolatory value of celestial contemplation, with particular reference

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66 See 2.603 (in a simile describing Pompey), 2.730, 8.209, and 8.837.
67 See also 11.6-7, where Seneca holds up the freedom of celestial contemplation as a consolatio not for exile but for the poverty attendant on exile.
to the optimistic treatment of both themes found in the oeuvre of his uncle Seneca: does
his astronomical inquiry render Pompey any more virtuous, and does it leave him any
less traumatized by his defeat and exile? It is in order to pose such questions that Lucan
has adapted an anecdote about Pompey's final days related by Valerius Maximus.
According to the latter, during a stop at Paphos in Cyprus while en route to the fatal
destination of Egypt, Pompey took the time to question his helmsman about a splendid
local building:

Pompeius vero Magnus in acie Pharsalica victus a Caesare, fuga quaerens salutem
cursum in insulam Cyprum, ut aliquid in ea virium contraheret, classe derexit.
adpellensque ad oppidum Paphum conspexit in litore speciosum aedificium
gubernatoremque interrogavit quod ei nomen esset. qui respondit κατωθοσιλειον vocari. quae vox spem eius quantulacumque restabat comminuit, neque id dissimulanter
tulit: avertit enim oculos ab illis tectis ac dolorem quem ex diro omine ceperat gemitus
patefecit. (1.5.6)

In both Lucan and Valerius, then, the fleeing Pompey, in search of some distraction from
his troubles, asks his helmsman about the latter's field of expertise, whether that takes the
form of the navigational ars by which he steers the ship from one port to another (as in
Lucan) or (as in Valerius) his knowledge of the distinctive features of those ports
acquired over years of voyaging. In the Valerius story, the helmsman's response crushes
Pompey's already fragile spirits with an intimation of his mortality (a building whose
name evokes the underworld), and Pompey receives the omen with a despairing reaction:
mere touristic curiosity has granted him neither comfort nor fortitude, which could have
been predicted by the many Roman moralists who criticize the use of travel as a spiritual
remedy. By shifting the scope of the anecdote from architectural tourism to the stars,
Lucan has raised the stakes considerably, for astronomy carries with it a much stronger

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68 See e.g. Horace, Odes 2.16.19-20, with the commentary of Nisbet and Hubbard ad loc., as well as Lucretius 3.1068-1069, with Kenney's note ad loc.
guarantee of succour for troubled souls, at least according to Seneca. If this avenue too is barred to Pompey, then, a fortiori, Pompey's plight, together with the plight of Lucan's universe as a whole, must be truly dire.

By Marti's analysis, Pompey does in fact profit from his exchange with the helmsman, which marks a vital step in his upward trajectory as a Stoic proficiens, allowing him "to wrestle with his anguish and to regain his self-control" and to recover "the vision of his fateful mission" (p. 372). For Pompey to achieve a true escape of his own shortcomings in a celestial voyage, however, he would need a very different vision of the stars than the one provided by the helmsman. When Pompey looks upward in the hope of a realm beyond the reach of terrestrial conflicts, as depicted by Seneca or Manilius, he discovers instead the civil war staring right back at him, for the stars are contaminated by a specifically "Caesarian" treacherousness (in the fallentia...sidera of 8.173-174); as for the goal of transilire...mortalitatem suam, how can Pompey forget his mortality and overcome his fear of death in celestial contemplation when Canopos, the star to which he will have to entrust himself (at least according to the helmsman's account), carries an ominous reminder of his impending doom, just like the one uttered by Valerius' helmsman.69

With regard to the theme of consolation for exile, Seneca in the Ad Helviam presents mundus, the firmament, together with the rational soul that observes and admires it, as an unwaveringly steadfast companion over the course of a human life: propria nobis

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69 Santini mentions Lucan's helmsman scene as a comparandum for the Valerius Maximus episode (p. 33), arguing that both passages feature the superimposition of a symbolic destination over the real one (i.e. Egypt); according to Santini, in the Valerius passage, the symbolic destination (as expressed in the helmsman's response) is Pompey's death, while in Lucan, it is Pompey who suggests the symbolic destination by proposing fortuna as his portus of choice. I thus differ from Santini in detecting a much closer correspondence between the two episodes, since in my view Lucan's helmsman is superimposing the symbolic destination of Pompey's death over the real destination of Egypt (above all through his gratuitous mention of the star Canopos) in exactly the same way that Valerius' helmsman does.
et perpetua et tam diu nobiscum mansura sunt quam diu ipsi maneimus (8.4). As the helmsman's reference to *fallentia sidera* makes clear, however, the stars of Lucan's poem cannot even be relied on for a single night, let alone for a lifetime. The stars' perpetual motion, embraced by Seneca as a potent consolation for the uprooted life of an exile (at 6.7-8), is recast in the helmsman's speech as proof of celestial treachery and grounds for dismay. Moreover, for Seneca, the consolatory effect of the starry sky is consistent in space as well as in time, since it maintains its uniform appearance over the entire surface of the earth, wherever an exile may happen to find himself: *angustus animus est, quem terrena delectant; ad illa abducendus est, quae ubique aeque apparent, ubique aeque splendent* (9.2). Pompey's reliance on this model of celestial uniformity is apparent from his final question to the helmsman, which (correctly) assumes the continued visibility of the reassuringly dependable polar constellations all the way to Libya. The helmsman's response, by contrast, makes it clear that, at least by the rules of Lucan's universe, Pompey will no longer be able to look to the circumpolar stars for guidance and reassurance if his travels take him as far as Libya; instead, he will be confronted with the spectacle of the deceitful and ominous Canopus. Pompey is thus truly and fully alone, just as Lucan foretold when he sought to comfort him for his future as a *solus...exul* at 7.703, since faithful companions for his exile are lacking not only on earth but also in heaven.

It therefore comes as no surprise to find that, at the conclusion of the helmsman's speech, Pompey gives no sign of encouragement or of moral improvement: his anguished response to the helmsman's straightforward request for sailing instructions shows him just as troubled and confused as he was when he began his investigation. Although he
embarked on his inquiry in order to calm his *fessos incerti pectoris aestus* (8.166), he has been left with *dubio...pectore* (8.186, with *pectore* occupying the same metrical *sedes* as the earlier *pectoris*) and is no longer *certus* (8.191):

> dubio contra cui pectore Magnus  
> "hoc solum toto" respondit "in aequore serva,  
> ut sit ab Emathiis semper tua longius oris  
> puppis, et Hesperiam pelago caeloque relinquas:  
> cetera da ventis. comitem pignusque recepi  
> depositum; tum certus eram, quae litora vellem,  
> nunc portum Fortuna dabit." (8.186-192)

These lines reveal that Pompey's inquiry has not even succeeded in providing a temporary distraction from the thought of his present unhappy situation, which was after all his main goal in questioning the helmsman. The latter's account has been laden with sinister reminders and omens of the catastrophic events of the civil war (both past and future), and Pompey's unabated preoccupation with such events emerges clearly in his stated desire to maintain an unceasing flight from the lands that have defeated him, Spain and Italy, signified by *Hesperiam*, as well as Thessaly (*Emathiis*), out of Caesar's ever-lengthening grasp. Pompey may be sailing away from the civil war (or so he thinks, although Egypt will prove him fatally wrong), but the thought of war still dominates his mental landscape. In addition, where Seneca in the *Ad Helviam* urges the exile to rise above his condition through celestial contemplation, Pompey's stargazing has left him obsessed by the fact of his banishment, his now-permanent separation from his homeland to the west (*Hesperiam*).

Moreover, what is visible here is not moral progress but an actual and marked deterioration in the state of mind that Pompey brought to his inquiry. In his questioning of the helmsman, he was able to conceive of two specific (albeit hypothetical)
destinations, Syria and Libya; Pompey may have been helpless to choose between these options, but at least he still had options. According to the helmsman's itinerary, however, the route to Syria is a route to Libya, and the route to Libya entails the traverse of the Egyptian coast under the ominous guidance of Canopos; the other potential voyage sketched by the helmsman, through the Bosporus into the Black Sea, is also fraught with menace through its association with Tiphys, Canopos' fellow doomed helmsman. Consequently, Pompey now retreats from the consideration of any concrete destination, since all destinations alike carry omens of his impending death. He is simply a man on the run, without a single constructive goal (at least after his retrieval of Cornelia), just as Lucan represented his headlong flight from Pharsalus at the beginning of Book Eight; far from elevating and uplifting Pompey, the helmsman's discourse has reduced him to a condition of animal terror. Pompey's mental decline is neatly illustrated by a verbal repetition. He begins by asking his helmsman (a doctus...servator Olympi, 8.171) how he discerns the route to Syria, Syriam quo sidere servet (8.169); servare is thus associated both with the capacity to make for a specific destination (i.e. to engage in a more constructive activity than mere panicked flight) and with the faithful observation of the stars that lead the way there. After the helmsman's discouraging response, however, Pompey negates all the optimistic connotations of servare, for he prefaces his injunction to fly from Italy and Thessaly with the command, hoc solum toto...in aequore serva (8.187, with serva emphatically closing the line just as Pompey's earlier servet closes line 8.169); the helmsman is now to look not upward to the stars or forward to a concrete destination but backward, to the scenes of Pompey's various defeats, which Pompey regards with as much dread as he did the sound of approaching footsteps or the wind in
the trees at the start of Book Eight. In short, what Pompey has truly failed to escape through Stoic astronomy is his own diseased mentality of escapism. Although he may have temporarily overcome this weakness through his quasi-Epicurean response to the dream of Julia in Book Three, it has otherwise motivated his actions throughout the poem; he therefore remains trapped not only in the world of civil war but also in the distinctive role of perpetual fugitive that has characterized his participation in the war.  

Unable to achieve a genuine spiritual release through astronomy in the manner enjoined by Seneca, Pompey is condemned to carry on with his futile path of physical flight even more desperately than before: his interrogation of the helmsman has resulted in no more real progress as a Stoic proficiens than was indicated by his decision to sequester Cornelia in the safety of Lesbos in Book Five.  

At best, the only service the stars can

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70 Pompey does subsequently achieve this "escape from escapism" in another scene of astronomical contemplation, the apotheosis at the start of Book Nine (9.1-18), when, after surveying the glories of the celestial realm to which his soul has risen from his Egyptian grave, he promptly returns to earth to carry on the struggle with renewed fervour. The stars have thus foiled Pompey's escape from civil war in two distinct ways. First, in the helmsman dialogue, by terrorizing Pompey with a string of evil omens, they forbid outright his spiritual ascent to the heavens from the plane of terrestrial strife; during the apotheosis, on the other hand, Pompey is actually afforded such an ascent, but precisely by virtue of the moral clarity thereby acquired, he actually chooses to renounce his cherished escapism and embrace participation in the civil war. On the latter passage, see Narducci: "Il contatto con le verità astrali non lo spinge a guardare ancora più in alto, disprezzando quanto accade sulla terra; al contrario, da quel contatto, dalla contemplazione degli astri erranti e delle stelle fisse, i suoi mani sembrano travare alimento e ispirazione per un rinnovato impegno nel conflitto" (p. 346). As Narducci shows, Lucan thereby challenges the position of his uncle Seneca, who asserts that meditation on the stars, particularly when achieved through posthumous apotheosis (e.g. at the end of Seneca's Consolatio ad Marciam), will necessarily impart a healthy contempt for the petty warfare and politics of the world below.

71 König (pp. 470-471) observes that "nach Meinung der Stoiker führt das Anschauen des Himmels zur Tugend," but he diverges from my interpretation inasmuch as he argues that Pompey actually experiences such a spiritual improvement through his astronomical inquiry. Lost in a metaphorical night after Pharsalus (so König's argument runs), Pompey turns his mind to the guidance offered by the stars through the actual night. His response to the helmsman's question shows that he has received the direction he seeks, for now he is at least sure of where to sail away from if not of his actual destination. The stars have thus confirmed Pompey in his own appropriate path, which (according to König) is "ein Rückzug aus der Politik". Night and the stars are Pompey's friends; it is only with the rising of the sun (Caesar's cosmic ally) that Pompey loses sight of this celestially enjoined "Rückzug aus der Politik" and turns once more to the active pursuit of political and military goals with the misguided Parthian project. König's analysis, however, appears to ignore the basic facts of Pompey's reported state of mind before and after his inquiry. First of all, Pompey does not need the stars to tell him to flee Italy and Thessaly: he has been running away from the former since Book Two (a decision confirmed in Book Six) and from the latter since the end of Book Seven. Next,
now render him is not spiritual but practical, as navigational aids in his panicked rout (hence Pompey's instruction to the helmsman to leave the west behind by sea and sky, *Hesperiam pelago caeloque relinquas*). Given the helmsman's ominous account of the science, however, reliance on celestial navigation must be a far from reassuring prospect.

The sheer desperation of Pompey's flight is starkly illuminated by the fact that, apart from his vague pleas to be kept as far away as possible from Italy and Thessaly, Pompey's only instruction to the helmsman is for him to entrust their course to the winds and *Fortuna* (8.192): *cetera da ventis* (8.190), and *nunc portum Fortuna dabit* (8.192). Pompey thereby reenacts his earlier abandonment of the direction of the Roman ship of state near the beginning of Book Seven, when (as discussed above) he yielded against his will to the clamorous demands of his followers for battle at Pharsalus. Lucan prefaced Pompey's speech of reluctant acquiescence in Book Seven with the words, *ingemuit rector sensitque deorum/ esse dolos et fata suae contraria menti* (7.85-86). Pompey, the *rector* of the Roman state, has been driven to despair by his newfound perception of *deorum doli*. Similarly, in the exchange of Book Eight, Pompey receives a crushing disillusionment about the reliability of the cosmos from his own *rector*, who tells him of *sidera fallentia*. In his concession speech, Pompey (the *rector* of 7.85) returns the rule (*regendas*) of the Roman state to *Fortuna*, who previously allotted it to him, and Pompey's daylight decision to seek alliance with Parthia (as I will argue in Chapter Three) is not a contradiction of his escapism but its perfect culmination, a desperate flight from the realm of civil war to the land furthest from Rome both in actual spatial distance and in political ideology. The three mental stages differentiated by König (Pompey before the inquiry, Pompey immediately after the inquiry, and Pompey at the rising of the sun) therefore all express the same tendency to fly away from his responsibilities in the civil war. Moreover, as is revealed by his posthumous fate (which Lucan describes in the apotheosis scene at the beginning of Book Nine), Pompey's ultimate destiny is not "ein Rückzug aus der Politik" but rather an enthusiastic embrace of partisan fervour when his soul enters the breasts of Cato and Brutus to carry on the struggle. The stars have thus failed either to effect any positive change in Pompey's deteriorating state of mind or to guide him on the path (to active stewardship of the remnants of the Roman state) that he must eventually pursue.
beseeches her to watch over it amid the uncertainties of battle: *res mihi Romanas dederas, Fortuna, regendas:* *accipe maiores et caeco in Marte tuere* (7.110-111). The nautical image latent in *rector* and *regandas* is then rendered explicit in the simile that closes Pompey's speech (with the cognate *regimen*): *sic fatur et arma/ permittit populis frenosque furentibus ira/ laxat et ut victus violento navita Coro/ dat regimen ventis ignavumque arte relict/ puppis onus trahitur* (7.123-127). Pompey is thus identified both with the charioteer who abandons the reins to his horses and with the helmsman who abandons the steering of his ship to the winds, and each of these images is suggestive of surrender to the frenzy of civil war. Virgil's first *Georgic*, for instance, closes with a deeply pessimistic summary of the worldwide devastation wrought by ongoing civil strife; the resulting political chaos and confusion are then expressed through the simile of a charioteer who has lost control of his horses (*Georgics* 1.512-514). In addition, the *populi* to whom Pompey gives free rein are characterized as *furentes*, a key term for the madness of civil war in Lucan. As for the simile of the storm-tossed helmsman, the storm is a common image for civil strife in Latin poetry, as in Horace's famous ode on the ship of state (1.14); indeed, Horace explicitly warns the ship not to allow itself to become the helpless prey of the winds, *tu, nisi ventis/ debes ludibrium, cave* (1.14.15-16). Lucan's actual storms are employed to similar effect, and in Book Five, as discussed in the introduction, the skipper Amyclas displays considerable navigational lore before surrendering all his *ars* to the violence of the storm, first with the phrase *dat carbasa*

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72 This alignment of helmsman with charioteer is taken up in the helmsman scene of Book Eight, for the careful adjustment of the ship's course that Pompey's helmsman undertakes in response to his master's anguished commands is likened to the expert steering of a chariot at 8.199-201 (as Postgate observes ad loc., this is the only simile of Book Eight); the helmsman's decisive control of the ship is thereby contrasted with Pompey's irresponsible vacillation. On a more literal level, Pompey is unable to control his actual horse (which is described as *stimulis...negantem* at 8.3) during his flight from Pharsalus at the beginning of Book Eight.
ventis (5.560) and then with his last appearance in the poem at 5.645-646: artis opem vicere metus, nescitque magister,/ quam frangat, cui cedat aquae. Likewise, in the simile of Book Seven, Pompey's gubernatorial ars is relict a (7.126) as he allows the violent Corus to drag him wherever it wills;\(^73\) he has surrendered culture, the science of steering chariots and ships, to the raw destructive power of nature, as embodied in the images of a frenzied horse and a violent wind.\(^74\) In addition to evoking the furor of the civil war in general, these images point specifically to Pompey's nemesis Caesar, who is frequently aligned with the element of the winds,\(^75\) and whose eagerness for civil war is likened to that of a race-horse pressing against the starting-gates in a simile at 1.293-295.

Moreover, the entity to whom Pompey entrusts the stewardship of the Roman state in his preceding speech, Fortuna, is presented as Caesar's closest ally throughout the poem (both by Lucan and by the character Caesar himself).\(^76\)

In Book Seven, the consequences of this surrender of authority to Caesar's cosmic accomplices, the very forces driving the civil war, were of course catastrophic both for Pompey and for Rome, since the defeat of Pharsalus was thereby enabled. Now, in the face of renewed proof of divine cruelty from the lips of his own rector, Pompey once

\(^73\) Viansino cites 5.645 as a comparandum for 7.125-127 (in his note on the latter).

\(^74\) Corus appears three times in the account of the storm of Book Five (at 5.572, 5.559, and 5.606). Considerably more desperation and recklessness are implied by Pompey's act of regimen dare ventis than by Amyclas' act of carbas a dare ventis, since the latter phrase is common in poetry and need not necessarily signify anything other than the neutral act of putting out to sea, whereas the surrender of the regimen itself to the winds entails an abdication of the helmsman's most hallowed responsibility (compare Palinurus' obstinate and dutiful refusal to abandon his grip on the rudder as he falls into his fatal sleep at the end of Aeneid 5). Pompey is also aligned with the helmsman who abandons his ship to a storm in the nautical simile of Book One that describes Pompey's decision (along with that of the Roman people and senate) to abandon Rome to Caesar's onslaught: qualis, cum turbidus Auster/ reppulit a Libycis inmensum Syrtibus aequor/ fractaque veliferi sonuerunt pondera mali,/ desilit in fluctus deserta puppe magister/ navitaque, et nondum sparsa conpagae carinae/ naufragium sibi quisque facit (1.498-503).

\(^75\) See n. 39 of the introduction. Caesar will show himself to be not the victim (like Pompey in the simile of Book Seven) but the master of the Corus wind when he employs it to effect a smooth passage to Rhodes at 9.1000-1003.

\(^76\) See e.g. 1.226, 4.121, 5.510, and 5.582.
more fails in his duty as leader of the remnants of the Roman Republic, by refusing to propose a destination where his forces can regroup and renew the struggle. Whereas in Book Seven Lucan recounted a double collapse of leadership (the gods' leadership of the cosmos and Pompey's of Rome), which was merely expressed with nautical imagery, the helmsman dialogue actually concretizes that imagery and adds another level of collapse: not only does Pompey once again respond to his abandonment from above by in turn abandoning the direction of the Roman state, but now he even demands a similar dereliction of duty from his own helmsman.\(^{77}\) When Pompey orders the latter to give over the steering of the ship to venti and Fortuna (cetera da ventis emphatically begins line 8.190 just as the metrically equivalent dat regimen ventis does line 7.126), he is both reenacting his earlier symbolic surrender to Caesarian furor prior to Pharsalus and undermining his projected flight from Caesar with a grim omen of disaster. Pompey will never escape his adversary under the auspices of such entities, just as he was wrong to commit the governance of Rome to them in Book Seven. Instead, the harbour to which they will eventually carry him, namely Egypt, will (through his murder) complete the downfall that was begun on the field of Pharsalus.\(^{78}\)

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\(^{77}\) To his credit, however, the helmsman more or less ignores his leader's tortured ramblings and, in the ensuing lines, is shown continuing to exercise careful control over the vessel entrusted to him (8.192-201, and see n. 72 above). Pompey's own failure as rector is all the more vividly highlighted by the contrast.

\(^{78}\) In his note on 8.192, Viansino comments that Pompey's invocation of Fortuna, here as during his retreat from Brundisium (at 2.699), is a proof of his άμυναντιος, and that the portus to be sought from Fortuna is a common metaphor for death; Viansino also notes Pompey's many subsequent invocations of Fortuna in Book Eight.
Chapter Three: Parthia vs. Egypt (The Council of Syhedra)

The Case against Parthia

Although Pompey emerges from his questioning of the helmsman without any resolution of his doubts over his future course of action, some destination must eventually be decided upon. The basic difficulty of this decision resides in the all-embracing consequences of Caesar's victory. Lucan introduces his catalogue of Pompey's forces in Book Three with the remark that these many far-flung allies are all doomed to share in Pompey's defeat, *interea totum Magni fortuna per orbem/ secum casuras in proelia moverat urbes* (3.169-170), and he concludes the list on the same note: *acciperet felix ne non semel omnia Caesar,/ vincendum pariter Pharsalia praestitit orbem* (3.296-297). In Book Seven, this theme is continually reiterated, with both Lucan and Pompey emphasizing the worldwide ramifications of the catastrophe of Pharsalus and the multitude of the nations that fell there;\(^1\) it is therefore no easy matter to find a land that is sufficiently untouched by the civil war to supply a secure base of operations and fresh forces for the struggle. In their plea for the honour of serving as Pompey's allies in adversity, the people of Lesbos cite the physical isolation of their island home (8.118-119): *quid, quod iacet insula ponto,/ Caesar eget ratibus?* Pompey, however, has set his sights on much more distant horizons, determined to look beyond the ambit of the Roman world entirely for a truly remote and secure retreat. Even before his defeat, at the outset of the campaign, Pompey dispatches his son Magnus to seek help from the ends of the earth, including Parthia (indicated by *Euphraten* at 2.633): *mundi iubeo temptare recessus* (2.632). It is therefore no surprise that, in Book Eight, he similarly instructs the

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king Deiotarus to request aid from the most distant eastern nations, on the grounds that

the *orbis Romanus* is now *Emathiis amissus cladibus*:

\[\text{iubet ire in devia mundi} \]
Deiotarum, qui sparsa ducis vestigia legit.
"quando" ait "Emathiis amissus cladibus orbis,
qua Romanus erat, superest, fidissime regum,
Eoam temptare fidem populosque bibentes
Euphraten et adhuc securum a Caesare Tigrim.
ne pigeat Magno quarentem fata remotas
Medorum penetrare domos Scythicosque recessus
et totum mutare diem..." (8.209-217)

Pompey's emphasis is thus on remoteness (with *devia mundi*, *remotas...domos*, *recessus*,
and *totum mutare diem*), together with the safety from Caesar that it entails (*securum a Caesare Tigrim*). His first instinct is to seek these in Parthia, to whose king he orders Deiotarus to carry an offer of alliance. This is an appropriate choice, for in Lucan's
catalogue of Pompey's allies in Book Three only Parthia is explicitly excluded as a neutral party from the list of nations doomed to fall with Pompey at Pharsalus: *inter Caesareas acies diversaque signa/ pugnaces dubium Parthi tenuere favorem,/ contenti fecisse duos* (3.264-266). Again, during the debate at the council of Syhedra, which is convened shortly after Pompey's speech to Deiotarus to determine the best choice of refuge for the defeated side, Pompey briefly considers and dismisses recourse to Numidia
and Egypt before embarking on a long account of the advantages of Parthia, and the most notable of these is once again its extreme remoteness. In his speech to his advisers at
6.319-329, Pompey pledged to take the war to the remotest regions of the north and south
in order to keep it away from Italy; now, he urges them to join him in a general exodus to the east in order to keep themselves away from the war: *Eoum, comites, properemus in orbem* (8.289). Pompey depicts an eastern world completely fortified and segregated by
geography from the troubles of Rome, using language that recalls his instructions to Deiotarus: *dividit Euphrates ingentem gurgite mundum,/ Caspiae inmensos seducunt clastra recessus,/ et polus Assyrias alter noctesque diesque/ vertit, et abruptum est nostro mare discolor unda/ Oceanusque suus* (8.290-294). Note the repetition of the word *recessus* in the same emphatic position at the end of the line in 8.291 as in 8.216, as well as the repetition of the idea of *totum mutare diem* (8.217) in *polus Assyrias alter noctesque diesque/ vertit.*\(^2\) In depicting the Euphrates as an impenetrable barrier protecting Parthia, Pompey is drawing on a literary tradition represented by Ovid, who describes the Parthian *gens* as *circumfusis invia fluminibus* (*Fasti* 5.582). It is thus Pompey’s assumption that, by virtue of its celebrated geographical isolation, Parthia alone will have emerged from the maelstrom of the Roman civil war unscathed and in a position to help. If Parthia fails him, Pompey will simply have to travel even further afield, beyond not only the *orbis Romanus* but the *orbis humanus*: *quod si nos Eoa fides et barbara fallent/ foedera, volgati supra commercia mundi/ naufragium fortuna ferat* (8.311-313).

Parthia constitutes for Pompey not merely a physical escape into a distant and impenetrable fastness but also a mental escape into a happier past, just as was temporarily achieved through his dream on the eve of Pharsalus. As a consolation for Pompey in the aftermath of his defeat, Lucan observes that, freed by disaster from all his onerous responsibilities, Pompey can now take pleasure in the serene contemplation of his former greatness: *iam pondere fati/ deposito securis abis; nunc tempora laeta/ respexisse vacat; spes numquam inplenda recessit;/ quid fueris, nunc scire licet* (7.686-689). Indeed, the

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\(^2\) Arnaud (1993) has shown that Pompey here represents Parthia as a kind of antipodes, an entirely separate world of the southern hemisphere rather than the eastern half of the same *ἡ Κοιλάδη* occupied by the Romans (pp. 52-55).
course of his flight actually recalls one of his most spectacular successes, the suppression
of the pirates, which is listed by Pompey himself in his catalogue of victories at 2.576-
579 and by Lucan in his epitaph for Pompey at 8.810-811; Pompey now enjoys the fruits
of this victory as he proceeds safely in his defenceless little boat along the formerly
pirate-infested coast (8.256-258). More importantly, Pompey's hopes for assistance from
Parthia are premised in large part on a delusional belief in the force of the reputation of
his eastern triumphs. In his commission to Deiotarus, he orders the latter to remind
Arsaces of the obligation incurred by his prior forbearance, when he mercifully refrained
from adding Parthia to his long roll of conquests (listed at 8.222-229). Similarly, in his
speech at Syhedra, Pompey appeals to the record of his eastern campaigns in words
dripping with self-indulgent nostalgia, as he imagines a return to the part of the world
where he attained the glorious pinnacle of his career (8.316-321): *sed cuncta revolvens/
vitae fata meae, semper venerabilis illa/ orbis parte fui, quantus Maeotida supra,/ quantus
apud Tanaim toto conspectus in ortu!/ quas magis in terras nostrum felicibus actis/ nomen
abit, aut unde redi maiore triumpho?*

In response, the consular Lentulus drags Pompey harshly back to present reality
from his vainglorious imaginings, insisting that the pitiful contrast between Pompey's
current state and former ascendancy will incite the Parthian king to despise Rome along
with Pompey all the more (8.341-346). If he journeys to Parthia, Pompey will travel
backwards in time not to the era of his eastern conquests but to the disaster of Carrhae,
painful reminders of which will continually force themselves on his attention: *tum
plurima cladis/ occurrent monimenta tibi: quae moenia trunci/ lustrarunt cervice duces,
ubi nomina tanta/ obruit Euphrates et nostra cadavera Tigris/ detulit in terras ac reddidit*
As for Pompey's insistence on Parthia's remoteness, Lentulus sharply reminds him that distance can be a double-edged sword, for it implies a potentially dangerous variance in *mores* as well as security from danger. Pompey has in fact already alluded to such a variance, attributing an exceptionally warlike nature to the Parthians, along with an exceptional aptitude for the horse and the bow (superior to that of the Romans, as suggested by the comparatives *celsior* and *fortior*): *pugnandi sola voluptas./ celsior in campo sonipes et fortior arcus,/ nec puer aut senior letales tendere nervos/ segnis, et a nulla mors est incerta sagitta* (8.294-297). Pompey also speaks approvingly of the Parthians' custom of dipping their arrows in poison, since it renders them more formidable opponents (8.303-305).

The door is therefore opened for Lentulus to turn the theme of Parthia's seclusion and exceptionality on its head. He begins by asking Pompey (8.335-339), *quid transfuga mundi,/ terrarum totos tractus caelumque perosus,/ aversosque polos alienaque sidera quaeris,/ Chaldaeos culture focos et barbara sacra, Parthorum famulus?* In these lines, Lentulus mocks Pompey's own insistence on the remoteness of Parthia's geographical situation, with *aversos...polos* corresponding to Pompey's *polus...alter* (8.292). He shows his contempt for the desperate escapism that seeks out such a faraway refuge by his use of *transfuga*, a word normally applied to military deserters, and he associates the journey to Parthia with assimilation into an alien religion (*Chaldaeos culture focos et barbara*).

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3 The three elements here cited as the basis for Parthia's military might, arrows (*sagitta*), horses (*sonipes*), and the open fields on which the latter are free to manoeuvre (*campo*), are included by Ovid along with the barrier of the Euphrates in his brief catalogue of Parthia's defensive features: *gens fuit et campis et equis et tuta sagittis/ et circumfusis invia fluminibus* (*Fasti* 5.581-582).

4 Mayer also comments that "*transfuga* is pointed because it finds no place in epic (or indeed in poetry, though Statius has a feeble imitation of this passage at *Silv.*1.2.203-5)" (note on 8.335).
Indeed, Pompey will even be compelled to abandon his Latin speech (8.347-349).

The arguments that follow combine a predictable tirade against the idea of alliance to the hated foe of Rome with a thorough critique of the Parthian character that is well grounded in the racist conventions of classical ethnography. Against Pompey's assertion of the Parthians' innate *pugnandi...voluptas*, Lentulus appeals to the ethnographic doctrine of the correspondence of climatic zones to psychological and ethical types, according to which the Parthians are predisposed by the warmth of their climate to softness and decadence: *omnis in Arctois populus quicumque pruinis/ nascitur, indomitus bellis et mortis amator:/ quidquid ad Eoos tractus mundique teporem/ ititur, emollit gentes clementia caeli./ illic et laxas vestes et fluxa virorum/ velamenta vides* (8.363-366). As proof of Parthian *mollitia*, Lentulus points to the very same military practices and skills earlier praised by Pompey (8.368-390): they fight on horseback in order to facilitate escape, the bow is both an unmanly and an ineffective weapon, and the smearing of poison on arrows is a mark of sinister guile instead of martial *virtus* (as indicated by the term *dolis* at 8.382).\(^5\) The geographical alterity cited by Pompey in fact undermines the Parthians’ value as allies in a Roman conflict, since they can only practise their particular style of fighting on their native *rura, campi*, and *planum solum* (8.368-372). This section concludes with a return to the theme of Parthian remoteness, as Lentulus asks Pompey if such shameful allies are worth the risk of dying so far from home; he thus implies that the treacherous mindset inherent in the use of the poisoned arrows will also be turned against the supplicant Pompey (8.390-393): *temptare*

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\(^5\) The reputation of Parthians (and orientals generally) for treachery and deceit will be discussed below in connection with Egypt. See Horsfall (especially p. 1109) for *duritia/mollitia* as a crucial category in the language of Roman ethnography.
Parthia's innate mollitia (the product of its distance from Rome and consequent enervating climate) argues against its use as an ally by any party to any armed conflict, but what renders it particularly unsuitable as a refuge for the Republican side in the current civil war is its political distance from traditional Roman institutions. The Parthian kings (like their Persian predecessors) are the archetypes of oriental despotism. In his De Constantia, for instance, Seneca speaks of the unenviable position of the Parthian king, who must rule by fear, surrounded by those who hate him: habes sub te Parthos et Medos et Bactrianos, sed quos metu contines, sed propter quos remittere arcum tibi non contigit, sed hostes taeterrimos (13.4). Rule by fear is of course also Caesar's modus operandi in the De Bello Civili, as Lucan observes when he describes Caesar's gratified reaction to the Roman people's terror at his arrival in Book Three: gaudent...esse timori/ tam magno populis et se non mallet amari (3.82-83). In waging civil war, Caesar is engaged precisely in setting up over Rome the same tyrannical system that already prevails over the eastern nations. In his lament for the consequences of Pharsalus in Book Seven, Lucan thus suggests that Rome has now joined Arabes Medique Eoaque tellus as a nation subject not to leges but to tyranni and regnum (7.440-445). The reason Pompey cannot escape Caesar by a flight to Parthia is that he will find another, worse Caesar already installed there. Lentulus accordingly predicts that Pompey

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6 As is noted by Hodges (p. 148), Lentulus' prediction of a humble tomb far from home at 8.390-394 obviously foreshadows Pompey's actual (and imminent) death and burial in Egypt; Lentulus therefore implies the transfer of the circumstances of Pompey's death (namely a treacherous reception) from Egypt to Parthia.

7 See also Tacitus, Annales 12.11.2 and Martial 10.72.5-7. These examples are all drawn from Isaac's discussion of the Roman stereotype of Parthian absolutism (pp. 376-379).
will be reduced to *Parthorum famulus* (8.339), and he begins his attack on the Parthian option with a statement of Parthia's political and moral equivalence to Caesar, arguing that, by seeking help from as great an enemy to *libertas* as Caesar ever was, Pompey will negate the entire stated goal of the civil war (8.339-341): *quid causa obtenditur armis*/ *libertatis amor? miserum quid decipis orbem,/ si servire potes.*

Although Pompey's appeal to Parthia will bring about his submission to (and possible murder by) a Caesarian tyrant, a worse fate awaits his beloved Cornelia. The feature of the Parthian character for which Lentulus reserves his fiercest rhetorical *indignatio* is sexual incontinence; this defect is most clearly manifested in the notorious excesses and insatiable appetites of the Parthian king, *infandus rex* (8.397), whose *bara...Venus* (8.397-398) is as little restrained by laws or conventions as his political conduct: *polluit innumeris leges et foedera taedae/ coniugibus* (8.399-400). It is madness to expose Cornelia to such a monster's shameful usages, especially when (as Crassus’ former wife) she will offer such a delicious trophy (8.410-416). Not only is this the argument that (according to Plutarch, *Pompey* 76.6) actually swayed the uxorious Pompey, but Lucan has already suggested that Pompey's decision to sequester Cornelia in Lesbos was motivated at least in part by a desire to shelter her from Caesar's sexual predation. Such at least is the implication of Cornelia's response to his announcement of the move in Book Five, when she declares herself afraid that, left alone in a deserted place, she will fall easy prey to Caesar even in the case of the latter's defeat: *nec solvent*

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8 The only *libertas* Lentulus associates with the Parthians is the *libertas fugae* required by their unmanly style of fighting (8.371). It is significant that, in Plutarch (*Pompey* 76.5), Theophanes (whose dissuasive role is assigned to Lentulus in Lucan) makes this argument in purely personal terms, asking why Pompey would submit to the Parthian king when he is not prepared to be second to his own kinsman and fellow-Roman; Lucan therefore departs from the historical model in Lentulus' emphasis on the incompatibility of Parthia with the Republican cause of *libertas* as a whole. Lentulus also compares Rome's enslavement by Caesar with the prospect of subordination to the Parthian king at 8.354-356, presenting the former as the lesser of two essentially similar evils.
audita metus mihi prospera belli, / cum vacuis proiecta locis a Caesare possim / vel fugiente capi (5.782-784). Bruère has shown that in Cornelia's imagination of herself abandoned on Lesbos and anxiously looking out for her husband's arrival, she is representing herself as another Ariadne; her (illogical) statement that Lesbos is uninhabited (vacuis...locis) thus recalls the description of Naxos in Catullus 64. If that is so, there must also be a hint of the final result of Ariadne's desertion, namely her seizure by and marriage to Dionysus, which Catullus at least represents as anything but an unequivocally happy ending: "La malheureuse Ariane, sauvée de la mort contre toute prévision, se verra associée aux courses d'un dieu agité et vagabond, à ses thiases fréquentiques, à son culte sauvage: proie et victime de l'acclus, elle ne connaîtra désormais ni calme, ni repos, ni bonheur" (Ramain, p. 145). After all, Caesar's sexual appetites were legendary. If, in Book Five, Cornelia is thus warning Pompey that his attempt to protect her from Caesar will only leave her more vulnerable to the latter's depravity, Lentulus makes a similar case in Book Eight, echoing Cornelia's capi in the phrase trahitur...captiva (8.416). Pompey is proposing to remove Cornelia from the would-be despot Caesar's reach by putting her into the power of an actual despot, who has attained a level of sexual license that Caesar himself can still only dream of. Parthia is far enough

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9 Compare Catullus 64,133 and 184. Bruère, however, suggests not Catullus but Ovid (Heroides 10) as Lucan's source, on p. 224 and 233 (n. 53 and 54).

10 Book Five contains Lucan's account of the mutiny of Caesar's soldiers as well as of Pompey's exchange with Cornelia; in the former, Lucan states that Caesar would gladly have granted the mutineers license to violate the mothers and daughters of senators (5.306-307), again associating Caesar with a sexual threat to noble Roman womanhood, Cornelia being one of the noblest. A threat to Cornelia from Caesar is also implied in Cato's angry rebuke to his own mutinous soldiers in Book Nine, when he suggests, using the sexually charged verb rapere, that, if they truly wish to curry favour with Caesar, they should present him with the gift of Pompey's wife (along with his sons and Cato's own head): rapiatur in undas/ infelix coniunx Magni prolesque Metelli (9.276-277).

11 See e.g. Suetonius, Divus Julius 51.
away from Rome to be enfeebled by the *mollitia* of its climate but not far enough to escape the moral contamination of Caesarism.

As the crowning abomination of the sexual *mores* of Parthian royalty, Lentulus cites the practice of incestuous marriage: *iacuere sorores/ in regum thalamis sacrataque pignora matres* (8.404-405). As far as Lentulus is concerned, these are the excesses of the barbarian other, a total affront to the Greco-Roman decency by which Oedipus stands condemned (8.406-410). What Lucan's readers would have brought to this passage, however, was a keen awareness that the moral divide between Rome and Parthia had not turned out to be nearly as sharp as Lentulus might have hoped; just as Lentulus aligns Caesar with the Parthian king as an enemy to *libertas*, so Caesar's Julio-Claudian successors are destined to reenact in Rome itself the exotic sexual perversions condemned by Lentulus, as in the case of Caligula (who impregnated his sister), Claudius (who married his niece Agrippina), and Lucan's own emperor Nero (in his rumoured intimacy with the same Agrippina).

It is therefore Rome's fate to be transformed into the mirror image of decadent Parthia under the aegis of the Caesars. By making the long journey to this alien realm under its alien sky, Pompey hopes to escape from his immediate predicament to the glories of his own personal past; instead, he will merely exchange his present experience of the Caesarian revolution for a glimpse into its even darker future. It is only because Lentulus himself cannot grasp the full horror of such a

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12 Although both Plutarch (*Pompey* 76.6) and Appian (*Civil Wars* 2.83) include the sexual danger to Cornelia among the arguments used to dissuade Pompey from the Parthian alliance, neither records a specific reference to the incestuous practices of the Parthian monarch as grounds for fearing such a danger; this emphasis by Lentulus is therefore Lucan's own invention (as far as can be ascertained from the extant sources).

13 In his notes *ad loc.*, Viansino suggests a possible reference to Caligula in Lucan's *sorores* (8.404) and to Nero in *matres* (8.405).
future that he asserts that, between Caesar and Parthia, Caesar is at least the lesser of two evils (at 8.354-356 and 429-430).

Lentulus' fear is that in Parthia Pompey will be slain and Cornelia abused by a Caesarian despot, but in fact the moral danger posed to Pompey by Parthia is even worse than the physical, for, in the actions that he takes in pursuit of this desperate alliance, Pompey actually begins to behave like a Parthian (and Caesarian) monarch himself. In his analysis of Pompey's psychological disintegration after Pharsalus, Ahl has argued persuasively that in the Parthian plan, "his most astonishing act of madness in the Pharsalia", Lucan's Pompey aligns himself with the examples of Caesar and Marius as an enemy of the Republic intent on satisfying his own ambitions at any cost: "To restore himself to power, Pompey is ready to do everything Caesar does and more."

Ahl also remarks on a significant omission from Pompey's speech to the council:

When the remnants of the republican forces gather at Syhedra, Pompey makes no reference to his despatch of Deiotarus to the Parthians. Instead, he suggests that the senate consider seeking aid from one of three sources: Libya, Parthia, or Egypt (8.276-278). This suggests some deviousness on Pompey's part, and drives home the fact that his consultation with and sending of Deiotarus is the only instance of genuinely independent and positive action on his part in the entire epic. (p. 171)

More will be said below on Parthian fides (or lack thereof); for now it is sufficient to note that Pompey, in the "deviousness" revealed by the concealment of his prior step towards a Parthian alliance, is actually taking on a little of the innate untrustworthiness of the very nation with which he proposes to ally himself. Pompey's "independent" action (that is, independent of the senate) in sending Deiotarus also links him to Caesar, who throughout the poem is presented as deciding and acting alone. There is no council of "Caesarians"

14 See pp. 169-172. In particular, Ahl points out (on pp. 171-172) that Pompey proclaims his hopes for the Parthian alliance with a verbatim repetition of Caesar's invocation of Roma at the crossing of the Rubicon: Roma, fave coeptis (8.322 and 1.200).
in the poem comparable to the four described by Lucan for Pompey's side (in Epirus at the beginning of Book Five and again at 6.316-329, before the battle of Pharsalus in Book Seven, and at Syhedra in Book Eight).\textsuperscript{15} Caesar's independence of action and indifference to the sentiments of those around him are starkly illustrated in Book Five, when he sneaks out of his own camp (5.510-512) to undertake a dangerous voyage that his followers would be sure to object to, as indeed they do, strenuously and at length, upon his return (5.678-699).\textsuperscript{16} Pompey thus betrays a certain contempt for the senate by the mere fact of dispatching Deiotarus behind their backs. In historical reality, on the other hand, although Pompey did in fact dispatch an envoy to Parthia (the senator Lucilius Hirrus) prior to Pharsalus, this occurred with the full knowledge and (presumably) approval of his senatorial followers (as is clear from Caesar's account at \textit{Bellum Civile} 3.82.4).

There are further despotic implications to the mission of Deiotarus. At the beginning of Book Seven, Pompey's troops blame his repeated postponement of battle on a desire to continue lording it over the nations temporarily gathered under his banner (with the loaded term \textit{regnum}): \textit{vocatur...orbis indulgens regno, qui tot simul undique gentes/ iuris habere sui vellet pacemque timeret} (7.52-55). Cicero takes up this theme in his speech to Pompey, opening with a bitter image of the Roman and foreign leaders prostrate before him: \textit{proceres...tuorum/ castrorum regesque tui cum supplice mundo adfusi} (7.69-70). Pompey takes the hint and bows to the common demand; his ensuing speech (7.87-123) is designed to establish that he delayed battle only from the highest

\textsuperscript{15} Although Curio advises Caesar in Book One, he does so in private (i.e. not at a general council), and he merely confirms Caesar's own prior impulses (after all, Caesar has already crossed the Rubicon on his own initiative at this point).

\textsuperscript{16} The verb \textit{fallere} is applied twice to Caesar's behaviour during this episode (at 5.512 and 5.679); this is also the verb used in the council of Syhedra to describe the possible treachery of the Parthians (8.311).
and soundest motives of state, not from any pleasure he might have been taking from his exalted position. Nevertheless, the suggestion has been made that Pompey considers himself the king of kings, an absolute monarch of the Persian stamp, and in his own address to his soldiers he casts himself as a latter-day Xerxes, commanding the hordes of the east: *primo gentes oriente coactae/ innumeraeque urbes, quantas in proelia numquam,/ excivere manus* (7.360-362). Already in Book Three, near the end of the end of the catalogue of Pompey's allies, Lucan has explicitly likened Pompey to the Persian Cyrus on the same grounds: *non, cum Memnoniis deducens agmina regnis/ Cyrus et effusis numerato milite telis/ descendit Perses...unum tot reges habuere ducem, coiere nec unquam/ tam variae cultu gentes, tam dissona volgi/ ora* (3.284-290).17

Pompey's risk of contamination by the mindset of oriental despotism is then confirmed in Book Eight. As was discussed in Chapter Two, Lucan makes a point of remarking on Pompey's illustrious company in defeat: *primusque a litore Lesbi/ occurrit natus, procerum mox turba fidelis./ nam neque deiecto fatis acieque fugato/ abstulerat Magno reges fortuna ministros:/ terrarum dominos et sceptra Eoa tenentes exul habet comites* (8.204-209). It is important to note that both his son (Sextus) and the *terrarum domini* are now present. In Book Two, faced (as in Book Eight) with a crisis in his affairs, Pompey commands (with *iubo* at 2.632) his son Gnaeus to summon the nations of the east, including the Parthians (2.628-649). The decision to seek aid from the Parthians at this juncture may be questionable, but the decision to send Gnaeus is not; this is merely a Roman father instructing his own son in accordance with old-fashioned

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17 Compare the catalogue of Xerxes' disparate Asian forces near the beginning of Aeschylus' *Persae* (21-57). See Hodges (pp. 121-134) for Lucan's portrayal of a "Xerxean Pompey" in the first seven books of the poem. As for Book Eight, Hodges comments that Pompey's "vain aspirations of invoking the help of the Parthians make clear finally his inclination towards assuming the character and goals of the eastern despot" (p. 148).
Roman *patria potestas*. Now, however, Pompey commands (*iubet*) not his son but the king Deiotarus to carry out the same mission: *iubet ire in devia mundi* (8.209). Reeling from the disaster of Pharsalus, Pompey seeks to reassure himself of his continued hegemony by issuing marching orders to a fully-fledged oriental king.\(^\text{18}\) Although Cicero's accusation was baseless at the time, Pompey is now clearly guilty of *orbis indulgere regno*; this is in spite of the fact that, in reality, his *orbis regnum* has already been lost on the field of Pharsalus, as revealed by the imminent and notorious desertion of Deiotarus to Caesar's side.

Moreover, Pompey is associating himself not only with the arrogant mentality of eastern despots in general but with the model of Alexander the Great in particular. Sallust writes, *Pompeius a prima adolescencia sermone fatorum similem fore se credens Alexandro regi, facta consultaque eius quidem aemulus erat* (*Histories* 3.88).\(^\text{19}\) It was of course precisely by virtue of his eastern conquests that Pompey could most plausibly boast of following in Alexander's footsteps and be considered *Magnus*. In his catalogue of Pompey's eastern allies at the beginning of Book Three, Lucan proceeds as far as the people of the Ganges, which he characterizes (erroneously) as the limit of Alexander's own eastward advance: *hic ubi Pellaeus post Tethyos aequora ductor/ constitit et magno*

\(^{18}\) Helzle, in his study of the role of the language of violence and command in the characterization of Caesar, Pompey, and Cato, notes that Caesar uses imperatives with much more frequency than Pompey and addresses them to all and sundry (p. 133), whereas Pompey (p. 134) not only uses fewer imperatives in general but also directs them largely to his immediate family (17 to family members and 15 to those outside his family). Helzle takes the latter statistic as a sign of weakness: "Where Caesar would give orders almost indiscriminately, thereby extending his role of imperator to people where it did not apply, Pompeius seems unable to play the role of imperator where it is needed most, in front of his soldiers. Conversely, he gives more orders to his sons and wife than anybody else, a fact which may make him appear weak" (p. 134). Family members, however, are the only people to whom a Roman citizen content to remain a *privatus* should feel comfortable giving orders. The only other individuals to whom Pompey addresses as many imperatives (five) within a single speech as he does to Deiotarus are his son Gnaeus (at 2.632-648) and himself (in the soliloquy accompanying his murder, at 8.622-635), both legitimate objects of his commands; the tone of command he employs with Deiotarus (who is, after all, not one of his soldiers but a theoretically independent king) thus constitutes a temporary moral lapse into megalomania.

\(^{19}\) See Green (pp. 4-6) for Pompey's *imitatio* and *aemulatio* of Alexander.
vinci se fassus ab orbe est (3.233-234). Consequently, when Pompey instructs Deiotarus to remind the Parthian king of his spectacular eastern conquests, which he claims to have pushed as far as the Ganges (8.227), as when (in his speech to the council at Syhedra) he proclaims that those conquests have made him toto conspectus in ortu (8.319), there is a clear evocation of Alexander. Pompey also claims the mantle of potential (although not actual) conqueror of Parthia itself (at 8.222-225 and 8.229-232). He is engaging in the grossest hyperbole with this assertion, as Ahl observes: "It is, of course, untrue that Pompey ever had a real opportunity to conquer Parthia" (p. 170). Nevertheless, it remains the case that the conquest of Persia was Alexander's crowning achievement, especially in Roman eyes, given their constant difficulties with Parthia. Lucan makes this point at the end of his diatribe against Alexander in Book Ten: non felix Parthia Crassis/ exiguae secura fuit provincia Pellae (10.51-52). Pompey is claiming to have magnanimously refrained from an annexation that only Alexander (and none of his fellow Romans) has ever succeeded in accomplishing. The significance of this self-presentation as a new Alexander is that, for Lucan as for Seneca, Alexander is an archetype of tyranny and megalomania; it is not Pompey but Caesar whom Lucan portrays as seeking inspiration for his campaign of world domination with a visit to Alexander's tomb. Pompey has thus transformed himself from a high-minded citizen-soldier defending the Roman state against Caesar into a risible parody of a Parthian king, of Alexander, and (by extension) of Caesar himself. Parthia is so far from affording Pompey an escape from Caesar that the very idea of it is enough to contaminate Pompey with Caesarian ambitions and pretensions, just as Alexander lost his sense of Greek proportion after his conquest of Persia, embarking there on the path of oriental absolutism.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{20} See e.g. Quintus Curtius Rufus 6.6.1-2: hic vero palam cupiditates suas solvit continentiamque et
Pompey is not Caesar, however, nor is he Alexander; he is surrounded by real Roman statesmen and is ultimately prepared to bow to their wishes. In Plutarch's account, it is the Greek sophist Theophanes of Lesbos who dissuades Pompey from his insane plan, but Lucan has replaced him with the consular Lentulus, whom he describes as the noblest in spirit of those assembled: \textit{quos Lentulus omnes/virtutis stimulus et nobilitate dolendi/praecessit dignaque tuit modo consule voces} (8.328-330). Postgate explains the substitution as follows: "To our poet it would have been an indecorum had the chief part on so momentous an occasion been assigned to a Greekling when a Roman of high station was available" (p. xxxix). This is certainly true, but there is a deeper significance to the role of Lentulus than mere propriety. In Book Five, it is Lentulus (as outgoing consul) who asserted the dignity of the Roman senate in exile, and who persuaded the senators to ratify Pompey's command and thereby subordinate him to their legitimate authority: \textit{docuit populos venerabilis ordo,/non Magni partes sed Magnum in partibus esse} (5.13-14). Now, Pompey's submission to the senate is endangered by the absolutist behaviour and aspirations associated with his proposal of a Parthian alliance, so

\begin{quote}
\textit{moderationem, in altissima quaque fortuna eminentia bona, in superbiam ac lasciviam vertit. patrios mores disciplinamque Macedonum regum salubriter temperatam et civilem habitum velut leviara magnitudine sua ducens Persicae regiae par deorum potentiae fastigium aemulabatur.} Compare Arrian's account of the \textit{προσκύνησις} controversy (4.9.7-4.12.7). It should be noted that Pompey's instructions to Deiotarus are not only his first speech but his first action of any kind following his exchange with the helmsman. Consequently, if these instructions are in fact fraught with tyrannical and otherwise negative connotations, it cannot be the case that (according to the analysis of Marti, p. 372, discussed in Chapter Two) the questioning of the helmsman marks an upward step in Pompey's progress as a Stoic \textit{proficiens}, or that "[t]hus he recovers the vision of his fateful mission." In fact, he emerges from his astronomical inquiry at the very lowest ebb he has ever reached in the whole poem (morally and ideologically speaking). All therefore remarks on the entire Parthian project, "This is why we should beware of following Berthe Marti's notion that Pompey approximates to a Stoic \textit{prokopton}. For throughout the \textit{Pharsalia}, Pompey is regressing, not progressing" (p. 170). This may not be true of the entire poem, but it certainly is of the first half of Book Eight.
\end{quote}

\footnote{In terms of Helze's analysis of the characterization of Pompey through his use of imperatives (see n. 18 above), Pompey demonstrates his basic \textit{civilitas} at Syhedra by issuing no direct commands whatsoever to the assembled Roman senators (even though he previously issued five to the non-Roman Deiotarus).}

\footnote{Postgate persuasively refutes Duff's suggestion (made on p. 131) that the change was motivated by the metrical difficulties entailed by the name Theophanes (p. xxxix, n. 1).}
Lentulus must once more intervene to defend the primacy of the senate and of traditional Roman values. His persuasion of the council is thus a double victory for libertas, both in the sense that it demonstrates the senators' independence from Pompey and in the sense that it prevents an action (Pompey's alliance with Parthia) that is inherently inimical to libertas: quantum, spes ultima rerum,/ libertatis habes! victa est sententia Magni (8.454-455).

The Case for Egypt

Instead of Parthia, Lentulus advises recourse to Egypt. Egypt's remoteness (the main theme of Pompey's case for Parthia) is a literary motif as early as Homer's Odyssey. Even in the Roman period, when travel to Egypt was increasingly routine, it could still be represented as a faraway land. In Plautus, according to Sonnabend (p. 95), Egypt essentially functions as "ein Synonym für 'Ferne'"; Sonnabend also cites passages from Lucretius, Horace, Propertius, and Vitruvius that locate Egypt at the furthest corner.

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23 Mayer comments on the phrase victa est sententia Magni, "Lucan in this blunt way stresses the freedom of the debate; in the old Senate even a Pompey could fail to carry his point" (note on 8.455); the fact that sententia is the technical term for a vote cast in the senate (see the OLD entry 3) underscores the constitutional propriety of the proceedings.

24 The following is by no means intended as an exhaustive account of ancient writings on Egypt in the utopian vein, nor do I offer any analysis of the complex process whereby a variety of Greek authors, interacting with their social and political context, with their own literary tradition, and with a distorted perception of Egyptian realities, developed the general picture of Egypt that is here outlined: I merely offer a representative sample of texts that have the virtue either of surviving to the present day or of being readily accessible to Lucan (or both). Such selectivity is possible because my point is not to suggest that Lucan necessarily consulted one text or another but rather to give a sense of the overall Egyptological tradition upon which he could draw. For a detailed discussion of representations of Egypt in Greek literature down to the time of Alexander, see Froidefond and Vasunia; see Hartog (pp. 64-73) for the further elaboration of the utopian model of Egypt in writings of the Hellenistic period, and Murray for the key role played in that process by Hecataeus of Abdera, who is thought to underlie the Egyptian book of Diodorus; for Roman views of Egypt, see Sonnabend (pp. 19-156).

25 See Odyssey 3.319-322, for which (along with other relevant passages) Froidefond supplies a nuanced discussion (pp. 20-22): "l'Egypte apparaissait aux Grecs de l'époque d'Homère comme une terre très lointaine, d'accès fort difficile" (p. 21). The Odyssey in general portrays extreme isolation as one of the features of a Utopia (or Dystopia), as with the Phaeacians and the Cyclopes.
of the inhabited world. Moreover, Egypt, together with the Nile, is often depicted by Greek and Roman writers as a refuge from both personal affliction and global upheavals. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, for instance, Io is granted an end to her wandering and salvation from her torment the moment (*simulac*, 1.729) she reaches the Nile (1.728-746), fulfilling the promise made by Aeschylus' Prometheus. Another episode frequently cited by ancient authors (as by Ovid in the *Metamorphoses*) is the flight of the Olympian gods from the monster Typhoeus into the remote safety of Egypt, where they take on animal forms to disguise themselves and thereby initiate the Egyptian custom of zoolatry. As for Egypt's own security from the disasters of the outside world, numerous writers from Herodotus onwards depict Egypt as a Utopia, a Shangri-La, which is afforded special protection by the blessings of the Nile (as well as by its climate and situation generally). In Plato's *Timaeus*, for instance (22c-e), Egypt is said to be sheltered by its geography from the periodic destruction of civilized human life through either fire (warded off by the Nile) or flood (prevented by Egypt's lack of rainfall). According to Diodorus, the combination of climate and river renders Egypt particularly suitable for the propagation and preservation of human life (1.10.1-3); consequently, Egypt alone would have been exempted from the devastating consequences of Deucalion's flood (1.10.4-7). Similarly, in Ovid's story of Phaethon (*Metamorphoses* 2.254-256), a catalogue of the world's rivers that are burnt away by the sudden proximity of the sun ends with the observation that only the Nile is able to escape, by concealing its source (although the

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27 It is perhaps significant that although, in his account of the shield of Aeneas, Virgil describes Augustus' conquest of a variety of foreign peoples in terms of the conquest of their national rivers (*Aeneid* 8.726-728), the Nile is portrayed not as itself defeated but as offering refuge to the defeated Egyptians returning from Actium: *contra autem magno maerentem corpore Nilum/ pandentemque sinus et tota veste vocantem/ caeruleum in gremium latebrosaque flumina victos* (8.711-713).

Delta is dried up). Another natural disaster excluded by Egypt's geography is the earthquake: where Pliny the Elder attributes this happy condition to the length of the Egyptian summers (2.195), it is explained by other writers as the result of the muddy constitution of Egypt's land, which is in turn the product of the Nile's alluvial action.\(^{29}\) Moreover, the extraordinary fertility and ease of cultivation associated with the annual inundation of the Nile protect Egypt from famine, while numerous geographical features offer security from invasion (to be discussed below); such physical advantages are listed at length in Isocrates' *Busiris* as the grounds for the mythical Pharaoh's selection of Egypt as the site for his new kingdom (11-14).\(^{30}\) The result of all this insulation from external disaster is a civilization of unparalleled antiquity and stability, with a reputation for tranquil permanence matched only by that of the stars themselves.\(^{31}\) The Egyptians alone have preserved intact the distinctive political, religious, legal, and cultural institutions of their remote past, as Herodotus insists: \(\textit{πατρίοισι δὲ χρεώμενοι νόμοισι ἄλλοις} \) \(\textit{σωδένα ἐπικτῶνται} \) (2.79).\(^{32}\)

Escape to Egypt thus occurs on several different levels. Most obviously, there is the straightforward taking of physical refuge from some concrete threat (as in the Io and Typhoeus stories). More abstractly, travel to Egypt involves an escape backwards in time. Because Egypt preserves the memory of remote epochs with meticulous accuracy,

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\(^{29}\) According to Seneca (*Naturales Quaestiones* 6.26), both Egypt's freedom from earthquakes and the alluvial explanation for the phenomenon are asserted \textit{auctoritate magnorum virorum}, although Seneca does not name these great authorities (whom he rebuts at 6.27 with the fact that Egypt actually does experience earthquakes).

\(^{30}\) See Froidefond (pp. 126-127 and 142-144) for the Greek attribution of Egypt's long survival to the twin geographical blessings of the Nile and of its situation.

\(^{31}\) Froidefond states that, in the Greek view of Egypt, "ancienneté et stabilité ne sont point séparables" (p. 144). See Froidefond, pp. 140-145 for Herodotus' association of Egypt's antiquity with the durability and insularity of its civilization.

\(^{32}\) See Froidefond (pp. 169-182) for Herodotus' conception of Egypt's social and political stability and the permanence of its pious *mores*. 
it can correct erroneous ideas about even the Greeks' own history: Herodotus discovers in Egypt the truth about the origins of Greek religion and the Trojan war,\(^{33}\) and Solon (in the *Timaeus*) the truth about the civilization of pre-Atlantean Athens (21e-25d), while Cicero speaks of *illa incorrupta maxime gente Aegyptiorum, quae plurimorum saeculorum et eventorum memoriam litteris continet* (*De Re Publica* 3.14).\(^{34}\) The teachings of Egypt embrace far more than mere historical facts, however, for Egypt is not only ancient but exemplary and utopian: in the *Timaeus*, as well as preserving factual information about early Athens in its priestly records, Egypt thus embodies and illustrates (albeit imperfectly) the virtues of the vanished Athenian Utopia in its own latter-day society. Because Egypt was already old even when other races were young, it was in a position at a very early date to instruct the peoples of the world in all the civilized arts (politics, law, religion, writing, agriculture, etc.).\(^{35}\) More recently, representatives of Elis are said to have made the journey there to receive instruction on the fairest method of conducting the Olympic games, and the biographies of an extraordinarily large number of Greek sages and luminaries include pilgrimages to Egypt in search of its ancient lore;\(^{36}\) according to Lucan's uncle Seneca, for instance, Egypt's astronomy was imported into Greece by Eudoxus and Conon (*Naturales Quaestiones* 7.3.2-3). Indeed, only a century before the time of Lucan's writing, Diodorus personally visited the country and held up many of its

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33 On religion, see Herodotus 2.43-44 and 49-58 and Froidefond (pp. 187-200); on the Trojan war, see Herodotus 2.113-120.
34 Compare Pomponius Mela 1.59: *ipsi vetustissimi, ut praedicant, hominum trecentos et triginta reges ante Amasim, et supra tredecim milium annorum aetates certis annalibus referunt.*
35 See Froidefond (pp. 137-206) for Herodotus' conception of "la Grèce à l'école de l'Egypte", and see also (for example) Diodorus 1.14-20 (on the worldwide civilizing crusade of Osiris) and 1.69 (on the Egyptian invention of astronomy, geometry, and art), as well as Tacitus, *Annales* 11.14.1, where Egypt is said to have invented writing and transmitted it to Greece via the Phoenicians.
36 See Herodotus 2.160 and Diodorus 1.95 (on the delegation from Elis) and e.g. Diodorus 1.96-98 (on the parade of Greek intellectuals and artists believed to have drawn inspiration from a visit to Egypt).
Another important source for the utopian view of Egyptian institutions is the influential Alexandrian scholar-priest Chaeremon, tutor to the young Nero and hence Lucan's near-contemporary, who is known to have written extensively on the piety and learning of the Egyptian priesthood to which he belonged. Moreover, these two basic ideas, of Egypt as a personal refuge from catastrophe and of Egypt as a repository of ancient wisdom and virtue, are in fact complementary, for among the values traditionally (although by no means universally) attributed to Egypt is ξενίκα. This is surely a major point of Herodotus' curious narrative of the experiences of Paris, Helen, and Menelaus at the court of Proteus (2.112-120), as also of his zealous refutation of the story of the attempted sacrifice of the visiting Heracles by an Egyptian mob (2.45); Isocrates too rejects the latter myth in his panegyrical treatment of the Pharaoh Busiris (36-37). Of course, this is not the only conventional literary model of Egypt and its people.

In addition to the utopian idealization, there are two other common views of Egypt. First

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37 See e.g. 1.69, 1.93, and 1.94-95; compare Isocrates, Busiris 16-20.
38 See Froidefond (pp. 179-187) for Herodotus' portrayal of Egyptian ξενίκα; see Odyssey 4.125-132 and 14.283-287 for the first association of ξενίκα with Egypt in Greek literature.
39 At this point, a few general observations should be made on the question of the accessibility of the Greek Egyptological tradition to the literate Roman elite of the first century A.D. Herodotus is praised (at 9.4.18) by the rhetorician Quintilian, who is writing only a few decades after Lucan, and is included in Quintilian's sketch of the ideal curriculum for a rhetorical education (10.1.73); according to John Lydus (De Mensibus 4.107), Herodotus' Egyptian book was cited in the now-lost portion of Seneca's discussion of the Nile in the Naturales Quaestiones (Book 4A). Diodorus Siculus is mentioned with approval in the preface to the Naturalis Historia (Pref. 25) of Pliny the Elder, a near-contemporary to Lucan, and is cited twice as a source in Pliny's index (for Books Three and Five, the latter containing Pliny's treatment of Egypt). Plato's Timaeus, which was partially translated into Latin by Cicero, is known to have been closely consulted by Seneca (see the commentary by Inwood (2007) on Epistulae Morales 58 and 65), as well as by Quintilian (see 9.4.77). Quintilian also praises Isocrates (e.g. at 2.8.11), sprinkling references to him throughout his work; although he makes no specific mention of Isocrates' Busiris, Quintilian does refer (at 2.17.4) to the Busiris of Polycrates, to which Isocrates' treatise is explicitly framed as a rebuttal (Isocrates, Busiris 1-9). Chaeremon's influence on Roman intellectual culture can be inferred from his connection to Nero and is attested by Martial's attack on him (11.56). Almost nothing remains from what might have been Lucan's most important source for Egypt, namely Seneca's De Situ et Sacris Aegyptiorum, which (like Diodorus' account) was presumably based at least in part on Seneca's own early sojourn in Egypt, but which must also have owed much to the Greek Egyptologists.
of all, there is the image of a bizarre alien otherworld, not necessarily better or worse than Greek and Roman society, merely different. Initiated to some extent by Herodotus, who claims that Egyptian customs are the exact inverse of those shared by all other nations (2.35), this approach tends to be applied above all to Egyptian religion.\(^{40}\) Next, and more importantly for an analysis of Lucan’s treatment of Egypt, there arises, particularly in the Roman period, an extremely dystopian model that presents latter-day Egyptians as decadent, effeminate, superstitious, treacherous, and servile (or, in the case of their ruling class, despotic), in accordance with general Greco-Roman attitudes towards the older civilizations of the south and east.\(^{41}\) Sonnabend has shown (pp. 96-108) that, for the Romans, these negative qualities were associated above all with Alexandria, its inhabitants, and its rulers the Ptolemies. It was therefore very easy for educated Romans simultaneously to despise the contemporary Egyptian people (whom they encountered most often in the form of Alexandrians) and to admire the traditional wisdom and civilizing achievements of the utopian Egypt of antiquity, just as they did in the case of the Greeks.\(^{42}\) Cicero and Tacitus, for instance, who praise the early civilization of Egypt in some parts of their corpus (cited above), launch savage attacks on the morals of its current inhabitants in others.\(^{43}\) Similarly, even though the \textit{Georgics} were written in the buildup to and aftermath of Actium, to which he refers in the proem to Book Three (3.28-29), Virgil offers a utopian account of life by the fertile Nile in the following book...

\(^{40}\) Lucan’s near-contemporary Pomponius Mela follows Herodotus in presenting Egypt above all as a land of alterity (1.57-58).
\(^{41}\) See Isaac (pp. 352-370).
\(^{42}\) For the contradiction in Roman attitudes towards ancient and contemporary Greeks, see e.g. Cicero, \textit{Ad Quintum Fratrem} 1.1.16, Tacitus, \textit{Annales} 2.55, and Pliny, \textit{Epistulae} 8.24, as well as Isaac’s discussion (pp. 381-405). Lucan thus contrasts the glory of Salamis with the paltriness of the current Athenian contribution to Pompey’s war effort: \textit{exhausit totas quamvis dilectus Athenas,/ exiguae Phoebea tenent navalia puppes,/ tresque petunt veram credi Salaminae carinae} (3.181-183).
\(^{43}\) See Cicero, \textit{Pro Rabirio Postumo} 35-36 (in which he denounces the Alexandrians specifically, as Greeks) and Tacitus, \textit{Historiae} 1.11.1 (an attack on Egyptians in general).
(4.287-294), terming the Egyptian people *gens fortunata* (4.287) and associating them with a significant advancement of civilization (although he does not attribute its actual invention to them), namely the apicultural practice of the bougonia;\(^{44}\) in the shield ecphrasis of *Aeneid* 8, by contrast, Virgil presents both Egypt's current ruler (Cleopatra) and its barbaric gods (Anubis) in a highly unfavourable light (at 8.688 and 696-700). In the *Aeneid* as in other works of Augustan propaganda, then, hostility for the new Egypt, under its Ptolemaic ruler Cleopatra, spills over into an attack against the attributes of the traditional Egyptian civilization, most notably in the sphere of religion. As early as 27 BC, however, only four years after Actium, in his poem (1.7) in honour of Messala's triumph, Tibullus seeks, through the medium of Egyptian religion, to integrate the utopian model of early Egypt as the cradle of human civilization under its culture-hero god Osiris with the new golden age of the *Pax Augusta*, which the culture-hero Messala has helped to bring about.\(^{45}\) On a more concrete and practical level, Strabo praises the Roman reorganization and administration of Egypt, which have put an end to centuries of mismanagement under the increasingly degenerate Ptolemies and transformed Egypt into a well-oiled cog in the imperial machine; Tibullus' Osiris taught the world how to live through agriculture and viticulture, and now Strabo's Augustus returns the favour by bringing good government to Egypt and restoring its ancient prosperity.\(^{46}\)

Given the role played by Egypt within the moral economy of the *De Bello Civili*, as an accursed land (like Thessaly) that is guilty of one of the war's most heinous crimes, it is no surprise that the hostile tradition should overwhelmingly predominate in Lucan's

\(^{44}\) See the note by Thomas (1988) on *Georgics* 4.287 for the association of the phrase *gens fortunata* with the conventions of utopian ethnography.

\(^{45}\) See Konstan's analysis; the poem therefore ends on a note of praise for Messala's peaceful contribution to civilization in the form of the construction of a portion of the *Via Latina* (Konstan, p. 184).

\(^{46}\) See Strabo 17.3 and 17.11-12.
treatment of the country and its inhabitants. Nevertheless, in contrast to his consistent
demonization of Thessaly, which he portrays as a source of human misery from its
earliest beginnings (6.395-412), Lucan allows faint traces of the utopian model of Egypt
to shine through (albeit briefly) at various points in the poem. First of all, he alludes in
passing to the features and achievements of the ancient Egyptian civilization on several
occasions: astronomy at 1.639-640, writing at 3.222-224, river navigation at 4.135-136
(which Virgil likewise describes as part of his celebration of Egypt at Georgics 4.289),
and religion and magic at 6.449-450. More importantly, the utopian model underlies
three key dialogue scenes in Lucan's Egyptian narrative: Lentulus' suasoria to Pompey
(discussed here), the presentation of the origins and arguments of the venerable priest
Acoreus at the start of the debate of the council of Ptolemy, convened to decide Pompey's
fate (discussed in Chapter Four), and the dialogue of Caesar and Acoreus at Cleopatra's
banquet in Book Ten (discussed in Chapters Five and Six). Where other writers (like
Cicero and Tacitus) alternately praise the achievements of ancient Egypt and condemn
the character of modern Egyptians in separate and unrelated passages, Lucan brings
together the utopian and dystopian models of Egypt in a clash of competing visions of
society that mirrors the struggle for the soul of Rome. In making his case for the
Egyptian alliance, Lentulus assumes the continued validity of the utopian model, just as
Acoreus champions Pompey from the standpoint of Egypt's traditional mores and
institutions. Like Acoreus' values, however, Lentulus' information is hopelessly
anachronistic, for Memphis, the old Egyptian capital and Acoreus' birthplace, has now
been replaced by the despised Alexandria, and the pious government of the native
Pharaohs by the new Ptolemaic despotism. Consequently, Lucan portrays Egypt not as a
straightforward embodiment of pure evil (like Thessaly) but as a tragic witness to the
decline of a formerly great and virtuous civilization (like Rome itself). Moreover, while
Tibullus and Strabo seek to reconcile the idealization of ancient Egypt with the current
Pax Augusta, Lucan shows the same forces that originally destroyed the Egyptian Utopia
to be also at work in late-Republican Rome, where they culminated in Caesar's victory
and the establishment of the Principate. There is thus the furthest distance imaginable
between the new imperial order, which ultimately stems from Caesar's illegal revolution,
and the conservative, law-abiding culture of the ancient Egyptian civilization, which
Caesar's own model Alexander and the latter's Ptolemaic successors have effectively
eradicated.

In historical accounts of the debate at Syhedra, as preserved above all by Appian
and Plutarch, three basic arguments are advanced for the choice of Egypt instead of
Parthia: Egypt's proximity (it was only three days' sailing away), its immense wealth and
resources, and the familial obligation binding its young king Ptolemy XIII to Pompey.47
Of these three, only the last is preserved more or less unaltered in the speech that Lucan
assigns to Lentulus.48 Lentulus seeks to establish not Egypt's proximity but rather the
reverse, its remoteness from world events, the same advantage that Pompey attributed to
Parthia; in doing so, Lentulus must draw heavily on the utopian model of Egypt.
According to Lentulus' interpretation, Parthia's remoteness entails not safety but rather a
fundamental and dangerous divergence from the ancestral mores of Rome. For Egypt, by

47 Appian gives all three reasons (Civil Wars 2.83), Plutarch the arguments from proximity and familial
obligation (Pompey 76.5), and Dio (by implication) the argument from familial obligation (42.2.4); in his
Bellum Civile, Caesar speaks in general terms of Pompey being motivated by necessitudines regni
reliquasque eius loci opportunitates (3.106).
48 It is therefore misleading for Sonnabend to assert that Lucan's account of the arguments advanced in
support of an Egyptian alliance is "ähnlich" to Appian's (p. 36); as will be argued below, Lucan has in fact
completely transformed the themes of Egypt's proximity and wealth that are emphasized in Appian's
version.
contrast, far from excluding old-fashioned values, geographical remoteness was
commonly believed to have ensured their perfect preservation (along with the
preservation of the country as a whole) both from the march of time and from any turmoil
currently afflicting the outside world, as in the *Timaeus*. Lentulus is therefore not
without reason to hope that Egypt will weather the storm of civil war more successfully
than Massilia did; after all, the utopian model of Egypt represents it as a bastion of social
and political stability, and it is precisely such stability that the Republicans are fighting to
defend against Caesar's revolutionary onslaught.

The first point Lentulus makes about Egypt is that it, unlike Parthia, is a part of
the *orbis Romanus* (8.441-442), implying that Pompey can expect from Egypt a
reasonable degree of conformity to those traditional Roman values from which the
Parthian *mos* is so dangerously far removed. Pompey, however, has already declared that
the *orbis,/ qua Romanus erat* has been *Emathiis amissus cladibus* (8.211-212), and that
he must for this reason look beyond Rome's furthest eastern borders to Parthia for
salvation. Lentulus must therefore establish not only that Egypt lies within the sphere of
Roman civilization, but also that, paradoxically, it will nevertheless have succeeded in
remaining isolated from the effects of the Roman civil war; this is where the utopian
tradition of Egypt's seclusion comes into play.

Logically enough in an argument for Egypt's value as a military ally, Lentulus
begins by establishing Egypt's remoteness from specifically military threats. Egypt's
natural defensibility is a well-established convention of literary treatments: Diodorus
Siculus, for instance, opens his account of Egyptian geography with an exhaustive
catalogue of the physical features protecting the country from invasion at all four points
of the compass (1.30-31), while Strabo and Lucan's near-contemporary Josephus offer similar catalogues. Initially, Lentulus appears to follow suit. First of all, he cites the notorious shallows of the Syrtes on the Libyan coastline, presumably as a deterrent to armies attempting to invade by sea from the west: *Syrribus hinc Libycis tuta est Aegyptos* (8.444-445). Lentulus then takes up *hinc* with a corresponding *inde* to indicate the next defensive feature on his list, the river Nile: *at inde/ gurgite septeno rapidus mare summovet amnis* (8.444-445). Here, Lentulus seems to make reference to the treacherous sandbank (an alluvial deposit of the Nile) that, according to Diodorus (1.31.3-4), stretched along virtually the entire extent of Egypt's northern coast and posed a major threat to mariners; this sandbank thus combines with the shoals of the Syrtes to fence Egypt off from all seaborne traffic.

There are, however, two serious problems with Lentulus' account of Egypt's defences. First of all, although I have glossed 8.445 as a reference to the sandbank, the line is by no means unambiguous, because Lentulus makes no mention of any sandbank, merely of the Nile and its flood, whose defensive function is less immediately apparent than that of the formidable Syrtes; other interpretations have therefore been proposed.

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49 See Strabo 17.1.53 and Josephus, *Jewish War* 2.16.4 and 4.10.5.
50 The silt-bar deposited by the Nile off the Delta coast is mentioned as early as Aeschylus, who refers to *Νείλον...προσχώματι* (*Prometheus* 847); Herodotus likewise attributes to the Nile the muddy shallows that ships begin to encounter while still a whole day's sailing away from Egypt (2.5). The same basic idea of alluvial mud-deposits underlies the poetic cliche of the Nile's staining of the sea (as in Catullus 11.8-9 or Lucan 1.684).
51 Postgate (in his note on 8.445), for instance, explains Lentulus' words with reference not to the sandbank but to the alluvial formation of the whole of the Delta region of lower Egypt. On the one hand, it is difficult to see the relevance of this historical fact of Egyptian geography to a strategic evaluation of the country, which is after all Lentulus' purported theme; on the other, because the same alluvial process is responsible for both the sandbank and the Delta, Lucan may be intending to evoke both features simultaneously at 8.445, for reasons that will be explored below. In an oral presentation of a section of this chapter at York University, an audience member proposed that Lentulus may be presenting the sheer force of the Nile's flood as in itself a barrier against ships attempting to land in Egypt. To this not unreasonable suggestion, however, two objections can be raised: first, the Nile's annual inundation is never portrayed in ancient sources as an obstacle to navigation, in fact quite the reverse, for it renders the whole of lower...
Diodorus, at any rate, does not explicitly connect the Egyptian shallows to the Nile's alluvial operation. Moreover, it is not the sandbank as such but Egypt's general lack of suitable harbours that tends to be cited, both by Diodorus and by other Egyptological writers, as the main protection of Egypt's northern flank from seaborne invasion, a fact for which the Nile is not obviously responsible. Indeed, Diodorus expresses this idea as a defence of Egypt by the sea: ἡ τετάρτη τοῖνυν πλευρὰ πᾶσα σχεδὸν ἀλιμένῳ θαλάττῃ προσκλυζόμενη προβέβληται τὸ Ἀιγύπτιον πέλαγος (1.31.2). In Lentulus' formulation, however, it is not the sea but the Nile that defends Egypt's northern coast, and not primarily against human invaders (as would be expected from the coordination of hinc and inde, which connects the clause about the Nile to the one about the barrier of the Syrtes) but against the sea itself: gurgite septeno rapidus mare summovet annis. What is achieved by shifting the focus to the protective powers of the Nile?

Lentulus' phrasing seems designed to suggest a struggle of the elements that is often evoked by ancient writers. In the apocalyptic close to the third book of his Naturales Quaestiones, for instance, Seneca asserts that the currently observable aggression of sea against land is a harbinger of the ultimate destruction of the world by flood (3.30.2): olim ad hoc maria se exercent. non vides ut fluctus in litora tamquam

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Egypt temporarily navigable (as at Georgics 4.289 and Seneca, Naturales Quaestiones 4A.2.11); second, since, as Lucan knows (8.466-469), Pompey will be arriving in Egypt at the time of the autumnal equinox, and since, as Lucan is also aware (as indicated by 10.217-218 and 235-237), the Nile's flood begins to recede at this point in the year, any defensive value directly attributable to the inundation will be unavailable to Pompey, at least until the flood returns in the following summer. I prefer the sandbank interpretation not only because it allows for a clear and permanent obstacle to shipping (and thus an unambiguous strategic advantage) but also because Lucan himself seems to refer explicitly to this national sandbank, vada...Aegyptia, again in conjunction with the Syrtes, at 8.539-540, when he sets the stage for Pompey's murder: perfida qua tellus Casiis excurrit harenis/ et vada testantur iunctas Aegyptia Syrtes.

52 In addition to Diodorus, see Josephus, Jewish War 2.16.4 and 4.10.5 and Strabo 17.6, 17.19, and 17.53.
exiturus incurrat? non vides ut aestus fines suos transeat et in possessionem terrarum
mare inducat? non vides ut illi perpetua cum claustris suis pugna sit? It is also a cliché
of ancient geography that the sea steals a large portion of the earth from human use.53

Through his description of sandbank formation, Lentulus is therefore portraying Egypt as
a refuge not only from human invaders but also from an elemental force inimical to
human life, just as, in the Timaeus, Plato depicts an Egypt sheltered by the Nile from the
elemental force of fire. Indeed, as Lucan's readers would have been well aware, not only
the sandbank but the whole of lower Egypt was, in Herodotus' famous phrase, a δῶρον
τοῦ ποταμοῦ (2.5). In his treatise On Isis and Osiris (366e-367c), Plutarch thus
allegorizes the mythical victory of the Egyptian god Horus over Typhon/Seth in terms of
the liberation of the land of Egypt from the sea (Typhon) through the alluvial action of
the Nile (Horus), using language similar to Lentulus': compare Plutarch's description of
the Nile as having ἔξωσις τὴν θάλασσαν to mare summovet at Lucan 8.445.54

What is more, Lucan very frequently portrays his civil war precisely as a
destructive force of nature that involves the entire cosmos in the ruin of the Roman state;
in the process, he associates the war with the imagery of natural elements, including the
sea.55 In Book Two, for instance, Lucan recounts the violent sundering of Italy and
Sicily, which formed a continuous body of land donec confinia pontus/ solveret
incumbens terrasque repelleret aequor (2.435-436); he returns to this theme in the

53 See e.g. Cicero, De Re Publica 6.21, Seneca, N.Q. 1.Pref.8, and Pliny the Elder 2.173.
54 See also Seneca's statement that debet illi [i.e. Nilo] Aegyptus non tantum fertilitatem terrarum, sed ipsas
(Naturalis Quaestiones 4A.2.10), as well as Seneca's more detailed treatment of the phenomenon at N.Q.
6.26. Although less benign, the Syrtes too are emblematic of a conflict between land and sea, as is apparent
from Lucan's account of them in Book Nine (9.303-318).
55 In addition to the examples discussed below, consider Lucan's description of the storm in Book Five,
which is compared to Deucalion's flood, cum litora Tethys/ noluit ulla pati (5.623-624), and by which the
sea is finally permitted to devour the mountains that it has hitherto coveted in vain: a quotiens frustra
pulsatos aequore montes/ obruit illa dies! quam celsa cacumina pessum/ tellus victa dedit (5.615-617).
following book, where he describes the strait dividing Italy from Sicily as the place qua mare tellurem subitis aut obruit undis/ aut scidit, et medias fecit sibi litora terras;/ vis illic ingens pelagi, semperque laborant/ aequora, ne rupti repetant confinia montes (3.60-63). Lucan's etiology of the Straits of Messina in Book Two occurs immediately before his narration of Caesar's invasion and conquest of Italy, while the passage from Book Three describes Caesar's first action (dispatching Curio to Sicily to secure its grain supply) upon completing that conquest. Descriptions of the division and penetration of the Italian peninsula by the unrelenting sea therefore serve to bracket the account of Italy's division by civil war and penetration by Caesar; the word confinia (in the same metrical sedes at 2.435 and 3.363) serves not only to connect both accounts of the Straits of Messina but also to associate the first of them with the subsequent narrative of Caesar's incursion, since the sea's attack on Italy's confinia (2.435) points forward to Caesar's gleeful violation of Hesperiae fines only six lines later (2.441). 56 Consequently, a

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56 It is true that the violent rupture of Italy from Sicily is a conventional motif of ancient poets and geographers, as enumerated by Hunink in his note on 3.60. Lucan's deliberate and thematic use of this motif as a metaphor for the disunity of an Italian civil war is, however, suggested by the fact that he carefully situates it at two key points in his narrative and connects the two instances with a verbal parallelism (as I argue here); the extent of Lucan's authorial choice in this respect can be inferred from the many other occasions in the poem on which he refers to Sicily (1.43, 1.545-547, 5.99-100, 6.65-66, and 6.813) and even the Straits of Messina themselves (1.547-549) without mentioning the story of Italy's division by the sea. In his note on 3.60, Hunink thus comments, "Here, the struggle of land and sea is exemplary of the civil war, and visualizes its effects on a higher level." I do not, however, accept Hunink's further analysis of this passage: "In particular, the symbolical connotations of land with Caesar and water with Pompey seem deliberately used here. As always, the resistance embodied in the sea is overcome by Caesar." Although there are certain natural elements with which Caesar is consistently identified over the course of the poem (e.g. fire and wind), and others that consistently operate as symbols of Pompey (e.g. wood), the opposition of land and sea cannot be so easily accommodated within a straightforward symbolism. One the one hand, where Caesar's strength clearly lies in his land forces, Pompey commands a massive navy. Caesar is also shown engaged in a Xerxean struggle against the sea during the siege of Brundisium, when he attempts to block the entrance of the harbour (2.660-679). Nevertheless, as discussed in Chapter One, Pompey appears to seek shelter from the violence of a metaphorical sea in his retreat to the safe haven of Brundisium, which is in accord with the long history in ancient literature (beginning with Alcaeus) of the expression of the perils of civil strife through the contrasting images of safe harbour and stormy seas. Pompey himself, in his own speech at Syhedra, likens his dire predicament to a shipwreck, naufragium (8.313), implying a quest for refuge on dry land. Moreover, Pompey is generally portrayed as static, in opposition to Caesar's violent dynamism (as in the initial contrast of the oak with the lightning
country like Egypt, which, far from being vulnerable to the sea's rapacity, in fact exists precisely by pushing its land out ever further into the sea, might therefore be expected to enjoy immunity from the ravages of civil war as well.

Lentulus' statement at 8.445 must therefore be read against the background of a variety of distinct ethnographic and geographic traditions: the tradition of Egypt's protection by the Nile from destructive forces (as in Plato's *Timaeus*), the tradition of a global, elemental struggle between land and sea, which is exploited by Lucan as an image for civil war, and the tradition of the Nile's alluvial replacement of sea by land. Within such a context, Lentulus is portraying Egypt as a bulwark against the malign pressures currently tearing the Roman world apart, the same pressures that have ripped Italy away from Sicily.

Finally, Lentulus' wording serves to characterize the Nile as a barrier not only against the elemental forces of civil war in general but also against Caesar in particular. Caesar's antagonism towards rivers begins with his very first action in Lucan, the famous crossing of the Rubicon in Book One, and continues as a defining character trait throughout the remainder of the poem. This hostility is most explicitly voiced in Book Two, when Caesar reacts with the following angry exclamation to an attempt by Pompeian soldiers to destroy the only bridge over the river Aternus as a means of protecting the Pompeian garrison at Corfinium: *non si tumido me gurgite Ganges*/
summoveat, stabit iam flumine Caesar in ullo/ post Rubiconis aquas (2.496-498). The language of Caesar's defiance of the Ganges points forward very closely to Lentulus' account of the Nile, with Caesar's gurgite...summoveat anticipating Lentulus' almost identical phrase gurgite...summovet (8.445). Lentulus thereby casts the Nile as one of the many elemental (and primarily riverine) obstacles that have served to delay Caesar's relentless advance over the course of the poem.

Whatever the interpretation and significance of 8.445, Lentulus is clearly positing the Nile as a barrier against threats from a seaward direction (with mare summovet). This brings me to the second problem with Lentulus' case for Egypt's natural defensibility.

The defensive value of the Nile is a recurrent theme in the literary tradition: Isocrates, for example, praises the wisdom of the legendary Busiris in selecting for his kingdom a χώρα that is ἀθανάτω τείχει τῷ Νείλῳ τετειχισμένην, and he goes on to characterize the Nile as ἀνάλωτος...καὶ δύσμαχος τοῖς ἐπιβουλεύονσιν (12-13). The Nile is, however, generally said to present an obstacle to invaders by land from the east or west (because of the crisscrossing of canals through the Delta) or south (because of the barrier of the cataracts); the annual inundation also offered some protection against armies attempting to cross the Delta region on foot.57 Lentulus, by contrast, portrays the Nile purely as a deterrent to marine incursions from the north, and a similar distortion of geographical tradition is apparent from his inclusion of the Syrtes on his list of defensive features, since both Diodorus (1.30.2) and Josephus (4.10.5), as well as Strabo (17.1.53), identify not the Syrtes, which are a menace only to sailors, but the Libyan desert, with all

57 See Bonneau for historical instances of the defensive value of the flood (pp. 76-78). See Herodotus (2.108) for the obstruction of movement on land by the canals in the Delta and Diodorus (1.30.2) and Josephus (4.10.5) for the defensive value of the cataracts.
its terrors for an army on the march, as the sole defence of Egypt's western borders. All three of the above-named writers also take pains to enumerate Egypt's obstacles to land invaders from the east, such as the dreaded swamps of the so-called Barathra, but Lentulus makes no mention of this or any other eastern barrier.\(^{58}\) The total omission of Egypt's defences against invasion by land is especially surprising in the light of the immediate strategic situation faced by Pompey. Even though Caesar himself was pursuing Pompey by ship with a small body of legionaries, his naval resources were greatly inferior to Pompey's, a fact emphasized by the citizens of Mytilene earlier in Book Eight when (as noted at the beginning of this chapter) they urge Pompey to choose their own Lesbos as his refuge (8.118-120): *quid, quod iacet insula ponto,/ Caesar eget ratibus?* The bulk of Caesar's forces would accordingly have to proceed on foot, and his Alexandrian campaign was in fact brought to a successful conclusion only after he was joined by a relieving army that arrived in Egypt via Syria.\(^{59}\) Why, then, does Lentulus, with his references to the sandbank and the Syrtes, concern himself exclusively with Egypt's inaccessibility to shipping?

The answer lies in the next section of Lentulus' ethnography, where he proceeds to celebrate Egypt's enviable self-sufficiency in its sole reliance on the Nile's bounty: *terra suis contenta bonis, non indiga mercis/ aut Iovis; in solo tanta est fiducia Nilo* (8.446-447). This section loosely corresponds to the section of Appian's history that cites Egypt's great wealth in ships, money, and provisions as grounds for the council's recommendation of an Egyptian alliance (*Civil Wars* 2.83), but Lentulus' emphasis is not on what Egypt possesses but on what it has no need for: rain, as symbolized by Jupiter,

\(^{58}\) See Diodorus 1.30.4-9 (the Barathra), Josephus, *Jewish War* 4.10.5 (the Red Sea), and Strabo 17.1.53 (the desert mountains of Arabia).

\(^{59}\) See *Bellum Alexandrinum* 26.
and trade, denoted by the word *mercis*, which falls emphatically at the end of line 8.446. Once again, his goal is to persuade the council of Egypt's isolation from the outside world. The Nile's liberation of Egypt from dependence on rainfall (a constant source of anxiety for most agricultural societies) is a central theme of the utopian presentation of Egypt in ancient literature from Herodotus onwards; it is a commonplace of Greek poetry, although its only (extant) appearance in Latin poetry prior to Lucan is in Tibullus' laudatory apostrophe of the Nile: *te propter nullos tellus tua postulat imbres,/ arida nec pluvio supplicat herba Iovi* (1.7.25-26). Lentulus' statement, however, goes beyond the cliché in several important respects. For one thing, unlike Tibullus (and every other ancient source for the cliché), Lentulus asserts that the Nile renders Egypt independent not merely of rainfall but of commerce, *non indiga mercis/ aut Iovis*. Although Lentulus is presumably appealing to Egypt's well-known self-sufficiency in the crucial area of grain supply, his references to *bona* and *merx* extend his assertion to the whole range of commercial transactions. In response to Pompey, who has argued for alliance with Parthia on the grounds of its extreme remoteness and consequent security from the civil war, Lentulus strives to present an Egypt that is absolutely unshakable by external forces, whether military, environmental, or economic.

By insisting on Egypt's complete autarky, Lentulus is drawing upon an ancient conception of Utopia first enunciated by Hesiod, who states that the people of the just city ἰδία

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60 *Mercis* is accorded more emphasis than *Iovis* both by position and as a trochee rather than a Pyrrhic.
61 Of the twelve Greek and Roman examples of the theme of the Nile replacing rain assembled by Sauneron and the further ten assembled by Bonneau (p. 129), Lucan is the only one to associate Egypt's independence from rain with its independence from trade as conjoined blessings of the Nile; the only possible exception is Pliny, who (at *Panegyricus* 31) at least implies such a connection, since the context of his reference to the Nile's replacement of rain is Egypt's temporary and unwonted dependence on imported grain from Rome after a failure of the Nile's flood. In other words, Lucan is reflecting upon and adapting the Egyptological tradition, not merely parroting a standard formula.
Virgil predicts a Golden Age when *cedet et ipse mari vector, nec nautica pinus/ mutabit merces; omnis feret omnia tellus* (4.38-39). In less fantastic terms, Dionysius of Halicarnassus praises Italy as the land that, with its varied resources, stands least in need of imports (1.36.3),\(^6^2\) an ideal that also to some extent underlies the *laudes Italiae* of Virgil's Georgics.\(^6^3\) There are several grounds for the attribution of autarky to Utopia. For Hesiod himself, the primary advantage of economic self-sufficiency is that it eliminates the need to risk the dangers of seafaring. Autarky also confers political and military strength by reducing reliance on potentially hostile foreign territories and on unreliable means of long-distance transportation.\(^6^4\) Finally and most significantly, autarky can exempt a people from the moral dangers attendant on a life of commerce. It is of course well-established that the ancients (especially the Romans) regarded those nations (like the Phoenicians) that subsisted primarily on trade with deep suspicion. In the *De Lege Agraria*, for instance, arguing for the decisive role of environment in forming individual and ethnic character, Cicero asserts that it was life in a busy trading port that corrupted the Carthaginians, not some inborn depravity: *Carthaginienses fraudulenti et mendaces non genere sed natura loci, quod propter portus suos multis et variis mercatorum et advenarum sermonibus ad studium fallendi studio quaestus*

\(^{62}\) Mayer (in his note on 8.446) connects Lentulus' praise of Egyptian autarky with Dionysius' praise of Italy.

\(^{63}\) Compare also Varro, *Res Rusticae* 1.2.3-10, especially 1.2.6: *contra quid in Italia utensile non modo non nascitur, sed etiam non egegrium fit?*

\(^{64}\) Tacitus therefore deplores the fact that, in spite of its natural fertility, Italy has been allowed to become dangerously dependent on foreign sources of grain: *hercule olim Italia legionibus longinquas in provincias commeatus portabat, nec nunc infecunditate laboratur, sed Africam potius et Aegyptum exercemus, navibusque et casibus vita populi Romani permissa est* (*Annales* 12.43.4). See Isaac's discussion of this and analogous passages (pp. 360-361).
In his treatise *De Re Publica*, at greater length, Cicero condemns maritime trade as a subverter of *mores* and a source of socially harmful luxuries, citing Carthage, Corinth, and indeed the whole of Greece in evidence (2.7-9); Cicero accordingly praises Romulus' foresight and wisdom in founding Rome at a safe distance from the sea's temptations (2.5 and 10). It is surely no coincidence that, in Ode 3.6, Horace casts the captain of a Spanish merchant vessel, *nauis Hispanae magister,* / *dedecorum pretiosus emptor* (3.6.31-32), in the role of corruptor of Roman womanhood.

This is a recurrent motif in ancient ethnographers. In his *Bellum Gallicum*, Caesar contrasts the pristine virtue of the Germans with the moral decline of the Gauls, for which he blames the Gauls' access to the products of overseas trade, *transmarinae res: Gallis...provinciarum propinquitas et transmarinarum rerum notitia multa ad copiam atque usus largitur, paulatim adsuefacti superari multisque victi proeliis ne se quidem ipsi cum illis* [i.e. *Germanis*] *virtute comparant* (6.24). The same point is made even more explicitly and at greater length by Strabo with regard to the Scythians (7.3.7).

According to Strabo, the popular stereotype of Scythian straightforwardness (*ἀπλουστάτους*), frugality (*εὐτελεστέρους*), and self-sufficiency (*αὐταρκεστέρους*) is no longer valid, thanks to the luxury (*πολυτελείας*), peddling habits (*καπηλείας*), and duplicitous cunning (*ποικιλίαν*) that have followed in the wake of Scythia's exposure to maritime commerce:

> ἀντι δ’ ἡ ὑπόληψις καὶ νῦν ἐτι συμμένει παρὰ τοῖς Ἐλλησιν ἀπλουστάτους τε γὰρ αὐτοῦς νομίζομεν καὶ ἕκιστα κακεντρεχεῖσ εὐτελεστέρους τε πολύ ἡμῶν καὶ αὐταρκεστέρους καὶ τοῖς ὑπο γε καθ’ ἡμᾶς

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65 Plato ascribes similar moral dangers to the placement of a city too close to the sea in his *Laws* (704d). Both the Cicero and the Plato passages are cited by Sonnabend in connection with Roman views of Alexandria (pp. 105-107).
Consequently, even if Lentulus is portraying Egypt as materially strong, he is also emphasizing Egypt's moral strength in its isolation from the debilitating social effects of commercial intercourse. Ships carry traders as well as raiders, and each type of visitor can prove equally ruinous to a society. It is for this reason that Lentulus emphasized the physical obstacles to maritime traffic with Egypt rather than the barriers to invasion from the land, and he now completes the picture by asserting that Egypt not only is inaccessible to ships but also has no need of them; the two aspects are closely linked by the Nile's flood, which keeps ships at bay through the alluvial deposit of the sandbank, and which renders Egypt self-sufficient through its fertilizing action. Lentulus thus adopts the opposite stance to the one found in Appian, where Egypt's ships, together with the money that flows from trade, are cited as one of its chief advantages as an ally.

The moral component of Egyptian autarky is unmistakably signalled by the phrase *terra suis contenta bonis* (8.446). For Lucan as for other moralizing Latin writers (like Horace and Seneca), the adjective *contentus* is frequently used to designate the laudable quality of moderation in ambitions and desires. In Book Nine, for instance, the word appears (as it does in Lentulus' speech in Book Eight) in an ethnographic

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66 Mayer contrasts the ethical with the political implications of autarky, suggesting that only the latter are in play here: "*terra suis contenta bonis* is not as ethical as it sounds; rather it hints that a self-sufficient country, with no need of imports, is strong" (note on 8.446). I argue that the two aspects are complementary rather than mutually exclusive.

67 See e.g. Horace, *Satires* 1.1.3 and 1.1.118 and Seneca, *De Vita Beata* 4.2 and 6.2.
context, when Lucan praises the Moors for their general simplicity of life, as manifested in the fact that they refrain from exploiting their only potential source of wealth, their native citrus-trees, for anything but shade, even though these are highly prized as a luxury commodity in Rome: *tantum Maurusia genti/ robora divitiae, quarum non noverat usum,/ sed citri contenta comis vivebat et umbra* (9.426-428). These unspoiled nomads, in other words, are not even interested in the luxuries of their own land, in contrast to the decadent Romans, who seek out such products from every corner of the globe. At another point in Book Nine, Lucan launches into a diatribe against the Roman importation of a more harmful African luxury than citrus-wood, namely the venom of African snakes: *(quis erit nobis lucri pudor?) inde petuntur/ huc Libycae mortes et fecimus aspida mercem* (9.706-707). Note that the key term *merx* is used here, at the same emphatic terminal position in the line as in Lentulus' account of Egyptian autarky. Again, in Book Four, Lucan employs *contentus* in a withering apostrophe of the expensive tastes of his contemporaries, including their craving for exotic foreign delicacies, that is, their lack of autarky: *o prodiga rerum/ luxuries numquam parvo contenta paratis et quaesitorum terra pelagoque ciborum/ ambitiosa fames et lautae gloria mensae* (4.373-376).

Most significantly, at the very start of the poem, following Sallust, Lucan condemns Rome's newfound appetite for luxury as one of the root causes of the civil war (at 1.160-170), with a specific reference to the importation of morally pernicious goods

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68 See Berti (note on 9.144-145) for the denunciation of the use of citrus-wood by Roman moralists.
69 Lucan also employs the term when, applauding Cato's practice of *servare modum finemque tenere/ naturamque sequi* (2.381-382), he illustrates this admirable way of life through his account of Cato's remarriage to Marcia in a ceremony free of all undue pomp and ostentation, including the usual throng of attendees: *pignora nulla domus, nulli coiere propinquii:/ iunguntur taciti contentique auspice Bruto* (2.370-371).
70 Compare *Bellum Catalinae* 10-13.
from distant countries: *fecunda virorum/ paupertas fugitur, totoque accersitur orbe/ quo gens quaeque perit* (1.165-167). As mentioned in the introduction, Lucan subsequently provides a concrete proof of this historical analysis in the character of Gaius Scribonius Curio, the tribune and erstwhile champion of the senatorial party whose defection to Caesar helped trigger the collapse of the Republic (at least by Lucan's account), for Curio is very closely tied by Lucan to the twin vices of commercialism and luxury. Lucan introduces him as *audax venali...lingua* at 1.269, while, in Lucan's epitaph for Curio at the end of Book Four, his disastrous defection is blamed on the *luxus* of his society, which rendered him susceptible to the bribe of Caesar's gold (a foreign source of wealth, imported into Rome from the newly conquered Gaul); Curio's venality (together with that of his era) is illustrated both in his acceptance of Caesar's bribe and in the closing image of the buying and selling of Rome: *perdita tunc urbi nocuerunt saecula, postquam/ ambitus et luxus et opum metuenda facultas/ transverso mentem dubiam torrente tulerunt;/ momentumque fuit mutatus Curio rerum/ Gallorum captus spoliis et Caesaris auro...cui tanta potestas/ concessa est? emere omnes, hic vendidit urbem* (4.816-824).

In characterizing Egypt as a *terra suis contenta bonis*, a land without exotic luxuries, commerce, or (by implication) a commercial mentality, Lentulus is therefore dissociating it from a set of vices that are currently in the process of eating away at Rome's moral foundations, and that are indeed in large measure responsible for the civil war. The Nile has accomplished for Egypt what Romulus' prudent choice of site accomplished for early Rome (in Cicero's conception), with the result that this famously conservative people has preserved intact the traditional virtues of Rome's antiquity, just as, according to the story in Plato's *Timaeus*, the praiseworthy institutions of the long-
vanished civilization of early Athens are still reflected in the latter-day Egyptian customs observed by the visiting Solon. In his sixteenth Epode, Horace calls on the pious of Rome to abandon the sinful world of civil strife and make their exodus to the Islands of the Blessed, which (among other utopian features) are described as untouched by marine traffic, including eastern trading vessels: *non huc Sidonii torserunt cornua nautae* (16.60). Similarly, Lentulus can be seen as advocating an escape for the beleaguered Republican faithful into a secluded paradise, the last remaining bastion of the Italian Golden Age. Whereas Pompey seemed to associate the journey to Parthia with a return to his own personal past, to the epoch of his resplendent eastern campaigns, Lentulus portrays Egypt as a means of retreat into the past of Rome itself.

The utopian resonances of Lentulus' account are perhaps further strengthened by the phrase *aut Iovis* (8.447). In his note ad loc., Mayer comments that "*Iovis* in the sense of 'rain', without a clarifying epithet, seems to be unique." Is it possible that, through this ambiguity, Lentulus is implying Egypt's independence not merely of Jupiter's rain but also of Jupiter's reign, that is, of the modern epoch of strife and toil that, under Jupiter's leadership, replaced the Golden Age of his predecessor Saturn, a Golden Age particularly associated with primitive Italy?

Lentulus also draws a sharp contrast between his idealized Egypt and his vilified Parthia through the phrase *in solo tanta est fiducia Nilo* (8.447), since he makes use of similar language to condemn the Parthian practice of smearing poison on arrows: *nulla manus illis, fiducia tota veneni est* (8.388), with the phrase *fiducia tota est veneni* corresponding exactly in sense to the phrase *fiducia in solo est Nilo* (both phrases fall at

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71 Postgate, for instance, in his own note on 8.446-7, cites Tibullus 1.7.26, *arida nec pluvio supplicat herba Iovi*.

the end of the line). Against a nation wholly reliant on poison and guile, Lentulus thus opposes a nation that takes its strength from the miraculous blessings of a divine river. Even though Egypt actually lies to the south of Parthia, it is only with respect to the Parthians that Lentulus attributes a dangerously softened national character to a warm climate (8.363-368). Instead, Egypt's unique geography, in the form of the Nile, contributes only to its independence from rainfall and its isolation from the perils of commercial intercourse, in other words to its economic and moral strength; this is in contrast to Livy, who (in a speech put into the mouth of the Roman commander Manlius) explicitly associates Egypt with Parthia and Syria as a source of degeneracy, through the mildness of its climate, for the Macedonians settled there (38.17.12).^73

Moreover, like Lentulus' emphasis on Egyptian autarky at 8.446, the term *fiducia* at 8.447 implies more than praise for the solidity and reliability of the material underpinnings of the Egyptian civilization, since there is a moral connotation as well. Not only is *fiducia* ("reliance, the placing of trust") obviously derived from *fides* ("trustworthiness"), but it can even serve as a synonym for the latter, at least in Plautus, and Roman writers often play on the etymological kinship of the two terms.^74 *Fides* is a key criterion in the assessment of possible refuges for the defeated Pompeians; at the beginning of his address, Pompey asks his counsellors, *vos pendite regna/ viribus atque fide Libyam Parthosque Pharonque* (8.276-277). In his contemptuous polemic against the Parthians' military practices, Lentulus insists that they lack any *vires* (8.385) in war; the same military practices, as well as being weak and unmanly, are also lacking in *fides*,

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^73 See Isaac's discussion of this speech (pp. 307-309).
^74 See Lewis and Short (entry IIA on *fiducia*), who cite Trinummus 142 and Aulularia 586; another possible instance is Trinummus 117. All three of these examples couple *fides* with *fiducia*, which are also linked by e.g. Cicero (*De Amicitia* 52), Sallust (35.1), and Livy (24.5.14 and 26.19.2).
particularly the guile entailed by the poison arrows (described by Lentulus as *inlita tela dolis* at 8.382). There is consequently a paradox in the application of the term *fiducia* at 8.388 to a method of fighting that is inherently without *fides*, and Lentulus refers precisely to Parthian faithlessness only a few lines later in his prediction that Pompey will die far from home (at 8.391-392). Indeed, Pompey's own speech contains a similar play on the contradiction of Parthian *fiducia* and *fides*. He states that he has complete confidence (*fiducia*) in Parthia's value as an ally in a Roman civil war on the basis of their proven success against Roman foes (8.306-307): *o utinam non tanta mihi *fiducia* saevis/*esset in Arsacidis!* Only five lines later, however, he shows that he is under no illusions about their *fides*, for he allows for the possibility of betrayal: *quod si nos Eoa *fides* et barbara fallent/*foedera, volgati supra commercia mundi/ naufragium fortuna ferat* (8.311-313). In the case of Egypt, conversely, Lentulus' implied association of *fides* with the Nile through the word *fiducia* is highly appropriate (at least within the terms of the utopian representation of Egypt), for two reasons. First, as discussed above, if the Nile does indeed render the Egyptians independent of every foreign *merx*, it can also protect the Egyptian people from the moral corruption attendant on daily contact with commercial activities; both in Cicero's Carthaginians and in the Scythians of Strabo's account, such corruption is manifested in treacherousness and deceitfulness among other vices. Next, the well-ordered society that has been sheltered by the Nile down through the ages is characterized precisely by an emphasis on gratitude towards benefactors (Diodorus 1.90.2-3) and on trustworthiness in the observance of oaths and contracts.

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75 Lentulus also prefaces his account of Parthian warfare with the statement, *non haec *fiducia* genti est* (8.362). *Fiducia* is in general a key term in the moral evaluation of Egypt and Parthia: seven out of its fourteen occurrences in the poem are found in Books Eight and Ten in relation to those two countries.

76 At 8.213, Pompey also announces to Deiotarus his intention to *Eoam temptare fide* as though there is at least a possibility of finding such *fides* lacking.
Under the obvious meaning of "so great a reliance is in the Nile alone" thus lies the reassuring subtext of "so great a fidelity is in the Nile alone". Fides also serves to associate Lentulus' model of Egypt with the traditional values of the old Roman Republic, just as it did in the case of Massilia in Book Three.

The notion of fidelity then serves as a bridge between 8.444-447, Lentulus' general account of Egyptian geography and ethnography, which is concluded by the reference to fiducia, and 8.448-453, where Lentulus specifically discusses the qualities of Egypt's current ruler Ptolemy XIII. Lentulus begins the latter section by assuming the strength of Egyptian fides, for he points out the strong familial obligation binding Ptolemy to Pompey and implies that it will be honoured: sceptrum puer Ptolemaeus habet tibi debita, Magne./ tutela comissae tuae (8.448-449). This assumption is rendered explicit in the next lines, in which Lentulus promises that Pompey will find intact at the court of Ptolemy iura fidemque/ respectumque deum (8.450-451); the phrase iura fidemque is Virgilian, but Lentulus has added the assonant and ponderous climax to the tricolon, respectumque deum, which recalls Herodotus' famous description of the Egyptians as ἡσοσθεὲς...περισσῶς κόντες μάλιστα πάντων ἀνθρώπων (2.37).

In other words, Ptolemy's court is said to embody precisely those qualities of law-abiding, ethical conduct towards human beings (iura fidemque) and piety towards the gods that are central to the utopian conception of the ancient Egyptian society. How does such an optimistic view of Egypt measure up to contemporary realities?

Lentulus' allusion to the difficulties for shipping entailed by Egypt's northern shoreline

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77 Isocrates similarly asserts that, by virtue of the Egyptians' great piety, τοὺς ὄρκους πιστοτέρους εἶναι τοὺς ἐν τοῖς ἐκείνους ἱεροῖς ἢ τοὺς παρὰ τοῖς ἄλλως καθεστῶτας (Busiris 25).
78 See Aeneid 2.541; this parallel is observed by Postgate (in his note on 8.450).
79 Lentulus also implies Ptolemy's conformity to the law by describing him as rex (8.453) rather than the more invidious tyrannus, which is Pompey's sole term for Ptolemy (at 8.281 and 581).
proves all too accurate, since this fact plays a crucial role in Pompey’s death: when Pompey arrives off the coast near the eastern mouth of the Nile, he is persuaded to leave the safety of his own ship and enter alone into the little Egyptian boat where his murderers await him on the grounds that the treacherous shoals prevent larger vessels from approaching the shore (8.565-567). The idea of Egyptian autarky, by contrast, is quite simply apocryphal, or at least wildly inaccurate, as any reader of Lucan’s period (or for that matter Lentulus’ period) would well know. It is true that the Egyptological writings of Diodorus and Plutarch attribute simplicity of lifestyle and the rejection of luxury to the early Egyptians. Lucan’s own contemporary, the Alexandrian polymath Chaeremon, praises the traditional asceticism of Egypt’s priests and stresses their freedom from the corrupting influences of imported luxuries and maritime travel: τῶν μὲν οὖν ἑκτὸς Ἀιγύπτου γιγνομένων βρωμάτων τε καὶ ποτῶν οὐ θέμις ἦν ἀπεσθαί: πολὺς τις οὕτως τρυφῆς ἀπεκέκλειστο τόπος (Horst fr. 10.7), and οἱ γε ἐν τοῖς ἀσεβεστάτοις ἐτίθεντο πλεῖν ἀπ’ Αιγύπτου, διευλαβούμενοι ξενικὰς τρυφὰς καὶ ἐπιτηδεύματα (Horst fr. 10.8). Strabo likewise speaks, with reference to early Egypt, of τὸ αὐταρκεῖς τῆς χώρας (17.1.53), and he characterizes the early Egyptian kings as ἀγαπῶντες οἴς ἔχον καὶ οὐ πάνω ἑπεισάκτων δεόμενοι (17.1.6). It is against the background of such an ethnographic tradition that Lentulus asserts Egypt’s continuing self-sufficiency. Strabo, however, only makes these claims in order to stress the great expansion of commerce to and from Egypt under the Ptolemies. Thanks to the harbour of Alexandria, Egypt was no longer cut off from

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80 See Diodorus 45.1-2 and Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris* 8 (354A-B); both passages refer to the same historical episode (the cursing of the Pharaoh Menas for his attempt to introduce luxury into Egypt).
commercial traffic by its inhospitable coast; Strabo thus details Alexandria's importance as a trading centre at 17.1.7 and also at 17.1.13, where he describes it as \(\mu\varepsilon\gamma\iota\sigma\tau\omega\nu\ \varepsilon\mu\mu\omicron\omicron\omicron\rho\omicron\omicron\iota\nu\ \tau\acute{h}\zeta\ \sigma\omicron\kappa\omicron\omicron\mu\acute{e}n\zeta\). Josephus too praises Alexandria for its facilitation of both imports and exports (Jewish War 4.10.5). Far from guaranteeing Egypt's self-sufficiency, the Nile, which was connected to Alexandria by a canal, is presented by Strabo as a critical factor in the city's (and hence the country's) commercial success (17.1.7 and 17.1.13). The Egypt of the first century B.C., the Egypt whose resources are catalogued by Appian, was a land of immense wealth, not of perfect autarky. As a result, the latter-day Egyptians, particularly the Alexandrians with whom Pompey had to deal, were regarded as no more immune to the corrupting effects of foreign trade than the latter-day Romans, indeed even less so.\(^{82}\) In terms of \textit{fides}, Cicero says of Alexandria, \textit{illinc omnes praestigiae, illinc, inquam, omnes fallaciae (Pro Rabirio Postumo 35)}, while the author of the \textit{Bellum Alexandrinum} writes (on the dangerous situation of Roman troops embedded among townsfolk who conceal their hostility), \textit{at mihi si defendendi essent Alexandrini neque fallaces esse neque temerarii, multa oratio frustra absumeretur; dum vero uno tempore et natio eorum et natura cognoscatur, aptissimum}.

\(^{81}\) See Fraser (vol. 1, pp. 148-184) for Alexandria's role as a centre of foreign trade under the Ptolemies. \(^{82}\) Egypt's involvement in international commerce in fact predates Alexandria, as the ancients were well aware. Diodorus records that Egypt was fully opened up to foreign merchants in the seventh century BC by the Hellenophile Pharaoh Psaumetichus (1.67.8-11), while Herodotus speaks of the early importance of Naucratis as a trading post (2.179). Even Isocrates, whose \textit{Busiris} offers perhaps the most unabashedly utopian portrait of Egyptian society in ancient literature (although not necessarily one that is intended to be taken seriously), praises the Nile not for eliminating the need for commerce but rather for promoting commerce, including imports, \(\eta\ \tau\acute{o}\nu\ \varepsilon\lambda\lambda\epsilon\iota\iota\pi\omicron\omicron\tau\omicron\omicron\nu\ \kappa\omicron\omicron\iota\omicron\delta\omicron\) (\textit{Busiris} 14). The literary association of latter-day Egyptians with the moral pitfalls of commerce can also be traced beyond the foundation of Alexandria; as Isaac points out (p. 326), Plato classed the real-life Egyptians of his own day (as opposed to the idealized Egyptians of the \textit{Timaeus}) with the Phoenicians as avaricious and unscrupulous traders at \textit{Laws} 747C-E and \textit{Republic} 435C-436A. It was Alexandria, however, that turned Egypt into the commercial \textit{centre} of the Mediterranean world and strongly intensified such negative associations, especially for the Romans.
esse hoc genus ad prodicionem dubitare nemo potest (7.2). Even Propertius, who condemns Memphis (the old Egypt) along with Alexandria (the new) in his diatribe against Cleopatra, only associates treachery specifically with Alexandria (employing the superlative *aptissimus* like the author of the *Bellum Alexandrinum*: *noxia Alexandria, dolis aptissima tellus* (3.11.33). Most significantly, even though Pompey died not in Alexandria but at the other end of the Delta, by the Pelusiac mouth, Seneca describes the treachery of Pompey's murder precisely with the phrase *Alexandrina perfidia* (*De Brevitate Vitae* 13.7). As for the other characteristic vice of a commercialized people, namely luxury, Quintilian speaks of *Alexandrinae deliciae* (1.2.7) and Seneca, more specifically, of the *studiosa luxuria* on display in the library of Alexandria (*De Tranquillitate Animi* 9.4). Next door to Alexandria, the pleasure resort of Canopos became a byword for decadence among Roman moralists, including Seneca; Juvenal (15.44-46) implies that his readers would be likely to distinguish the Greek inhabitants of Canopos from the native Egyptian population as being especially luxurious (a distinction that he seeks to challenge). Like the mercenary Curio, like Strabo's Scythians or Caesar's Gauls, the Egyptians of Lentulus' era have been utterly assimilated into all the vices of the new global economy; Pompey has been induced to make for Egypt on the basis of a dangerously obsolete ethnographic model.

Lucan's own representation of Egypt is strongly coloured by such hostile attitudes, as is evident from his scathing portrayal of the rampant treachery, venality, and

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83 These two passages are suggested by Sonnabend as illustrative of Roman views of Alexandria and Alexandrians (on p. 40 and p. 102 respectively).
84 Valerius Maximus also offers anecdotes associating the Ptolemies and their subjects with luxury (9.1.ext.5-6). These examples are all drawn from Bogun (p. 232-233 and n. 4). See also Diodorus Siculus 17.52.5.
85 See e.g. Seneca, *Epistulae Morales* 51.3 and Propertius 3.11.39 (*incesti...Canopi*), as well as Strabo 17.1.16.
86 See also Juvenal 6.84.
luxury on display at the Alexandrian court. As will be further explored in the next chapter, Lentulus’ speech is followed (some thirty lines later) by a council of Ptolemy’s advisors, who are convened to decide Pompey’s reception when the latter arrives off the Egyptian shore; this debate is marked precisely by an emphatic rejection of \textit{fides} and \textit{pietas} on the part of Ptolemy’s chief minister Pothinus (see e.g. 8.485 and 494). When Pompey is greeted by nothing more than a small boat that he is invited to board alone, he begins to suspect that Egypt’s vaunted \textit{fides} and \textit{pietas} may be found wanting: \textit{quippe, fides si pura foret, si regia Magno,/ sceptrorum auctori, vera pietate pateret,/ venturum tota Pharium cum classe tyrannum} (8.572-574).\textsuperscript{87} His suspicions are then confirmed at the moment of death, when he consoles himself with the thought that future generations will bear witness to this egregious violation of \textit{fides}: \textit{aevum...sequens speculatur ab omni/orbe ratem Phariamque fidem: nunc consule famae} (8.623-624).\textsuperscript{88} Lucan himself has been harbouring no illusions on this point; as early as Book Five, he addresses Ptolemy as \textit{non fidae gentis dignissime regno} (5.58), with specific reference to Pompey’s murder (5.61-64), while he describes Egypt as \textit{perfida...tellus} (8.539) in his account of the Egyptian preparations for the crime.

Less obviously, Lucan associates Pompey’s end not only with Egyptian treachery but also with Egyptian luxury and venality. This is accomplished through the narrative of Caesar’s experiences in Egypt in Books Nine and Ten. To begin with, when Ptolemy’s henchman offers the head of Pompey to Caesar upon the latter’s arrival in Alexandria at

\textsuperscript{87} Pompey also states that his reception by the Egyptians will serve as a test of their \textit{fides} for the benefit of his watching wife and son (8.579-582).

\textsuperscript{88} With \textit{Pharia fides} should be compared the common derogatory use of the phrase \textit{Punica fides} (discussed by Isaac, pp. 329-332). Postgate (in his note ad loc.) compares Seneca’s reference to \textit{Alexandrina perfidia} (\textit{De Brevitate Vitae} 13.7); like Seneca’s \textit{Alexandrina}, Lucan’s epithet \textit{Pharia} (from Pharos) is perhaps intended to connect the failure of Egyptian \textit{fides} to Alexandria specifically (although \textit{Pharius} is often used of Egypt generally).
the end of Book Nine, he characterizes the murder precisely as a commercial transaction, by which Caesar's favour has been purchased: *tanto te pignore, Caesar,/ enimus; hoc tecum percussum est sanguine foedus* (9.1020-1021). Alexandria's venal *mores* are also starkly illuminated at the beginning of Book Ten, shortly after Caesar's exchange with the royal *satelles*, through Cleopatra's unparalleled command of the art of bribery: after bribing a guard, presumably with money, to admit her into the palace at Alexandria (*corrupto custode* at 10.57), she offers her body as a bribe to Caesar for settling her dispute with Ptolemy in her favour (*corrupto iudice* at 10.106). Once again, the verb *emere* is employed to describe her success in the latter transaction: *pax ubi parta ducis donisque ingentibus empta est* (10.107). Note that, where the elided phrase *empta est* 89 The exact meaning of this line is the subject of much dispute, as is Dorvillius' emendation of *ducis* (instead of the manuscript *duci*), which is adopted by Housman (see Schmidt and Holmes (1989) ad loc. for a complete history of the scholarship). The current scholarly consensus, as established by Schmidt, who is followed by Holmes (1989) and Berti in their own notes ad loc., is to read *duci*, as a dative of agent, with the sense, "When the general (Caesar) obtained peace and purchased it with mighty gifts." According to Schmidt, the line refers to the treaty brokered by Caesar between Cleopatra and her brother Ptolemy XIII and, specifically, to an episode narrated by Cassius Dio (42.35): when the Alexandrian mob learned of Cleopatra's presence in the palace and of Caesar's support for her claim to the throne, a riot erupted that Caesar was only able to quell through a reading of her father's will, by which she and Ptolemy were named joint heirs to the kingdom under Roman guardianship, and through his gift (hence Lucan's *donis*) of the Roman territory of Cyprus to two of their siblings, Ptolemy XIV and Arsinoe IV. If one were given line 10.107 in isolation and told only that it referred to Caesar's management of Egyptian affairs after his arrival in Alexandria, this would indeed be a very natural reading. Given the line's context within Lucan's narrative, however, such an interpretation becomes much less convincing. First of all, Lucan makes no mention whatsoever of the riot itself, of the specific donation of Cyprus, or of the two royal siblings, Ptolemy XIV and Arsinoe IV, to whom the donation is made (this Ptolemy never appears in Lucan, and Arsinoe only much later, at 10.519-523). Even Cleopatra's principal adversary Ptolemy XIII, although mentioned in her appeal to Caesar, does not appear at this point in the narrative as a participant in negotiations; he only enters the scene some 30 lines later, briefly and anonymously, when Lucan marks the beginning of Cleopatra's celebratory banquet with the phrase *discubuere illic reges* (10.136). The narrative context for 10.107 is concerned to relate not Caesar's dealings with Ptolemy XIII (or XIV, or Arsinoe), nor his dealings with the Alexandrian populace, nor even his actions towards Cleopatra, but rather Cleopatra's actions towards Caesar. The latter is the passive target of all her wiles: her charmingly distressed appearance (10.82-84), her flattering and plaintive address (10.85-103), her *voltus* and *facies...incesta* (10.105), by which he is finally swayed (*corrupto iudice*, 10.106), and (after 10.107) the banquet whereby she seeks to dazzle him with her immense wealth (10.108-110). All the active, personal verbs in this narrative sequence (that is, excluding the verbs of Cleopatra's speech) have for their subject either Cleopatra herself or her attributes or possessions: *adit* (10.83), *orsa* (10.85), *temptasset* (10.104), *adest* and *perorat* (10.105), whose subjects are Cleopatra's *voltus* and *facies* respectively, *exigit* (10.106), *excepere* (10.108), whose subject is the *epulae* provided by Cleopatra, and *explicit* (10.109). If the interpretation of the modern commentators is accepted, then, not only must the reader supply an array of historical
falls emphatically at the end of the line here, the word *eminus* fell with equal emphasis at the beginning of line 1021 in the speech by Ptolemy's minion, while *pax*, which begins line 10.107, finds its complement in *foedus*, which ends line 9.1021; in each of the two lines, then, a noun of sacred union is undermined by the verb of petty commerce, which suggests a conscious parallelism.\(^9\)

The same mercenary ethos has also corrupted the Roman garrison stationed at Alexandria, as Lucan complains when he describes the participation of these Roman troops in the Egyptian revolt against Caesar's forces in Book Ten:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{pars maxima turbae} \\
\text{plebis erat Latiae; sed tanta oblivio mentes} \\
\text{cepit in externos corrupto milite mores,} \\
\text{ut duce sub famulo iussuque satellitis irent,} \\
\text{quos erat indignum Phario parere tyranno.} \\
\text{nulla fides pietasque viris qui castra secuntur,} \\
\text{venalesque manus: ibi fas, ubi proxima merces;} \\
\text{aere merent parvo iugulumque in Caesaris ire} \\
\text{non sibi dant. (10.402-410)}
\end{align*}
\]

The Roman soldiers in Egypt have thus suffered precisely the fate that, according to Lentulus, awaited Pompey in Parthia: assimilation into alien and inferior *mores* (compare

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{circumstances and personages that are completely absent from Lucan's text, but he or she must also make} \\
\text{the awkward shift from Cleopatra as agent to Caesar as agent (for a single line), and then immediately back} \\
to Cleopatra as agent in her preparation of the banquet. It is for these reasons that I find the reading of *ducis* more plausible, where Cleopatra is the implied agent for both *parta* and *empta*, and where the phrase *donis...ingentibus* refers (ironically) to her sexual favours towards Caesar, which would follow naturally from *corrupto iudice* in the previous line. Nevertheless, if Cleopatra is the buyer, what exactly is she purchasing? In other words, the precise meaning of *pax ducis* still requires elucidation. Housman explains it as equivalent to the common phrase *pax deorum* (he cites *Aeneid* 3.370), "favour of the gods": "When the general's favour was obtained and purchased with mighty gifts." Holmes (1989), however, is correct to point out that "pax in the sense of favour is only used of gods" in Latin literature (note on 10.107). Perhaps a better approach would be to translate *pax ducis* as "the peace upheld by the general", in the sense of *pax Augusti*. In fact, Martial employs the identical phrase *pax ducis* with exactly this meaning at 14.34.1 (where a scythe is speaking), *pax me certa ducis placidos curvavit in usus*; a possible allusion to Lucan 10.107 (and thus a possible confirmation both of Dorvillius' reading of *ducis* and of my interpretation of its significance) is suggested by the fact that the words *pax* and *ducis* occupy the same metrical *sedes* in each line, while Martial's *certa ducis* bears a close resemblance to Lucan's *parta ducis*. Cleopatra could then be seen as having (through her sexual favours) purchased Caesar's agreement to impose a peace settlement (*pax*) on the reluctant Ptolemy. \\
\text{\footnote{Cleopatra's *donis...ingentibus* (10.107) can also be compared to the *dira...regis dona* (9.1010-1011) proffered by the *satelles*.}}
\]
where Lentulus feared that Pompey would be reduced to a *famulus* of the Parthian tyrant (8.349), the Roman troops have descended to an even lower level, for they serve not the *Pharius tyrannus*, Ptolemy XIII, himself but Achillas, Ptolemy’s *famulus* and *satelles*; the Romans thus labour as the slaves of a slave. Moreover, not only does Alexandria fail to embody the traditional Roman virtues of *fides* and *pietas*, but it has succeeded in stripping the Roman soldiers stationed there of their own *fides* and *pietas* and contaminating them instead with its own characteristic venality.

As for the luxury that traditionally follows from overseas trade, Cleopatra celebrates her procurement of Caesar’s support with a lavish banquet that is characterized precisely by a host of imported luxuries from every corner of the globe: tortoise-shell from India (10.120-121), purple from Phoenicia (10.123-124), slaves from Africa and Germany (10.129-132), silk from China (10.142), tables of citrus-wood from Mauretania (10.144-146), and even that ultimate Italian luxury export, Falernian wine (10.160-163); the Falernian has been matured not in Egypt but in Ethiopia, another link in the chain of international commerce. Furthermore, in contrast to Lentulus’ designation of Egypt as a *terra suis contenta bonis*, Lucan employs similar language to rebuke Cleopatra for the extravagant scope of her ambitions; this denunciation occurs as Cleopatra takes her seat at the banquet, festooned in a shameless display of expensive personal adornment: *nec sceptris contenta suis nec fratre marito,/ plena maris rubri spoliis, colloque comisque/ divitias Cleopatra gerit cultuque laborat* (10.138-140). Far from confirming Lentulus’ depiction of the country as an ancient sanctuary for old-fashioned Roman values, the Egypt of Cleopatra’s banquet offers a disturbing glimpse into Rome’s decadent future, just as was afforded by Lentulus’ account of the incestuous sexual *mores* of the Parthian
court. Lucan introduces the catalogue of the banquet's luxuries as follows:

\[ \text{explicuit...suos magno Cleopatra tumultu/ nondum translatos Romana in saecula luxus} \]

(10.109-110). In other words, even though, as Lucan makes clear at 1.160-170 and 4.816-818, Roman society had already fallen victim to the corrupting taint of *luxus* by the time of the civil war (for *luxus* was in fact one of the war's root causes), Egypt at that point represented a far more advanced stage of the disease; the phrase *translatos...luxus* suggests not merely a similarity between Cleopatra's Egypt and Nero's Rome but an actual causal link, implying that Egypt has infected Rome with a heightened taste for extravagance, an impression borne out when Lucan concludes his account of the banquet by presenting Caesar as a keen student of Egyptian *luxus: discit opes Caesar spoliati perdere mundi* (10.169). Caesar may have corrupted Curio and Amyclas, but Egypt succeeds in (still further) corrupting Caesar himself, and by extension Caesar's successors.\(^91\)

Here too, a link with Pompey's murder can be discerned. Among the luxuries whereby Cleopatra seeks to impress Caesar are the banqueting-hall's door-posts, which are built entirely of Ethiopian ebony instead of cheap timber, *robore vili* (10.118). The adjective *vilis*, often used by moralists to describe the plain and simple products despised by *luxus*,\(^92\) also appears in the minion's speech to Caesar, when he asserts the lavish expense of Pompey's murder, an expense measured in the moral obligations violated by the crime: *nec vile putaris/ hoc meritum, facili nobis quod caede peractum est* (9.1026-

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\(^91\) Berti discusses Lucan's portrayal of the banquet (and Egypt generally) as a source of corruption for Roman *mores* on pp. 18-21.

\(^92\) See for instance Horace, *Satires* 2.2 (on luxury), lines 15 and 45, and Seneca, *Epistulae Morales* 18 (on removing the fear of poverty), section 5.
Like Cleopatra's banquet, like the library of Alexandria (as denounced by Seneca), the decision to end Pompey's life is merely another instance of this nation's propensity for extravagant display.

In Books Nine and Ten, Lucan has thus exemplified the corrupt *mores* of Ptolemaic Egypt through both of the warring factions at the royal court, showing each as bad as the other. Addressing Caesar from a boat in the midst of the harbour that has made Alexandria the trading capital of the world, the spokesman for Pompey's murderers represents the deed as the purchase price for Caesar's support and as the ultimate luxury commodity, in other words as an entirely characteristic product of the mercenary mentality of the new, Alexandrianized, Egyptians. Lentulus could not have been more wrong in urging Pompey to entrust himself to such a people.

In his speech at Syhedra, with remarkable concision, Lentulus both exploits and embroiders upon the conventions of literary Egyptology, and in so doing he offers a tantalizing glimpse of a moral sanctuary from civil war; the council's ready assent to his proposal is in consequence understandable if misguided. Nevertheless, Lentulus could just as easily have carried his point on the sort of pragmatic grounds suggested by Appian. Why has Lucan chosen instead to premise this momentous decision on a utopian fantasy? The answer should be sought in one of the poem's central themes: the universal decline or collapse of traditional values and institutions, together with the inability of Lucan's more naively idealistic characters to accept this brutal fact. Repeatedly, Lucan

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93 The phrase *nec vile* recalls the dread of a mercenary betrayal that Lucan attributed to the fugitive Pompey at the beginning of Book Eight: *quamvis summo de culmine lapsus/ nondum vile sui pretium scit sanguinis esse,/ seques, memor fati, tantae mercedis habere/ credit adhuc iugulum, quantam pro Caesaris ipse/ avolam cervice daret* (8.8-12). Pompey's worst fears are thus shown to have been realized.

94 I therefore disagree with Mayer's verdict that "the close of [Lentulus'] speech is rhetorically weak" (note on 8.446).
bemoans the hollow sham to which the old Republic had been reduced by the time of the civil war, a process that would culminate in the thin constitutional veneer of the Principate.95 With a handful of lonely exceptions, including Cato as well as the stalwart Lentulus himself, Rome's senatorial elite are portrayed as cowardly, vain, or mercenary,96 on whichever side of the conflict they happen to find themselves; even Pompey is (according to Lucan's famous description at 10.135) a mere shadow of a name, nostalgically glorying in a reputation that he can no longer support with present vigour. The few surviving holdouts of old-fashioned virtue, like the frugal Amyclas in Book Five or the loyal and brave Massilians in Book Three, quickly find themselves swept away by the destructive tide of civil strife.

In spite of it all, however, Lentulus maintains a fervently anachronistic belief in his Republican heritage. At the beginning of Book Five (his only other substantial appearance in the poem), in his speech (as outgoing consul) to the senate assembled in exile at Epirus, he opens by reminding his audience of the high standards set by their illustrious forebears: *indole si dignum Latia, si sanguine prisco/ robur inest animis* (5.17-18). He goes on to assert the senate's undiminished majesty in the face of its current tribulations (5.18-22). Wherever the senate travels, there is Rome (5.23-27), just as was the case during the invasion of the Gauls, when Camillus97 led the Roman forces from Veii (5.27-29): *non umquam perdidit ordo/ mutato sua iura solo* (5.29-30). Moreover, just as the authority of the senate can survive a mere change in geography, it also extends

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95 See e.g. 5.385-402 and 9.204-206.
96 Appius Claudius (to be discussed below) and Pompey's son Sextus are the cowards, and Cicero's vanity prompts him to demand the battle of Pharsalus from Pompey (7.62-67), while the mercenary mindset is exemplified by Caesar's henchman Curio and also by the Republican Metellus, whose attempt to bar Caesar from the treasury of Saturn is said to be motivated by *auri...amor* (3.119).
97 Pompey also appeals to the example of Camillus, at 2.544 and 7.358.
indefinitely into the future, for Lentulus concludes with the address, *vos, quorum finem non est sensura potestas* (5.45). Lentulus insists on the Republic's continued survival over both space and time, expecting to find the values and institutions of early Rome, the Rome of Camillus, intact in the age of civil war, and even beyond. In the same way, in Book Eight, Lentulus associates the attributes of the traditional Pharaonic civilization of Memphis, such as autarky and *fides*, with the new regime at Alexandria, for he prefaces his utopian account of Egypt by designating the country as *Pharon arvaque Lagi* (8.443), with a reference to Alexandria (Pharos) and to the new ruling house of the Ptolemies (descended from Lagus); Lentulus' epithets are drawn from the new Egypt, but his utopian model assumes the survival of the old.

In both of these assumptions, Lentulus shows himself hopelessly naive. First of all, in Book Five, once the senators have dispersed, less than twenty lines after the conclusion of Lentulus' grandiloquent speech, one of the most notable of the senatorial order (at least by birth), Appius Claudius, proceeds to Delphi to assuage his cowardly anxieties about his own future survival in the civil war. Ahl (who outlines Appius' distinguished career and antecedents on p. 124) comments as follows on Appius' delighted response to the oracle's apparent promise of personal safety:

> [T]he incident tells us a great deal about the patriotic impulses of this scion of an ancient family...The aristocratic governor of Greece simply abandons the cause when he sees the opportunity to save his own skin. Thus this man who had held the high office of censor and who numbered among his ancestors the famous Appius Claudius, the blind censor, commits an act that makes mockery of his rigorous purging of the senate. Not only is he shown to be morally degenerate, but also a traitor to the country in its hour of need. Thus Apollo's oracle does reveal something of consequence to history, for all its reticence. It shows the complete debasement of the Roman character even among the most notable patricians, such as makes Curio moderately heroic by comparison. (p. 128)
This Appius Claudius, in other words, most certainly does not possess a *robur* that is *dignum of his indole*. *Latia or his sanguine prisco*. Lentulus' utopian faith in the persistence of the values of the old Republican heroes among their senatorial descendants is thus promptly undermined by Lucan's narrative of the degenerate Appius; his reliance on the virtues and institutions of ancient Egypt will be proved equally mistaken by the immediate sequel to the debate at Syhedra, namely the council of Ptolemy that condemns Pompey to death.

In fact, a collision between the ideal Egypt of antiquity and the reality of Egypt's current moral turpitude occurs not only in book Eight but also in the immediate aftermath of Lentulus' speech in Book Five, when the senators praised by Lentulus vote honours to the despicable Ptolemy XIII, much to Lucan's righteous indignation (5.57-64). It is on this occasion that Lucan addresses Ptolemy as *non fidae gentis dignissime regno* (5.58). Lucan thereby contrasts his own clear perception of Egyptian criminality with the senate's (and by implication Lentulus') blind trust in Egypt and its ruler. Lentulus' faith in the senators, the senators' faith in Egypt, and Lentulus' faith in Egypt are all equally unfounded.

It should be noted that Plutarch attributes the arguments for an Egyptian alliance to Pompey's close friend, the Greek historian Theophanes, and Appian to an anonymous group of Pompey's followers. In such accounts of the debate, the issue at stake is the personal fate of Pompey, not the destiny of Rome, and the speakers are concerned only to list Egypt's practical advantages for Pompey's immediate predicament; although disastrous for Pompey, the end result is without wider implications. By assigning the fatal case instead to the Roman consular and arch-Republican Lentulus, who had no
personal connection to Pompey, Lucan has transformed a private strategic miscalculation into a public tragedy of Roman idealism, of misplaced faith in the bygone traditions of Italy and Egypt alike. Through his Egyptian Utopia, Lentulus promises salvation not only (and not even primarily) for Pompey as an individual but for the entire Republic, just as Plato portrays Egypt as a source of hope for the restoration of the ideal Athenian society of remote antiquity.\textsuperscript{98} Republic and Pompey alike are thus doomed by the fundamental mismatch between quixotic illusion and bitter reality that lies at the heart of Lucan's poem, and for which Lucan himself ultimately paid with his own life when he joined the Pisonian conspiracy against Nero.

Lucan can depend on Lentulus' track record of naive idealism, as well as on the representation of contemporary Egyptian reality found elsewhere in the poem and in Roman literature generally, to subvert the utopian model of Egypt proposed by Lentulus, but even the latter's own speech in favour of an Egyptian alliance contains an unsettling hint of instability. There are two sections to Lentulus' case for Egypt, the first concerned with Egyptian geography and ethnography, the second with the virtues of Egypt's current ruler Ptolemy XIII. Although, as I have argued above, those virtues, as outlined by Lentulus, are fully compatible with the traditional Egyptian civilization evoked by Lentulus' prior account of Egyptian seclusion and autarky, Lentulus argues for the rectitude of Ptolemy's court on the grounds not of Ptolemy's ethnicity but of his extreme youth: \textit{quis nominis umbram/ horreat? innocua est aetas. ne iura fidemque/}

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\textsuperscript{98} It is significant that Lucan does not represent Pompey himself as being swayed by Lentulus' arguments but rather the whole assembly of senators, in opposition to Pompey (8.453-455). In the end, Pompey's own wishes do not even enter into the equation: this is a decision taken collectively by and for the last true Romans, not by and for Pompey. Plutarch, by contrast, concludes his account of the debate by showing Pompey (and Pompey alone) persuaded by Theophanes, and on private rather than public grounds, namely the risk of outrage against his wife Cornelia if he were to bring her to Parthia.
respectumque deum veteri speraveris aula:/ nil pudet adsuetos sceptris; mitissima sors est/
regnorum sub rege novo (8.449-453). On the one hand, there is nothing very remarkable about this statement in itself. It is a direct response to Pompey's stated reservations about the young Ptolemy's moral fibre: aetas Niliaci nobis suspecta tyranni est/ ardua quippe fides robustos exigui annos (8.281-282). It is also in accord with Plutarch's record of the debate, in which Theophanes urges Pompey not to fear Ptolemy, since the latter is ἡλικίαν...ἀντιπαιδα (Pompey 76.5); Lentulus likewise begins by asking, quis nominis umbram horreat? The general sentiment is also conventional: compare Tacitus' observation that Nero embarked on the criminal phase of his reign vetustate imperii coalita audacia (Annales 14.1),99 or the speech in Livy in which the Macedonian king Perseus is described as novus rex, omnis iniuriae insons (41.24).

Nevertheless, Lentulus goes beyond these examples in attributing not merely an absence of formidability or innocence of crime but also the specific, characteristically Egyptian qualities of iura fidemque/ respectumque deum to a youthful court. The problem is that Egypt's legality, fidelity, and piety, the qualities that render it a suitable haven for the distressed Republicans, are inseparable from its antiquity. Egypt is virtuous only insofar as it is vetus, that is, insofar as it has preserved intact the institutions and values of ancient times, sheltered by geography from the contaminating influences of the outside world in the manner suggested by Lentulus at 8.444-447. Everything new in Egypt, whether the city of Alexandria or the ruling house of the Ptolemies, tends towards the corruption of those ancestral mores; Lentulus is optimistically blurring over a fundamental and irreconcilable contradiction in contemporary Egyptian society. This

99 This parallel is supplied by Mayer (in his note on 8.451).
becomes immediately apparent in Lucan's ensuing narrative of the council of Ptolemy, where Ptolemy's youth and Egypt's antiquity are shown to exist not in harmony but in a violent tension that fatally compromises Egypt's ability to offer refuge to Pompey.
Chapter Four: Acoreus vs. Pothinus (The Council of Ptolemy)

Although it appears a perfect choice of sanctuary to Lentulus, Egypt's literary idealization as a safe harbour from global catastrophe is now dangerously misleading, for it has itself been invaded by the spiritual conflict of the Roman civil war; ancient Egypt is no more immune to contamination by Rome's furor than such other ancient sanctuaries as the treasury of Saturn and the sacred grove in Book Three or the oracle of Delphi in Book Five. It is noteworthy that Lucan, who can see the Roman civil war imaged everywhere and on every scale, from the grand strife of fundamental cosmic elements to a diseased liver subjected to hepatoscopy, omits virtually any mention in Book Eight of the very obvious parallel to the Roman civil war that awaited Pompey in Egypt: the strife between Ptolemy and his sister Cleopatra. Indeed, at the very moment of Pompey's arrival at the Pelusiac mouth of the Nile, Ptolemy and Cleopatra were actually encamped against each other there with their rival armies;¹ all Lucan has to say, however, is that Pompey conperit...regem Casio se monte tenere (8.470), without any explanation of what Ptolemy is doing there in the first place. Lucan's silence on this strife between siblings is especially surprising given his constant reference to the impiety of the conflict between Pompey and Caesar as son-in-law and father-in-law, and given the fact that he traces the roots of civil war in Rome back to the original fratricide of Remus by Romulus (1.93-97). The explanation lies in the complete moral equivalency of Ptolemy and Cleopatra, whom Lucan presents (in Books Eight and Ten respectively) as equally (although in different ways) despicable and offensive to Roman values. Although in his darker moments Lucan sometimes conceives of the Roman civil war as a mere orgy of random violence without

¹ Caesar records, castra...Cleopatrae non longo spatio ab eius [i.e. Ptolemy's] castris distabant (Bellum Civile 3.103).
higher meaning or purpose, he often takes pains, particularly in the later books, to elevate it to the level of a heroic (if doomed) and morally weighted contest between libertas and Caesar, a contest that bears no relationship to Ptolemy's petty squabble with Cleopatra.

In Book Seven, Lucan lamented the total obliteration of libertas by Caesar on the field of Pharsalus; now, as he flees from Pharsalus to Egypt, Pompey will find that an analogous battle has been played out, and to the same end, in Egypt itself, not between Ptolemy and Cleopatra but between two diametrically opposed factions within Ptolemy's court.

At the council convened by Ptolemy to decide Pompey's reception, the two opposing speakers, the old priest Acoreus and the corrupt eunuch Pothinus, not only advance the interests but also mirror the personalities of Pompey and Caesar respectively. It is worth noting that Acoreus is apparently a product of Lucan's own invention;² Plutarch, who in his life of Pompey provides the fullest account of this debate, merely records, τῶν μὲν οὖν ἀλλών τοσοῦτον οἳ γνώμαι διέστησαν δόσον οἳ μὲν ἀπελαύνειν ἕκελευν, οἳ δὲ καλείν καὶ δέχεσθαι τὸν ἄνδρα (77.3). The identity and arguments of Pompey's defender or defenders are thus completely omitted, giving Lucan free rein to create a character who closely evokes both Pompey and the utopian traditions of ancient Egypt. Moreover, although Pothinus is a well-attested historical figure, Lucan has departed from the historical record in assigning to him the case for Pompey's murder rather than to the Greek rhetorician Theodotus, who is

² Postgate (p. l-li) attempts to connect Lucan’s Acoreus to the actual high priest of Memphis at the time of Pompey's death, who is known from an inscription that "gives a detailed account of his life and distinctions"; Postgate asserts that "in respect of neither of these is there discordance between what we find in the inscription and what Lucan tells us of his Acoreus." Nevertheless, as Postgate admits, "[t]he name of the priest in the inscription is not Acoreus or anything like Acoreus," and the priest in question would only have been 42 (or 45) years old in 48 BC and would only have been serving as high priest for 28 (or 31) years, which hardly seems to warrant Lucan's characterization of Acoreus as iam placidus senio fractisque modestior annis and as one whose service as priest has seen more than one Apis bull live out its allotted term (a term specified as 25 years by Plutarch, De Iside et Osiride 43).
accorded this role by both Appian (2.84) and Plutarch (Pompey 77.2-4). Other possible motives for Lucan's substitution of Pothinus will be discussed below; for now, it is enough to point out that Lucan has transformed a debate between a foreigner (Theodotus was from Chios) and various unnamed Egyptian counsellors into a debate between two Egyptians, although one is an ethnic Greek (Pothinus) and the other an ethnic Egyptian (Acoreus). Consequently, Lucan can present the conflict between Pompey's attacker and defender as a conflict within Egyptian society, that is, as an example of civil strife. By virtue of Lucan's deliberate manipulation of the historical account, the Egyptian debate at once reenacts (through its two participants) and concludes (through its outcome, the murder of Pompey) the contest of the two Roman leaders; it also reflects a fundamental struggle for the soul of Egypt between, on the one hand, a pious Utopia that is spiritually aligned with Pompey and his cause and, on the other, the decadent and tyrannical regime of the later Ptolemies, associated with Caesar and Caesarism. As a result, the doom of Pompey, of the old Roman Republic that he championed, and of the ancient Egyptian society that he (or at least that Lentulus) hoped would protect him is sealed in a single moment by Acoreus' failure in the debate.

Acoreus

Acoreus is marked above all by his considerable antiquity: he is introduced as iam placidus senio fractisque modestior annis (8.476). Similarly, the very first characteristic attributed to Pompey in Lucan's initial description of the two rival leaders in Book One is old age: Pompey is vergentibus annis/ in senium (1.129-130). These are two of only four instances of the term senium in the whole poem, and nowhere else is the word

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3 See Postgate, p. lii (n. 4) for further historical documentation of Theodotus' role.
4 Mayer cites 1.129-130 as a comparandum for 8.476 (in his note on the latter).
applied to a specific individual: a conscious link between the two portraits is thus
suggested. Moreover, like Pompey and Acoreus, the Egypt of the literary tradition is
proverbially old; this is indeed (along with extreme religiosity) the central feature of
Egypt's literary representation, and Lucan has already alluded to it in passing at 3.220-
224 and 6.449-450.⁵

Acoreus' longevity is combined with patriotic conservatism, for he springs from
the very roots of Egyptian civilization. Lucan reports that Acoreus was born in Memphis,
and Lucan's wording presents Memphis as not merely the site of Acoreus' birth but his
actual parent: hunc genuit...Memphis (8.477-478). Acoreus is thereby presented as
autochthonous, sprung from the very soil of Egypt itself, just as the Nile's flood is said to
promote the spontaneous generation of life (e.g. at Diodorus 1.10).⁶ In deriving Acoreus
from Memphis, Lucan emphasizes the city's close association with the three
interconnected pillars of ancient Egypt: the Nile, the Pharaohs, and the gods. Indeed,
Lucan has already over the course of the poem drawn attention to at least two of these
associations, connecting Memphis both to Egypt's technological mastery of the Nile
(4.135-136) and to Egypt's ancient rites (6.449-450). In his description of Acoreus'
birthplace, Lucan accordingly points out that Memphis contains the Nilometer, using
language suggesting not just the measurement but the guardianship of the Nile's flood,
that miraculous event upon which the whole Egyptian Utopia depends: custos Nili

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⁵ Although the phrase vetustorum...magorum at 6.450 appears to associate the quality of antiquity not with
Egyptian civilization as a whole but with the actual persons of Egypt's magicians, Lewis and Short state
that vetustus is used "almost exclusively of things" rather than people; Lucan is accordingly employing it to
express the antiquity of the institution of the magi rather than of the individual magi as such.
⁶ Compare Lucan's use of gignere to denote the autochthonous generation of the giants from Tellus (4.593).
Postgate (in his note on 8.477) gives a number of literary comparanda for the use of gignere (most often in
the form genuit) to indicate national or local origin; of these, Virgil, Aeneid 4.366 explicitly suggests
actual, physical origination from the ground, while Propertius 1.22.9-10 implies it (since Propertius
associates Umbria's fertility with his birth there).
crescentis in arva/ Memphis (8.477-478). Acoreus' bond with the Nile is then confirmed in Book Ten, when, as will be explored in Chapter Six, he delivers a long account of both the course of the Nile and the causes of its flood. As for the Pharaonic regime, Memphis is the old Egyptian capital,\(^7\) and Lucan ties Acoreus to the royal heritage of his birthplace through his choice of Acoreus' name, which is almost certainly intended to evoke that of the Pharaoh Uchoreus, credited by Diodorus with the foundation of Memphis (1.50.3-7).\(^8\) Finally, Memphis is closely bound up with the religious life of Egypt. In a land full of sacred sites, it is preeminently hallowed, home to several important cults to which Lucan alludes with the phrase *Memphis vana sacris* (8.478).\(^9\) Indeed, all but one of the references to Memphis in extant Latin poetry prior to Lucan are in connection to its role as a cult centre for Isis.\(^10\) Another important cult located in Memphis (and one related to the worship of Isis and Osiris) is that of the Apis bull, whose life cycle is used to measure Acoreus' long years of priestly office: *illo cultore deorum/ lustra suae Phoebes non unus vixerat Apis* (8.478-479). Acoreus, like Egypt itself, has thus grown old in piety, in the assiduous service of the gods. The conjoined qualities of antiquity and piety recur in connection with Acoreus in Book Ten, when Caesar addresses him respectfully at Cleopatra's banquet with the words, *o sacris devote senex* (10.176). Caesar goes on to

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\(^7\) Memphis is the original capital of Egypt in Herodotus' account (at 2.99), but Diodorus records (incorrectly, as Murphy observes in note 103) that it only replaced Thebes as the royal residence after its foundation by the later Pharaoh Uchoreus. Strabo terms Memphis τὸ ἴσωταῖον Ἐμπορίον (17.1.31), while Nigidius Figulus describes the coronation of the ancient Pharaohs there (Swoboda fr. 98).

\(^8\) The similarity of the two names is discussed by Postgate (p. l-li). The tradition of Memphis' foundation closely links its Pharaonic heritage to its relationship with the Nile, since (in the accounts of both Herodotus and Diodorus) the Pharaoh responsible (whether Min or Uchoreus) was forced to undertake large-scale engineering works to control the Nile's flood (the first of their kind).

\(^9\) See e.g. Strabo (17.31-32) for the many temples of Memphis.

\(^10\) See Ovid (*Ars Amatoria* 1.77 and 3.391 and *Amores* 2.13.8), Tibullus 1.7.28, and Horace (*Odes* 3.26.10, referring to Aphrodite/Isis); the exception is Propertius 3.11.34, an attack on Memphis along with other Egyptian places and attributes as part of a tirade against Cleopatra. See Witt (pp.100-103) for the centrality of Memphis to the Isis cult.
attribute Acoreus' advanced years to the favour of the gods he serves, in the same way that Egypt is rewarded for its piety by the divine dispensation of the Nile, which ensures Egypt's continued survival down through the ages.\textsuperscript{11} quodque arguit aetas,/ non neglecte deis (10.176-177).

If Acoreus is described in terms that mark him as a suitable representative of the ancient civilization of Egypt, it should not be forgotten that Pompey is also the champion of an ancient and pious society. For Pompey as for Acoreus, personal longevity is combined with conservatism, with devotion to the past. Acoreus evokes the deeds of a famous early Pharaoh by his very name, while Pompey appeals to the example of the great heroes of Roman legend in two crucial speeches to his troops. First, at the opening of hostilities in Book Two, Pompey marvels that, when given the chance to join the noble ranks of Camillus and Metellus, Caesar should align himself instead with the treason of the Marians: \textit{cum fata Camillis/ te, Caesar, magnisque velint miscere Metellis,/ ad Cinnas Mariosque venis} (2.544-546). Next, just as Pompey dissociates the old heroes from Caesar's cause in Book Two, so in Book Seven, in his speech at Pharsalus, he assures his troops that, if such men (once again including Camillus) were alive today, they would undoubtedly be fighting on his side: \textit{si Curios his fata darent reducesque Camillos/ temporibus Deciosque caput fatale voventes,/ hinc starent} (7.358-360).\textsuperscript{12} Pompey can claim the support of these great champions of Rome because he is fighting to protect the traditional institutions of the Roman state. In his speech at Pharsalus, he accordingly seeks to inspire his troops with the promise of divine sanction: \textit{causa iubet}

\textsuperscript{11} A number of Egypt's religious rites and festivals were specifically designed to guarantee the continuation of the vital gift of the Nile's flood, as ancient Greek and Roman authors were well aware (see Bonneau, pp. 361-420).

\textsuperscript{12} Cato also appeals to the example of Decius (2.308).
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melior superos sperare secundos:/ ipsi tela regent per viscera Caesaris, ipsi/ Romanas sancire volunt hoc sanguine leges (7.349-351). The aspect of Pompey's life that receives the highest praise from both Lucan and Cato in their respective epitaphs for him is not his long roll of military triumphs but his (comparative) willingness to conform to constitutional limits in an age of power-mad generalissimos. Lucan concludes a catalogue of military victories with praise for Pompey's refusal to rely unlawfully on an armed power base: \textit{dic semper ab armis/ civilem repetisse togam} (8.813-14). Similarly, in his first speech to his troops (in Book Two), Pompey prefices a long and boastful account of his successes in warfare by emphasizing their legality and constitutionality: \textit{quo potuit civem populus perducere liber,/ ascendii, supræque nihil, nisi regna, reliqui:/ non privata cupis, Romana quisquis in urbe/ Pompeium transire paras} (2.562-565). As for Cato, he makes no direct reference whatsoever to Pompey's conquests;\textsuperscript{13} instead, the only commendation he is prepared to bestow is that Pompey behaved like a citizen (at least to a greater extent than his fellow warlords), and his eulogy therefore opens with a designation of Pompey as \textit{civis} (9.190).

In the same way that Lentulus aligned Egypt as a whole with the values of the old Roman Republic through the phrase \textit{terra suis contenta bonis} (8.446), so Acoreus is closely aligned with those values through the term \textit{modestior} (a cognate of \textit{modus}) at 8.476. \textit{Modestia} is suitable in an Egyptian priest like Acoreus, for, according to Isocrates, the inculcation of ascetic self-restraint (σωφροσύνη) among the priestly caste was built into the design of Egyptian society by its founder Busiris: τοῖς...νερεῦσι

\textsuperscript{13} Cato does, however, refer obliquely to these conquests when he mentions Pompey's contributions to the state treasury at 9.197-198, and when he describes Pompey's \textit{clarum et venerabile nomen/ gentibus} at 9.202-203.
14 Such respect for limits (as expressed by modus and its cognates) is, however, also a highly Roman virtue, one that distinguishes Lucan's heroes from his villains. In his eulogy, Cato acknowledges that Pompey's superior ability to nosse modum iuris marked him out in a time of warlords (9.190-192), and he goes on to imply that, with respect to personal property, Pompey's own opes were at least not too inordinate (inmodicas, another cognate of modus) compared to those that he poured into the public coffers: inmodicas possedit opes, sed plura retentis/ intulit (9.197-198).

Pompey is the imperfect but Cato himself the perfect realization of this idea of modus, for Cato's way of life is summed up by Lucan as follows: hi mores, haec duri inmota Catonis/ secta fuit, servare modum finemque tenere/ naturamque sequi (2.380-382).

Moreover, if modus is the defining characteristic of the old Republic's defenders, its absence defines the latter's enemies. The Pompeian soldier resurrected for the gruesome necromancy of Book Six, for instance, employs the term inmodicus (in the context of leges) to describe the unworthier denizens of the underworld, who are now rejoicing at Caesar's imminent victory: vidi ego laetantes, popularia nomina, Drusos/ legibus inmodicos ausosque ingentia Gracchos (6.795-796). Indeed, it is precisely a lack of modus in personal consumption that Lucan blames in Book One as part of the general moral decline creating the conditions for civil war: praedaque et hostiles luxum suasere rapinae,/ non auro tectisve modus, mensasque priores/ aspernata fames (1.162-164). As discussed in the introduction, Caesar therefore reenacts the corruption of Rome as a

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14 In Lucan's own day, the ascetic regimen of Egypt's priests was discussed in detail in the works of Chaeremon (Horst fr. 10-11); see also Witt (pp. 89-99) for the asceticism of the priesthood of Isis in Greek and Roman times.
whole when he urges Amyclas to discard the *vota modesta* (5.532) of his utopian poverty. The word is also used to describe the slaughter that ensues when the tide of battle turns decisively against Pompey at Pharsalus: *perdidit inde modum caedes* (7.532). Insofar as he is endowed with respect for *modus*, then, Acoreus is an eminently suitable defender of both the Roman Republic and its champion Pompey against Caesar's violent excesses.

A combination of traditional Roman and traditional Egyptian values also emerges in Acoreus' actual speech to Ptolemy (briefly summarized by Lucan). Essentially, Acoreus' remarks are premised on the belief that a ruler may not simply act as he pleases, that there must be some conformity to behavioral norms: *consilii vox prima fuit, meritumque fide mque/ sacraque defuncti iactavit pignora patris* (8.480-481). This is an appropriate stance for an Egyptian priest, since, like the Romans with their cherished *mos maiorum*, the Egyptians of the literary tradition demonstrate their conservatism by scrupulously honouring not only the great figures of the past but also a vast body of ancestral laws and taboos: *πατρίοισι δὲ χρεώμενοι νόμοισι ἄλλων οὐδένα ἐπικτῶντα* (Herodotus 2.79.1).15 According to Diodorus, the Pharaohs themselves were prepared to conform to a rigorous and comprehensive set of rules, which regulated even the minutiae of their daily life (1.70.1), and they scrupulously refrained from any act or decision that was motivated δὲ ὑβριν and not in harmony with the established public *νόμοι* (1.71.1).16 Through their obedience to the law, the Pharaohs of Diodorus are aligned with Lucan's Cato and (to a lesser extent) Pompey, in terms of the capacity to

15 See also Plato, *Laws* 2 (656D-657B) for the extreme conservatism of Egyptian regulations concerning music and the visual arts. Compare Diodorus' account of the similar conservatism of Egypt's medical profession (1.82).

16 Compare Nigidius Figulus' account of the coronation of the Pharaohs at Memphis, on which occasion they were obliged to swear an oath to make no changes to what was *institutum...ab antiquis* with regard to the sacred calendar (Swoboda fr. 98).
noscere modum iuris, and sharply differentiated from Caesar and from the conventional image of eastern despots, whose only law is their own capricious will, and whom Diodorus describes (at 1.70.1) as τοῖς ἀλλοις τοῖς ἐν μοναρχικαῖς ἐξουσίαις οὖσι καὶ πάντα πράττοντι κατὰ τὴν έκαστῶν προαίρεσιν ἀνυπευθύνως.

Acoreus is thus urging his master to conform to the law-abiding model of the old Egyptian Pharaohs (like his namesake Uchoreus), as well as to the ideal of the constitutionally minded Roman statesman lauded (and embodied) by Cato. Through this effort, Acoreus fulfils the role of priestly counsellor to the Pharaoh along the lines sketched out by Diodorus, who records that (under the praiseworthy system of the old regime) the high priest would every day tactfully encourage the Pharaoh to upright conduct through a carefully crafted prayer listing a series of royal virtues (1.70.5-8).

The specific ethical constraints posited by Acoreus are also fully compatible with his identity as an Egyptian priest.17 Here is the traditional Egyptian fides on which Lentulus has induced Pompey to rely; it is perhaps significant that, where Acoreus begins by insisting on the importance of meritumque fidelique, Diodorus emphatically closes his catalogue of the Pharaonic virtues celebrated in the high priest's daily exhortation with that of gratitude towards benefactors (1.70.6). Here also is the famous Egyptian έυσέβεια (as indicated by the phrase sacra...pignora). These virtues point conservatively to the past in two ways: first, they are part of the utopian account of early Egyptian mores as found in Diodorus and elsewhere; and second, of themselves they

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17 This is not to say that there is anything necessarily Egyptian about either the role of one urging virtuous conduct upon a ruler or the specific arguments put forward by Acoreus. Nevertheless, Lucan has made the choice to attribute this role and these arguments to an Egyptian priest of the old capital of Memphis, who bears the name of one of the great early Pharaohs. The reader will therefore bring to this scene an awareness that Acoreus' intervention in the council is in conformity with the traditions of the old Pharaonic civilization.
require respect for the past in the form of past obligations. Like the Massilians in their exchange with Caesar (in Book Three) and like Lentulus in his address to the senate (in Book Five), Acoreus asserts the continued validity of traditional values and institutions in the face of the chaos of civil war. Acoreus also emphatically differentiates himself (and his ancient Egyptian culture) from the Parthian dystopia against which Lentulus warned, for where the Parthian kings consort with *sacrata...pignora matres* (8.405), Acoreus (less than a hundred lines later) pleads for the respect of *sacra...pignora patris* (8.481),\(^{18}\) with *pignora matres* corresponding exactly in metrical position to *pignora patris*. Even if Parthian kings violate their mothers' bodies, an Egyptian Pharaoh should honour his father's will.\(^ {19}\) In other words, the vision of the Egyptian state that Acoreus represents and attempts to enact at the council of Ptolemy is precisely the opposite of the demonized Parthia, just as Lentulus distanced his utopian model of Egypt from his dystopian model of Parthia through the key phrase *fiducia est* (as discussed in Chapter Three); Acoreus' Egypt would thus provide an ideal refuge for Pompey and his fellow Republicans. A similar effect is produced by Acoreus' repetition of Lentulus' *fidemque* (compare 8.450 and 8.480), only thirty lines later and in the same emphatic position at the end of the line.\(^ {20}\) Lentulus has promised Pompey that he will find intact at the court of Ptolemy *iura fidemque/ respectumque deum* (8.450-451), and Acoreus (a *cultor deorum* of many years' standing) now appears to confirm this optimistic expectation.

Lucan's Pompey (along with the Roman constitution that he champions) and the Egypt of the utopian tradition thus together underlie the character and action of Acoreus

\(^{18}\) Postgate (in his commentary on 8.405) notes (but does not discuss) the similarity between the two lines.

\(^ {19}\) Postgate offers this interpretation for *pignora* at 10.481 (in his note ad loc.).

\(^ {20}\) These are the only instances of the form *fidemque* in the poem. Of course, as noted above, Lentulus' use of *fidemque* is highly problematic in this context, for he mistakenly associates it with Ptolemy's youth rather than Acoreus' old age; this contradiction will be discussed further below.
in Book Eight, but they perish together through a common weakness that (like their common virtues) arises from their antiquity: they are inherently backward-looking and lacking in present vigour. Instead of taking decisive action for immediate exigencies, Pompey prefers to bask in the warm memory of bygone triumphs, as evidenced by his frequent allusions to his youthful victories in his speeches; this is true even (or perhaps especially) in Book Eight, in the sobering aftermath of Pharsalus.\textsuperscript{21} When he introduces Pompey in Book One, Lucan therefore comments, \textit{nec reparare novas vires, multumque priori/ credere fortunae. stat magni nominis umbra} (1.134-135),\textsuperscript{22} likening Pompey to an ancient oak tree, an object of reverence and covered in trophies but fatally weakened (1.136-143).\textsuperscript{23} Acoreus as well as Pompey has succumbed to the frailty of old age, for Lucan applies the term \textit{senium} to both men (at 1.130 and 8.476 respectively), and Mayer comments (in his note on 8.476) that this word signifies "more than old age...it connotes...a degree of decrepitude as well;" Mayer goes on to remark that the phrase \textit{fractis...annis} (8.476) has a similar effect in Lucan's description of Acoreus. The pair's long years of peaceful existence render them equally unwarlike: Lucan says that Pompey \textit{longo...togae tranquillior usu/ dedidicit iam pace ducem} (1.129-130), while Acoreus is \textit{iam placidus senio} (8.476). Pompey is indeed highly sensitive to the charge of senile weakness in warfare and is at pains to refute it in his speech to his troops in Book Two: \textit{licet ille [i.e. Caesar] solutum/ defectumque vocet, ne vos mea terreat aetas:/ dux sit in his castris senior, dum miles in illis} (2.559-560).

\textsuperscript{22} See Feeney (1986) for the significance of Pompey's \textit{magni nominis umbra} to his characterization over the course of the poem.
\textsuperscript{23} See Rosner-Siegel for the importance of this simile to Pompey's characterization over the course of the poem.
Similarly, the Egypt of the literary tradition is a land strewn with the memorials of vanished greatness, proudly displayed by its inhabitants but now mostly in ruins, as in Strabo's account of the palaces at Memphis (17.1.32); such ruins include monuments to conquests that surpass even the eastern campaigns remembered so fondly by Lucan's Pompey. The experience of the touring Germanicus, as narrated by Tacitus, is typical:

mox visit veterum Thebarum magna vestigia. et manebant structis molibus litterae Aegyptiae, priorem opulentiam complexae: iussusque e senioribus sacerdotum patrium sermonem interpretari, referebat habitasse quondam septingenta milia aetate militari atque eo cum exercitu regem Rhamsen Libya, Aethiopia, Medisque et Persis et Bactriano ac Scytham potitum quasque terras Suri Armeniique et contigui Cappadoce colunt, inde Bithynum, hinc Lycium ad mare imperio tenuisse. (Annales 2.60)

Where Tacitus' Theban priest proclaims the deeds of Ramses to Germanicus, Lucan's Acoreus, a priest of Memphis, glorifies (or at least appears to glorify)\textsuperscript{24} the extensive conquests of the legendary Pharaoh Sesostris in his address to the visiting Caesar in Book Ten, telling how \textit{venit in occasus mundique extrema Sesostris/ et Pharios currus regum cervicibus egit} (10.276-277). Like his Pompey, Lucan's Egypt is now a mere "shadow of a great name", for there are few vestiges left of the stupendous military might wielded by Sesostris; Lucan therefore terms the nation \textit{mollis} at 8.543 and \textit{inbellis} at 10.54 and 10.64,\textsuperscript{25} while Acoreus makes his remarks in glorification of Sesostris in the midst of a banquet marked by a wanton display of effeminate luxury, including a troop of eunuchs, the very antithesis of Sesostris' martial virility: \textit{infelix ferro mollita iuentus/ atque exsecta virum} (10.133-134). Present-day Egypt is thus characterized by the same \textit{mollitia} that Lentulus attributed to Parthia at 8.366. Indeed, Caesar is presented with evidence of Egypt's lapsed greatness upon his very arrival at Alexandria, for he is immediately given

\textsuperscript{24} Acoreus' treatment of his national hero Sesostris is in fact far from unequivocally celebratory, as will be discussed in Chapter Six.

\textsuperscript{25} See Berti's note ad loc. for the arguments for construing \textit{inbellis} at 10.54 as a genitive agreeing with \textit{populi} rather than as a nominative agreeing with \textit{puer}. 
a tour of *templa vetusti/ numinis antiquas Macetum testantia vires* (10.15-16), a phrase implying both former strength and present decay; compare Strabo's account of the degeneration of the Ptolemies at 17.1.11. Decadence also characterizes Egypt's contemptible ruler Ptolemy XIII, who bears little resemblance to his famous namesake, Alexander's great general, and whom Lucan addresses with the words *ultima Lageae stirpis perituraque proles./ degener* (8.692-693); for this reason, Lentulus advises Pompey not to be intimidated by the boy-king's name and title, in terms that closely recall Lucan's initial description of Pompey (8.449-450): *quīs nominis umbram/ horreat?*26

The motif of the empty name also serves to align both Pompey and Egypt with the twilight of the Roman Republic. The lapse of the cowardly Appius Claudius from the high standards set by his illustrious ancestor was discussed in Chapter Three; as he sets out to destroy the remnants of the Republic, in his first address to his troops at Ariminum, Caesar contemptuously (although wrongly) attributes a similar degeneracy to Cato, dismissing him as *nomina vana, Catones* (1.313). Cato himself in his epitaph for Pompey refers to the latter's *clarum et venerabile nomen* (9.202), while in Book Two he announces, *tuum...nomen, Libertas, et inanem prosequar umbram* (2.302-303), in a clear evocation of Pompey's *magni nominis umbra* (1.135), before going on to attach himself to Pompey's standards (2.319-320); the implication is clear, as Feeney comments:

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26 Note that *nominis umbram* here occupies the same emphatic metrical *sedes*, at the end of the line, as *nominis umbra* in Lucan's description of Pompey at 1.135. Feeney comments (1986, p. 241, n. 9), "The words...convey the notion that Ptolemy is the shadow, not of his own name, as is Pompeius, but of his ancestors' great name." Acoreus himself can also be considered the "shadow of the name" of a past ruler of Egypt, in this case Uchoreus, since an elderly and ineffectual priest at the court of a decadent child-ruler is a poor substitute for the wise and mighty Pharaoh who engineered the great city of Memphis.
"Pompey is the played-out leader of a played-out cause: he and Libertas are both 'umbrae', 'nomina'" (1986, p. 242).

Egypt and Pompey are in fact linked by more than a shared senescent obsession with bygone achievements, for Pompey can actually number Egypt among his triumphs (more plausibly than in the case of Parthia) and includes it in two separate catalogues of victories. First, in his speech to his troops in Book Two, seeking to demonstrate his complete domination over all points of the compass, he cites Egypt as the representative of the south (2.586-587). Next, when he issues instructions to his son Gnaeus to summon allies from the east (also in Book Two), he orders him to try Egypt as well as other witnesses to his former campaigns:

mundi iubeo temptare recessus:
Euphraten Nilumque move, quo nominis usque nostri fama venit, quas est volgata per urbes post me Roma ducem. sparsos per rura colonos redde mari Cilicas; Pharios hinc concute reges Tigranemque meum...
et - quid plura moror? totos mea, nate, per ortus bella feres totoque urbes agitabis in orbe perdomitas; omnes redeant in castra triumphi. (2.632-644)

Pompey thus reckons Egypt among the many triumphi that are now to return to his camp.

Pompey may remember Egypt fondly, but does Egypt remember Pompey? The immediate sequel to the dispatch of Gnaeus occurs early in Book Three, with a long catalogue (of 128 lines) of the allies who have come to join Pompey in obedience to his summons. The first section of this catalogue (3.171-228) is an uncontroversial list of cities and peoples from Greece, Asia Minor, Syria, and neighbouring regions, incorporating some allies not mentioned in other sources but not unduly stretching the

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27 See also Fantham, who (in her note on 2.302-303) compares inania iura at 2.316 and nomen inane at 2.342, commenting that "moral values have become hollow or ineffectual."
bounds of historical verisimilitude. At 3.229, however, Lucan takes flight into pure and extravagant fantasy: *movit et Eoos bellorum fama recessus,/ qua colitur Ganges...quaque ferens rapidum diviso gurgite fontem/ vastis Indus aquis mixtum non sentit Hydaspen* (3.229-236). In addition to the Indians, the call is heard by such varied and far-flung peoples as the Armenians (3.245), Arabs (3.247-248), Ethiopians (3.253-255), Scythians (3.266-268), and Moors (3.294). The Parthians are explicitly excluded from this exotic procession at 3.264-266, but there is another highly conspicuous (although only implicit) omission: Egypt. According to Caesar's *Bellum Civile*, Egypt supplied Pompey with grain (3.5), 50 ships (3.3 and 3.111), and even 500 men, who, although not native Egyptian troops but Roman legionaries (left in Alexandria as a garrison by Gabinius), were nonetheless under the control and in the pay of the Ptolemaic government (3.4). This is clearly a substantial contribution to the war effort, more noteworthy, for instance, than the mere three ships sent by Athens (recorded by Lucan at 1.181-183). Nonetheless, Lucan systematically describes every nation surrounding Egypt (Syrians, Arabs, Ethiopians, and Moors) without mentioning Egypt itself, even though, of those four nations, only two (the Syrians and the Moors) are known to have played any part at all in the events of the civil war, and the inclusion of the Ethiopians is just as fantastic as that of the Indians. Lucan has not simply forgotten Egypt as he revels in the excesses of geographical *eruditio*; he has instead made a conscious decision to exclude Egypt and indeed halts the final, North African section of the catalogue exactly at Egypt's border (*Paraetonias Syrtes* at 3.295). Hunink therefore comments on this portion of the catalogue that "the name of Egypt, the only country we would absolutely expect he re,...is carefully avoided" (note on 3.292). Lucan

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also calls attention to Egypt's absence from the roll-call of Pompeian allies by alluding to either the Egyptians or the Nile at three separate points in the catalogue in order to embroider his descriptions of other peoples and places.  

Why does Lucan undertake such a glaring piece of historical revisionism?  

In my view, Lucan's goal is to lend a delusional quality to the nostalgia voiced by Pompey in Book Two: the glowing record of past achievements cannot be relied upon in present exigencies, at least where Egypt is concerned. Egypt's failure to live up to Pompey's nostalgic expectations in Book Three is then re-enacted in Book Eight, when Lentulus' expectation of an old-fashioned, Golden-Age Utopia comes face to face with the harsh realities of contemporary Egyptian court politics.

Pothinus

A great deal is at stake in Acoreus' plea to the council. He speaks not only for Pompey (and the Roman leges defended by Pompey) but also for the traditional values and institutions of Egypt. Like the old oak tree of Book One, however, both Acoreus and

29 In connection to Strymon (in Thrace), Lucan mentions the annual migration of the cranes from Thrace to the Nile (3.199-200); he compares the early civilization of the Phoenicians to that of the Egyptians (3.220-224); and he compares the fertilizing action of the Euphrates to that of the Nile (3.259-260). Hunink suggests, "The poet perhaps presents Egypt as neutral in order to enhance the pathos of the tale of Pompey's death" (note on 3.292), adding, "If Egypt were one of Pompey's allies, the main character in the tragic tale would be king Ptolemy, who would have to decide between supporting or killing Pompey. As it is, Pompey is the protagonist, and his cruel death is focused upon" (p. 139, n. 2). Surely, however, the pathos of Pompey's death is only increased if he is betrayed by a former ally rather than merely refused support by a neutral party. Both Lucan and Pompey himself thus present the catastrophe of Pharsalus as the ultimate test of loyalty. After Pompey's warm reception by the people of Larisa after Pharsalus, Lucan comments, nunc tibi vera fides quaesiti, Magne, favoris/ contigit ac fructus: felix se nescit amari (7.726-727). As noted in Chapter Two, when he receives an offer of sanctuary and support from the Lesbians, Pompey resolves to search the world for an equal commitment to friendship in adversity (8.139-142), concluding with the prayer, da similes Lesbo populos, qui Marte subactum/ non intrare suos infesto Caesare portus,/ non exire vetent (8.144-146). The pathos of these lines consists precisely in the reader's foreknowledge that Egypt will in fact not prove similis Lesbo, for, although Pompey is allowed to enter its waters, he is forbidden to leave them alive; Lesbos is a friend in both prosperity and adversity, but Egypt deserts Pompey when he is Marte subactus and pursued by infestus Caesar. In any case, whether or not he has previously lent aid to Pompey, Ptolemy still has "to decide between supporting or killing" him, and an entire council scene is devoted to the decision. Another motive must therefore be sought for the exclusion of Egypt from the catalogue of Book Three.
Pompey, along with the ancient societies that they simultaneously incarnate and strive to protect, are venerable but fragile, ready to fall at the first strong gale, and it is Pothinus who delivers the fatal blow. The latter not only calls for Pompey's murder and thereby promotes Caesar's interests on an obvious practical level but also evokes the new ethos of Caesarism on the moral level, with his contempt for antiquity and practice of cynical *Realpolitik*. Both Pothinus and Caesar appeal to might rather than right as their highest criterion. Pothinus opens his harangue with an attack on *ius*, as well as on the *fides* praised by Acoreus, whose appeal to traditional morality is scathingly dismissed with Pothinus' *laudata* (8.485); *fortuna*, the naked fact of success, is the only law he recognizes: *ius et fas multis faciunt, Ptolemaee, nocentes;/ dat poenas laudata fides, cum sustinet...quos fortuna premit* (8.484-486). Pothinus is working to ensure that Egypt will join the ranks of Brundisium and the other towns of Italy (as discussed in Chapter One) as an object lesson in the power of *fortuna* over *fides*. Likewise, after he crosses the Rubicon, Caesar contrasts *iura* with *Fortuna*, discarding the former and embracing the latter: *hic...hic pacem temerataque iura relinquo;/ te, Fortuna, sequor. procul hinc iam foedera sunto;/ credidimus satis his, utendum est iudice bello* (1.225-227). In another passage, Pothinus vehemently rejects as a consideration in statecraft the respect for legal and moral limits asserted by Acoreus: *sceptrorum vis tota perit, si pendere iusta/ incipit, evertitque arces respectus honesti./ libertas scelerum est, quae regna invisa tuetur,/ sublatusque modus gladiis* (8.489-492). In contrast to Acoreus, who is termed *modestus* by Lucan, and to Pompey, whose *iusti reverentia* and ability to *nosse modum iuris* (at least in comparison with his less constitutionally scrupulous peers) are guardedly praised by Cato (9.190-192), Pothinus here rejects any *modus* to the exercise of tyrannical
violence and exalts naked *vis* over *iusta*. Similarly, Caesar's contempt for constitutional and ethical boundaries is apparent throughout the poem, whether in the crossing of the Rubicon in Book One or in the plundering of the treasury of Saturn in Book Three; the latter violation was portrayed by Lucan precisely as a victory of *vires* over *iura* (3.113).

Caesar and Pothinus are perfectly aligned in their violent assault on hallowed antiquity. It is therefore with particular irony that Lucan shows Pothinus invoking the utopian model of Egypt in the course of his diatribe against ancient Egyptian values. In an apostrophe to Pompey, for instance, Pothinus asks (8.513-515), *quid sepositam semperque quietam/ crimine bellorum maculas Pharon arvaque nostra/ victori suspecta facis?* Pothinus thus applies to Egypt the same verb (*seponere*) that described Pompey's decision to deposit Cornelia in the remote security of Lesbos in Book Five (5.724), while *quies* and *quietus* are key terms in Lucan's treatment of escapism, as in the Appius Claudius episode. Surprisingly enough, the callous and modernistic Pothinus is here appealing (just as Lentulus did) to the romantic illusion of Egypt as a secluded Shangri-La, but he does so in order to refuse safe harbour to Pompey in Egypt rather than to promise it. Pothinus also cites the gift of the Nile's flood, which is so central to Lentulus' view of Egypt (8.524-526): *quae te nostri fiducia regni/ huc agit, infelix? populum non cernis inermem/ arvaque vix refugo fodientem mollia Nilo?* Pothinus here contradicts Lentulus' exception of Egypt from the general law of the moral deterioration resulting from a mild climate, and the key term *fiducia* whereby Lentulus defines Egypt's dependence on the Nile signifies instead Pompey's misplaced trust in Egypt. While Lentulus credits the blessings of the Nile with Egypt's security from external threats (and

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31 In Book Ten, Cleopatra, Pothinus' equal in both potency and depravity, is said (in a rejection of *modus* in the sphere of personal adornment) to be *immodice formam fucata nocentem* (10.137).
consequent value as a refuge for the Pompeians), Pothinus implies that it is precisely this utopian feature that renders the Egyptians unsuitable allies in wartime. Although the adjective *mollia* is applied to *arva* in order to highlight the weakness of the *populus inermis*, who have difficulty in working even fields softened by the Nile's flood (let alone the rugged soil of Greece or Italy), there is a clear association in thought between a soft land and a soft people. Just as Lentulus asserts that, for southern and eastern regions in general, *emollit gentes clementia caeli* (8.366), so in Egypt it is the Nile that softens not only *arva* but *populus* (by making life too easy for the latter in the same way that a warmer climate does for the Parthians). Once again, Pothinus is cynically embracing one conventional motif of the utopian model, the ease of cultivation associated with the Nile's flood, in order to reject another, namely Egypt's reputation as a pious refuge from calamity. In doing so, Pothinus is engaged in a distinctively Caesarian activity: the ruthless exploitation of traditional structures as instruments in the campaign to overthrow the traditional order, as in Book Three, when Caesar empties the treasury of Saturn to fund his war effort and reduces the sacred grove at Massilia to a pile of lumber for his massive siegeworks, or (more relevantly) in Caesar's first address to his soldiers, at 1.299-351, when, after having just crossed the Rubicon, he poses as an indignant defender of constitutional norms against Pompey's illegal seizure of power.

Pothinus resembles Caesar not only in his callous amorality but also in his vigorous dynamism, and it is the latter quality that ensures Acoreus' defeat in the contest. Both Pompey and Acoreus are explicitly represented as old men, in implied contrast to their respective rivals Caesar and Pothinus (although in reality Caesar was only six years younger than Pompey); Pothinus' youthfulness is indeed strongly suggested by the fact

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32 See e.g. Herodotus (2.13-14) and Diodorus (1.36).
that, in his letter to Achillas in Book Ten, he refers to Caesar (who was after all only 52 at the time) as *senem* (10.360). Moreover, each pair is marked by a contrast in power as much as in years. In the initial sketch of the two leaders in Book One, against the aging and feeble Pompey, who is symbolized by the tottering oak, Lucan depicts Caesar as the very incarnation of swift, destructive vigour (1.143-150). Caesar is then compared not to an old tree but to a short-lived lightning bolt that destroys trees (along with everything else) in its brief but devastating career. Similarly, where the protests of Acoreus in the council of Ptolemy are relegated to a mere one and a half lines of futile indirect speech, Pothinus is allowed to deliver a long and effective (albeit wicked) display of rhetorical prowess. Although Acoreus does make a direct speech later on, in Book Ten, it is not a cogent harangue on matters of state but an extended scientific digression on the river Nile for the benefit of the visiting Caesar; at the same time as Acoreus is indulging in arcane scholarship, Pothinus is once again generating forceful political rhetoric with an immediate practical aim, this time in the form of a letter in which he urges the general Achillas to raise the Egyptian troops in revolt against Caesar. Pothinus is of course acting against Caesar's interests on this latter occasion, but he paradoxically mirrors Caesar in his insistence on haste and the need for decisive action. Lucan comments on Pothinus' ferocious criminal drive, *non vaesana Pothini/ mens inbuta semel sacra iam caede vacabat/ a scelerum motu* (10.333-335), while the message to Achillas is fraught with urgency: *ades; subito bellum molire tumultu,/ inrue Caesaris in iugulum* (10.393-394), *tu parce morari* (10.395), and *aude* (10.397).

Pothinus' use of *aude* at 10.397 is especially significant, for this is not the only time that

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33 This has the effect of recasting Caesar as Pompey in relation to a "Caesarian" Pothinus, a realignment that will be explored more fully in Chapter Six.

34 See Rosner-Siegel for the significance of this image to Caesar's characterization throughout the poem.
he is shown to possess a criminal *audacia*: Lucan introduces Pothinus in Book Eight as 

*ausus* *Pompeium leto damnare* (8.483), and Pothinus’ second great intervention into

Roman history, the plot against Caesar in Book Ten, is also said to mark him out as

*audax* (10.344). Such unhesitating violence is the keynote of Caesar’s characterization

from the very start of the poem; in particular, he is frequently associated with the terms

*audax* or *audere*.35 In fact, the only occasion when Caesar fails to live up to his

reputation for demonic energy is precisely in Book Ten, when, after a night of peaceful

scholarly discourse, he is caught completely unawares by the Egyptian rebellion.36 In

this instance, then, Pothinus is behaving more like Caesar than Caesar himself.

Moreover, as discussed above in Chapter Three (n. 18), Helzle (pp. 133-134) has

observed that Caesar is distinguished from Pompey by his dictatorial fondness for

imperative forms (imperatives, jussive subjunctives, etc.): he counts 80 in total for

Caesar’s speeches. It is therefore telling that Acoreus’ reported speech at the council of

Ptolemy in Book Eight contains no indirect commands, merely the assertion of various

principles; even in Book Ten, when Acoreus is allocated the longest direct speech of the

total poem, a discourse on the river Nile addressed to the visiting Caesar, he once again

makes no use at all of the imperative mood, with only a single jussive subjunctive.

Pothinus, on the other hand, issues four imperatives to his master Ptolemy during his

speech in Book Eight, including three barked in rapid succession at the start of his

address (at 8.486-487), as well as employing three jussive or hortatory subjunctives and a

gerundive; similarly, no less than ten imperatives and five jussive or hortatory

35 *Audax* is applied to Caesar at 10.449, *audere* at 1.467, 5.500, 5.509, 8.766, and 9.1062. *Audax* is never

applied to Pompey and *audere* only once, at 8.250-252, and there with a negative sense, to denote an

absence of daring.

36 Caesar’s moment of weakness in Book Ten will be explored at greater length in Chapter Six.
subjunctives appear in the letter in Book Ten in which Pothinus exhorts the general Achillas to raise up the Egyptian army against Caesar. Consequently, Pothinus and Acoreus are strongly contrasted in the level of "Caesarian" imperiousness of their respective communications.

Lucan also highlights Pothinus' effectiveness through a significant omission. Whenever Pothinus is introduced in other historical accounts, the fact of his eunuchism is front and centre in his depiction.\textsuperscript{37} By contrast, if Lucan were our only source for this period, we would never suspect that Pothinus was a eunuch, for no mention is made of this circumstance either by Lucan himself in any of his exclamations of \textit{indignatio} against Egyptian vice and treachery or by Lucan's Cleopatra in her otherwise savage denunciation to Caesar of Pothinus' influence over Ptolemy (10.94-103). Indeed, precisely at the instant when Caesar himself is in the process of being temporarily emasculated and reduced to Cleopatra's plaything, she attributes a mighty \textit{tumor} to Pothinus (although in his mind rather than in his flesh), the one thing supposedly beyond the reach of any eunuch (10.99-100): \textit{quantosne tumores/ mente gerit famulus!}\textsuperscript{38}

Pothinus may play the part of a low-born and audacious criminal in Lucan, but his manhood is unimpugned. In the light of the frequent accusations of effeminacy levelled against Egypt and its rulers over the course of the poem, such silence is extremely surprising. Lucan thus blasts the effrontery of \textit{Pelusiaci tam mollis turba Canopi} (8.543) in daring to lay hands on Pompey, with \textit{mollis} suggesting both the notorious sexual

\textsuperscript{37} See Caesar, \textit{B. C.} 3.108.1, Plutarch, \textit{Pompey} 77.2 and \textit{Caesar} 48.5 and 49.4, Appian, \textit{Civil Wars} 2.84, Cassius Dio 42.36.1, Florus 2.13.60, and Seneca, \textit{Epistulae Morales} 4.7.

\textsuperscript{38} See e.g. Lucretius 4.1045 and \textit{Priapeia} 83.43 for the sexual sense of \textit{tumere} and \textit{tumor}. 
libertinism of Canopus and the flaccidity of the Egyptian eunuchs. In addition, as discussed above, among the luxuries of Cleopatra's banquet in Book Ten is a cohort of eunuch attendants (10.133-134). As for Egypt's rulers, Lucan seems to go out of his way to direct the charge of effeminacy, which would naturally be associated with Pothinus, to his master Ptolemy instead, for the latter is twice referred to as semivir (8.552 and 9.152). Consequently, Lucan has not only frustrated every logical expectation in refusing to cast doubts on Pothinus' virility but even drawn attention to his historical revisionism by emphatically casting such doubts on Ptolemy's instead. This suggests that he has made a very deliberate decision to transform Pothinus into a more vigorous and therefore Caesarian figure.

Even when regarded in isolation, the forceful Pothinus, unhindered by antique scruples, enjoys a considerable advantage over the pious old Acoreus (just as Caesar does over Pompey, a fact lamented by Lucan at 6.303-305), but the context for their debate renders Acoreus' defeat all the more inevitable. Whereas, in Plutarch's account of the debate (Pompey 77.4), Pompey's cause is championed by an entire party of Ptolemy's advisors (expressed by the phrase οἱ ἄρχοντες), Lucan's Acoreus cuts a lonely figure at the court of Ptolemy and Cleopatra. When he first enters the stage, he is presented as a venerable and virtuous island in a sea of freaks: omnia monstra/ Pellaeae coiere domus,

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39 The OLD gives as possible translations of mollitia both "effeminacy" (entry 6) and "licentiousness" (entry 7).
40 Also in play is the ancient view of Egyptian society as constituting a bizarre otherworld whose customs, including gender roles, are exactly opposite to those of the normal societies of Greece and Rome; see e.g. the theme of gender inversion in Herodotus 2.35 and Pomponius Mela 1.57. In Book Ten, it is thus a mark of Egypt's monstrosity that a woman (Cleopatra) and a eunuch (Pothinus) behave like arrogant, forceful, and domineering men while the virile and ambitious Caesar is reduced to the double mollitia of sensual hedonism (in Cleopatra's bed and at her banquet) and of timorous anxiety (as revealed by his demeanour during the subsequent siege).
Even though they accord a token respect to his age and priestly status by allowing him to speak first (*consilii vox prima fuit*, at 8.480), such *monstra* are unlikely to lend a sympathetic ear to his righteous counsels, and so it is no surprise that, at the end of Pothinus' rousing speech, *adsensere omnes sceleri* (8.536); thereafter, Lucan frequently designates both Pompey's murderers and his murder as *monstra*, implying the inevitability of Acoreus' failure to dissuade his depraved peers from their equally depraved course of action. Moreover, just as Acoreus' virtue is thrown into sharp relief by the vices of those surrounding him at the council of Book Eight, so in Book Ten Lucan presents him reclining robed in the simple linen garments of the ascetic priesthood of Isis in the midst of a feast of staggering luxury and excess: *summa...in sede iacentem/ linigerum...Acorea* (10.174-175). Indeed, not only is there a general mismatch between Acoreus and his sumptuous surroundings, but only twenty lines earlier Lucan has actually recounted the serving up of Egypt's sacred animals at the banquet, the ultimate abomination against Acoreus' sacerdotal sensibilities, since Egyptian priests were supposed to refrain from consuming the flesh even of permitted animals that bore some superficial resemblance to the sacred ones: *multas volucresque ferasque/ Aegypti posuere deos* (10.158-159).

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41 The phrase *quos inter* Acoreus/* iam placidus senio fractisque modestior annis* (8.474-476) suggests not that Acoreus is a member of the class of *omnia monstra* but that he is surrounded by them (the phrase "surrounded by" being one of the primary meanings assigned to *inter* by Lewis and Short).

42 See 8.541, 8.548, 8.613, 10.337, and 10.474.

43 See Berti (note on 10.175) for the association of linen (and the term *liniger*) with Isis, and Witt (pp. 89-99) for the general asceticism of the priesthood of Isis.

44 In his note ad loc., Berti points out (with reference to Diodorus 1.83.6-9) that the killing of sacred animals was strictly prohibited; at 1.84.1, Diodorus tells how, during a famine, the Egyptians preferred to starve rather than touch the flesh of these animals. Chaeremon (Horst fr. 10.7) is the source for the taboo against the priestly consumption of the flesh of permitted animals resembling sacred ones.
Acoreus' placement at a seat of honour (*summa... in sede*) is therefore a hollow mockery of respect, just as was his license to speak first at the council.\(^{45}\)

Acoreus is sharply differentiated from his audience in Book Eight not just by general wholesomeness but also by his advanced years. It is to the fifteen-year-old Ptolemy that Acoreus and Pothinus make their rival appeals, *rex puer* (as he is termed at 8.537 and 10.54).\(^{46}\) As discussed in the previous chapter, at the council of Syhedra, Pompey voices concern about the moral fibre of the Egyptian boy-king: *aetas Niliaci nobis suspecta tyranni est,/ ardua quippe fides robustos exigit annos* (8.281-282).

Lentulus takes the opposite view, arguing that youth rather than maturity guarantees innocence from crime: *innocua est aetas. ne iura fidemque/ respectumque deum veteri speraveris aula:/ nil pudet adsuetos sceptris; mitissima sors est/ regnorum sub rege novo* (8.450-453). Here, *fides* is the key term: Pompey attributes it to the old and Lentulus to the young. It is not, however, a youth but the venerable Acoreus who takes up Lentulus' *fidemque* with a verbatim repetition in his indirect speech (at 8.480), while Lentulus' emphasis on *respectus deum* (8.451) finds its realization precisely in Acoreus' old age, which he has reached in long years of pious service to the gods (8.478-479). The (comparatively) youthful Pothinus, by contrast, persuades the even younger Ptolemy to reject out of hand the claims of *ius* and *laudata fides* advanced by Acoreus (8.484-485).

Indeed, Pothinus actually cites his master's youth as additional grounds for denying Pompey sanctuary, since the latter must be taught not to despise Ptolemy's years: *non inpune tuos Magnus contempsert annos,/ qui te nec victos arcere a litore nostro/ posse*

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\(^{45}\) According to Berti (in his note on 10.174), *summa... in sede* refers to the leftmost position on the left couch at a Roman banquet, by which Acoreus is ranked as fourth in importance among the assembled guests, presumably below the two Egyptian monarchs and Caesar himself.

\(^{46}\) The term *puer* is also applied to Ptolemy at 5.61, 8.448, 8.557, 8.607, 8.679, 10.94, and 10.361.
putat (8.496-498). The event therefore proves Pompey's fears well-founded. The Egypt of the utopian ethnographers is marked above all by antiquity, by a reverence for tradition and for the elders who embody it;\textsuperscript{47} as the elderly Pompey and Acoreus discover, on the other hand, the new Egypt is governed by young upstarts with a Caesarian contempt for hallowed scruples. This contrast is aptly summed up in the initial description of Acoreus as *fractis...modestior annis* (8.476). Duff's translation ("taught moderation by decrepitude") suggests that the comparative *modestior* functions to compare Acoreus in his youth with Acoreus in his old age. Given the fact that Acoreus is introduced with the phrase *quos inter* (8.475), however, it seems more likely that the comparison is not between two different stages of Acoreus' own life but between Acoreus and the people around him (both Ptolemy and the other courtiers). Acoreus mirrors the ancient civilization of Egypt in that for both of them, antiquity is combined with conservatism and the promotion of ethical self-restraint in accordance with time-honoured rules. In Lucan's Egypt, however, Acoreus finds himself surrounded by *monstra* possessing neither maturity nor (in consequence) *modestia*.

Acoreus' isolation is above all a function of the fact that he is rooted in Memphis, the ancient capital of Egypt, while Egypt's centre of power is now not Memphis but the new foundation of Alexandria, and Egypt is ruled from there not by native Egyptians but by Greeks with Greek names (like those of Ptolemy, Pothinus, and Achillas, the commander actually entrusted with Pompey's murder). As Sonnabend has shown, the Romans consistently distinguished between Alexandria and Egypt as geographical entities (pp. 101-102), and they were also fully aware of the political distinction between native Egypt and its Ptolemaic overlords: "Es war Literaten wie Politikern stets

\textsuperscript{47} See e.g. Herodotus 2.80 for Egyptian reverence of the elderly.
gegenwärtig, daß es sich bei den Ptolemäern um eine landfremde, aus Makedonien stammende Herrscherdynastie handelte und nicht etwa um 'Ägypter' im ethnischen Sinn" (Sonnabend, pp. 96-97). He cites as evidence the remarkable fact "daß der ptolemäische Herrscher in den literarischen Quellen so gut wie nie als 'König von Ägypten' oder gar als 'Pharaoh' bezeichnet wird. Statt dessen sprachen die Römer in der Regel von dem 'rex Alexandrinus' oder schlicht von 'dem Alexandriner'" (pp. 97-98). The Romans were thus free to reconcile their loathing of Egypt's modern regime with a guarded respect for its ancient civilization, since the former (along with its capital Alexandria) was merely an alien graft upon the latter. Although not a Roman himself, Diodorus reflects this view when he concludes his glowing and utopian account of Egypt's greatest lawgivers with the observation that the many admirable laws attributed to them were altered for the worse after the Macedonian conquest (1.95.6).

Pothinus' very presence signifies exactly such a deplorable lapse in the traditional practices of the Pharaonic government. According to Diodorus, among the praiseworthy body of regulations governing the daily life of the ancient Pharaohs was one designed to ensure a high calibre of royal servants. The Pharaohs were attended not by slaves (σώφρενοι...οὐτε ἀργυρών οὐ τοιχογενής δοῦλος) but by the well-educated sons of the most illustrious priests of the land, so that they would be exposed only to morally edifying influences rather than to the corrupting counsels of τοὺς ὑπηρετήσων... 

48 The last of the Ptolemies, Cleopatra, is the exception to this rule, since she both associated herself and was strongly associated in hostile Roman propaganda with the epithets and traditions of Egypt as a whole, not just Ptolemaic Alexandria; see Sonnabend (pp. 57-59) for Cleopatra's "Ägypter-Sein".

49 At 1.69.6, Diodorus similarly associates Egypt's 4,700-year history of rule by native Pharaohs (βασιλεύσαν τοὺς πλεῖστος ἐγγενεῖς) with its utopian condition (τὴν χώραν εὐδαιμονοστάσθην...τῆς ἀπάσης οἰκουμενῆς) and with the excellence of its laws and customs (τῶν ἀνθρώπων χρημάτων κρατίστοις ἔθεσι καὶ τοῖς κατὰ πᾶσαν παιδείαν ἐπιτηδεύμασιν), although here the fact of rule by natives is presented more as effect than as cause of Egypt's utopian system. At 71.5, Diodorus speaks of the admirable system of Pharaonic laws as no longer in effect.
ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις (1.70.2). Pothinus’ function for Ptolemy, by contrast, is precisely that of a servile panderer to his master’s worst ἐπιθυμία. He is after all melior suadere malis et nosse tyrannos (8.482), and the end result of his speech is a swelling of Ptolemy’s pride in his newfound license to do wrong: laetatur honore/ rex puer insueto, quod iam sibi tanta iubere/ permittant famuli (8.536-538). Moreover, Pothinus is consistently represented in Lucan as low-born and slavish; he is three times referred to as a famulus (8.538, 10.100, and 10.341) and twice as a satelles (10.98 and 10.405), and in his letter to his co-conspirator Achillas in Book Ten he concedes that they are both non sanguine clari (10.382). This is in accordance with the historical fact that court eunuchs in the Hellenistic period were generally slaves or freedmen, perhaps suggesting another possible explanation for Lucan’s decision to substitute Pothinus for Theodotus as the prime mover of Pompey’s murder: a base house-slave provides a stronger contrast than a freeborn rhetorician with the utopian model of the early Pharaonic regime (as embodied in the opposite character of Acoreus). The Pharaoh is no longer steered gently towards virtue by the daily exhortations of his high priest (as recounted by Diodorus at 1.70.5-8) but instead seduced into evil by the worst kind of δουλος.

The contrast between the old and the new Egypt in this respect is mirrored in the contrast between Lucan’s characterizations of Pompey and Caesar. Pompey is primus inter pares, and he is surrounded by high-minded and high-born senators who forbid him from thinking or acting like a tyrant. This is Cato’s stated motive in enlisting under Pompey’s standard: nec, si fortuna favebit,/ hunc quoque totius sibi ius promittere mundi/ non bene compertum est: ideo me milite vincat,/ ne sibi se vicisse putet (2.320-323). In

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50 See Guyot (pp. 102-104).
Book Five, Lucan remarks on the acts of the senate assembled in exile at Epirus that
*docuit populos venerabilis ordo,/ non Magni partes sed Magnum in partibus esse* (5.13-
14). The primacy of the senate is then forcefully asserted when Pompey yields to two of
their number, the consuls Cicero and Lentulus, in Books Seven and Eight respectively.
Although Pompey's adoption of their advice is disastrous in its consequences (first his
defeat at Pharsalus and then his death in Egypt), and although the motives of Cicero in
particular are suspect, the fact remains that Cicero and Lentulus each persuade Pompey to
behave like a Roman and a citizen instead of lording it over the army that he temporarily
commands (in Cicero's speech) or tying himself and his cause to the degenerate eastern
despotism of the Parthians (in Lentulus'). As argued above in Chapter Three, this
explains Lucan's decision to attribute the dissuasion of Pompey from a Parthian alliance
not to the Greek sophist Theophanes (as in Plutarch's account) but to the Roman consular
Lentulus, just as Lucan may have chosen to replace Theodotus with the baser Pothinus at
the council of Ptolemy in order to make the opposite point about the quality of Ptolemy's
advisors. Caesar, on the other hand, receives advice at a crucial juncture (as he wavers
on the brink of civil war at Ariminum) not from an august guardian of the Roman
constitution but from Curio, whom Lucan introduces as *audax venali...lingua* (1.269) and
later condemns for selling not only his tongue but Rome itself in exchange for Caesar's
gold (4.824). Curio may not be a slave, but he is clearly corrupt and mercenary, far
beneath the high standard of statesmanlike propriety set by Lentulus. As such, he is well
suited to give Caesar license to pursue his sinful project of world domination (1.290-
291); Curio therefore functions like Pothinus in Book Eight as a *ὑπηρετὼν ταῖς
ἐπιθυμίαις*, a base and wicked minion inciting his paymaster to base and wicked deeds.
Lucan has provided another concrete illustration of the neglect of the laudable customs of the old regime by the new Macedonian overlords in the very nature of the contest between Acoreus and Pothinus. Their debate perfectly embodies the tension between Egyptian and Greek *mores*, for it is a contest in rhetoric, and rhetoric is a quintessentially Greek domain. Indeed, according to Diodorus, the old Egyptian Pharaohs were so suspicious of artful speaking that they required all legal arguments to be submitted in writing, to prevent the swaying of judges by any factors extraneous to a sober consideration of truth and right (1.75.6-76.2). A reliance on written briefs levels the playing field, preventing any unfair advantage for the exceptionally clever, deceitful, or audacious: οὔτω γὰρ μάλιστα μήτε τοὺς εὐφυεῖς τῶν βραβυτέρων πλεονεκτήσειν μήτε τοὺς ἐνθηληκότας τῶν ἀπείρων μήτε τοὺς ψεύστας καὶ τολμηροὺς τῶν φιλαλήθων καὶ κατεσταλμένων τοῖς ἡθεσι (1.76.3). The Egyptian system thus provides a sharp contrast with the conventional Roman stereotype of the Greeks; it is significant that rhetoric does not seem to be included among the many discoveries attributed to Egypt by the utopian tradition, nor do orators appear on the long list of Greek philosophers, scientists, statesmen, artists, etc. who are said to have received instruction from Egypt in their particular fields.  

In Anchises' proclamation of the Roman way in *Aeneid* 6, it is surely the Greeks who are intended by the reference to the *alii* who *orabunt causas melius* (6.849), and the *Aeneid* contains a powerful object lesson in the destructive consequences of Greek eloquence in the form of the lying speech of

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51 Diodorus (1.16), for instance, attributes the invention of language itself, as well as writing, religion, astronomy, music, and wrestling, to an Egyptian mortal who became the god Hermes, but he makes no reference to the specific use of language for persuasion, i.e. rhetoric, merely its use for the straightforward communication of ideas. No Egyptian voyage features in any of the biographies (attributed to Plutarch) of the canonical ten Attic orators.
Sinon in Book Two, which is prefaced by Aeneas with the racist injunction, *accipe nunc Danaum insidias et crimine ab uno/ disce omnis* (2.65-66).\(^{52}\) Even Juvenal, who certainly has no kind words for any foreigners, including Egyptians, does not accuse them of that precise combination of loquacity, mendacity, and audacity that he attributes at length to the Greeks in Satire Three.\(^{53}\) As a matter of historical fact, Alexandria, together with the Greek communities of Ptolemaic Egypt in general, was home to a thriving culture of political and legal speechmaking that had been previously unknown in Egypt; see the discussion by Smith (pp. 37-72), who comments, "As was true in the West, so it appears in the East: Hellenism introduced into Alexandrian legal practice the art of forensic discourse with all the attendant abuses of oratorical display. Egypt seems to have had no experience with lawyers until the arrival of the Greeks who brought with them their long history of law and pleading" (p. 60). Smith also notes Alexandria’s prominence in the study of rhetorical theory: it is no coincidence that the list of the ten great Attic orators went by the name of the Alexandrian canon (pp. 13-15).

In the contrast between the Egyptian Acoreus and the Greek Pothinus as individuals, a contrast between opposing national attitudes towards rhetoric is therefore also apparent. At 154 lines, Acoreus’ discourse on the Nile in Book Ten, which has no (apparent) relevance to Lucan’s main narrative, is easily the longest direct speech in the

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\(^{52}\) Williams comments on "the masterly rhetoric which Sinon commands in all its moods, despair, subtlety, humility, anger, appeals to pity" (note on 2.57-199), while Austin observes that "Cicero would have enjoyed reading it [i.e. Sinon’s speech], and would have recognized its quality" (note on 2.194).

\(^{53}\) At 3.73-74, Juvenal characterizes the Greek as possessing *ingenium velox, audacia perdita, sermo/ promptus et Isaeo torrentior*; at 3.76, he includes *rhetor* among the disreputable professions at which the immigrant Greeks excel; and at 3.86-93, he comments on their prowess in flattery, i.e. in deceptive speech. Similarly, as Isaac observes (pp. 386-387), Cato the Elder was said to have remarked, τα ρήματα τοις μεν Ἐλληνοις ὀπὸ χειλέων, τοῖς δὲ Ρωμαίοις ὀπὸ καρδιάς φέρεσθαι (Plutarch, *Cato the Elder* 12.4-5). Juvenal's hostile references to Egyptians are found at 1.26-29, 1.129-131, and throughout Satire 15; in none of these are Egyptians accused of a dangerous verbal proficiency. As Isaac notes, however (p. 356), Seneca does describe the contemporary (but not the ancient) Egyptian character as *loquax* (*Ad Helviam* 19.6); Statius also refers to Egyptian-born slaves as *loquaces* (*Silvae* 5.5.66).
entire poem. It is in consequence highly incongruous that, in Book Eight, when the same character must deliver a crucial *suasoria* at a council meeting that is to decide the fate of one of the poem's two chief protagonists and determine the entire direction of events after Pharsalus, his speech should be confined to one and a half lines of indirect speech (8.480-481). According to Mayer, the fact that Acoreus "is not given a formal speech" is "a sure token of the futility of his plea" (p. 141), but Lucan does not hesitate elsewhere to provide a full account of equally futile speeches. The omission can therefore more plausibly be explained as indicative of a certain old-fashioned plainspokenness: Acoreus refuses to sway his royal auditor with the pyrotechnics of rhetorical showmanship, contenting himself instead with the bare mention of a few time-honoured ethical maxims and of Ptolemy's obligation to Pompey. As befits a representative of the tradition extolled by Diodorus, Acoreus is only comfortable delivering speeches that are primarily didactic and expository, like the Nile discourse, rather than forensic (as demanded by the debate of Book Eight). Pothinus, conversely, is introduced by Lucan as *melior suadere malis*; although the sense of this phrase is "better at persuading evil men", the order of the words ensures that the first impression of Pothinus is simply of one who is *melior suadere*, more skilled at the art of persuasion in general; Pothinus accordingly delivers a

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54 Compare the Massilians' vain plea for neutrality (3.307-355), Phemonoe's attempt to dissuade Appius Claudius from his oracular consultation (5.130-140), or the two speeches in which Amyclas cautions Caesar against proceeding with his nocturnal crossing of the Adriatic (5.540-556 and 568-576). Book Eight itself contains several such speeches, including Pompey's own long *suasoria* to the council of Syhedra urging alliance with Parthia (8.262-327); the closely paired ἄγωγες of the councils of Syhedra and of Ptolemy's court are thus distinguished by the fact that, in the one, Pompey himself delivers a full (if ineffectual) oration, while in the other, a "Pompeian" figure, Acoreus, defends Pompey's cause without recourse to rhetorical artifice. Acoreus' reticence is also contrasted with the declamatory (and hence rhetorical) indignatio of Lucan's own denunciation of the murder of Pompey, which falls immediately after his narrative of the council of Ptolemy (8.542-560), and which Mayer (in his note ad loc.) compares to a poem lamenting the death of Cicero that is preserved and praised in one of the elder Seneca's *suasoriae* (6.26).

55 Note that, unlike *suadere*, the verb applied to Acoreus' speech, *iactare* (8.481), carries no connotations of persuasion, merely of assertion, utterance, or discussion.
rhetorical "tour-de-force",\textsuperscript{56} which is rooted in the finest traditions of the Roman school suasoriae, and which succeeds in winning the assent of the assembled court.\textsuperscript{57} Of course, in the traditional Egyptian view (according to Diodorus), the art of persuasion is generally applied to the defence of the worse cause; Pothinus is thus melior suadere malis, and he employs his eloquence at the council of Ptolemy in a manner that marks him as superlatively τολμηρός in Diodorus' formulation, audax in Lucan's.

As discussed above, Lucan associates Pothinus with Caesar's trademark audacia not only in Book Eight but also in Book Ten, through Pothinus' second great suasoria, the letter in which he incites the general Achillas to rise up against Caesar (10.353-398). Like his speech to Ptolemy, this a forceful piece of rhetoric, which appeals with brutal frankness and directness to Achillas' sense of self-preservation. The effectiveness of Pothinus' words is then emphasized by the fact that, as in Book Eight, they are greeted with immediate and enthusiastic assent, for Lucan describes Achillas in his reaction to the letter as non lentus...suadenti parere nefas (10.398-399); this phrase recalls Lucan's initial description of Pothinus as melior suadere malis.\textsuperscript{58} Moreover, as in Book Eight, the power of Pothinus' rhetoric is here contrasted with Acoreus' inability (or refusal) to engage in rhetorical display, since Pothinus' vigorous exhortation follows immediately upon Acoreus' rambling and leisurely discourse on the river Nile (which, at least in its upper course, is equally rambling, vagus at 10.310).\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{56} Mayer (p. 141)
\textsuperscript{57} See Mayer (p. 141) and Postgate (p. liii) for the general effectiveness of the speech; Bonner provides a more detailed analysis of its conformity to the canons of the suasoriae (pp. 286-288).
\textsuperscript{58} For the rhetorical effectiveness of Pothinus' letter, see Berti (note on 10.358-398).
\textsuperscript{59} It will be argued in Chapter Six, however, that Acoreus does in fact have a very definite and concrete (if veiled) moral goal in his didactic address to Caesar, a goal that he to some extent achieves.
The idea that evil rhetoric seals Pompey's fate is in harmony with the actual historical accounts of the council of Ptolemy found in Plutarch and elsewhere, where (as noted above) it is not Pothinus but one Theodotus, a Greek rhetorician from Chios employed as Ptolemy's tutor, who makes the case for murder. Plutarch describes Theodotus as δεινότητα λόγου καὶ ρητορείαν ἐπιδεικνύομενος in his speech \( Pompey 77.4 \); Theodotus was thereafter heard to boast that it was by his powers of persuasion that Pompey met his end, and Brutus accordingly had him killed during his brief period of control of the eastern provinces. Even though Lucan has substituted Pothinus for Theodotus (the possible motives for which have already been discussed), the fact remains that Lucan has both preserved intact the original attribution of the decision to kill Pompey to the force of Greek eloquence (since Pothinus is Greek) and (in the invented character of the native Egyptian Acoreus) contributed the added dimension of an ethnic contrast with a national tradition hostile to forensic oratory. In front of the Greek Ptolemy and in opposition to the Greek Pothinus, Acoreus' proper Egyptian reluctance to engage in unseemly rhetorical trickery dooms his cause from the outset.

Acoreus and his ancient Egyptian mores are thereby aligned with Pompey's characterization elsewhere in the poem, for Lucan consistently associates the various stages of Pompey's downward trajectory with failures of rhetoric. In Book Two, at the start of hostilities, he tries to inspire his troops with a rousing oration but instead delivers an alternately boastful and defensive rant on which Fantham comments, "The chief
weakness of the speech is its lack of relation to the audience” (p. 181). The soldiers are consequently unmoved: *verba ducis nullo partes clamore secuntur/ nec matura petunt promissae classica pugnae* (2.596-597). Pompey then resolves to withdraw from Capua to Brundisium, and Lucan assigns as his motive for this retreat not strategic considerations but the demoralized response to his speech (2.598-600).

Pompey’s war begins with a display of verbal weakness, and it ends with his disastrous decision to meet Caesar on the field of Pharsalus, a decision forced upon him against his better judgment by the fiery eloquence of Cicero, who is introduced by Lucan as *Romani maximus auctor/ Tullius eloquii* (7.62-63). Cicero's presence and intervention here are alike gross distortions of history, for in fact Cicero was in Dyrrachium on the day of the battle, and "[i]n any case he was not one to urge Pompey on to rash action” (Dilke (1960), p. 31). Whatever other reasons Lucan may have had for this fiction, surely one of his points is the destructive power of rhetoric to advance the worse over the better cause: *addidit invalidae robur facundia causae* (7.67). Another point is Pompey's comparative lack of rhetorical *robur* (compare Lucan’s initial comparison of Pompey to a tree without *robur* at 1.142); even though Pompey attempts a rebuttal of Cicero's arguments, he does so only after conceding the whole issue and agreeing to the battle. Moreover, not only does Cicero's *suasoria* succeed in forcing Pompey's hand, but Cicero is motivated precisely by pride in his rhetorical proficiency (the same pride said to have been shown by Theodotus for his part in Pompey's death), a proficiency that he will only be free to display to its full glory once the war is concluded: *pertulit iratus bellis, cum rostra forumque/ optaret, passus tam longa silentia miles* (7.65-66).
Finally, the fatal decision in Book Eight to choose Egypt as an ally in defeat is also forced on Pompey through powerful rhetoric, this time from Lentulus. Although Postgate describes Pompey's speech to the council as a "vivid and vigorous declamation" (p. xxxix), Mayer observes, "At the same time this speech must, in the context of the eighth book, fail; for failure is central to Lucan's portrait of Pompey. Thus the speech is not so strong throughout as Pompey's situation demands;" Mayer goes on to point out the essential self-contradiction and vacillation of Pompey's argument (p. 119). As for Lentulus, he delivers a blisteringly effective refutation of Pompey's case for a Parthian alliance; given the immense affection that Pompey showers on Cornelia throughout the poem, Lentulus' emphasis on the sexual indignities awaiting her at the hands of the lecherous Parthian despot is particularly effective and demonstrates precisely that "relation to the audience" whose absence (according to Fantham) constituted the main weakness of Pompey's speech to his troops in Book Two. As I have argued in Chapter Three, Lentulus' brief account of Egypt is also well crafted to appeal to the Republican sensibilities and illusions of his senatorial audience.

Pompey is himself presented as an ineffective speaker, and the more successful speeches of his followers and associates are directed against his wishes and interests. Caesar, by contrast, is deaf to rhetorical persuasion, whether it takes the form of the Massilians' vain plea for neutrality in Book Three or the skipper Amyclas' warning not to take to the sea in Book Five. While rhetoric has no deleterious power over Caesar,

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63 Mayer points out (p. 125) that Lentulus' speech conforms to the criteria laid out by Cicero in the De Oratore (2.335), in that it argues from both utile (the Parthians would make weak, unreliable, and treacherous allies) and honestum (it would be unseemly and wrong to enlist the aid of Rome's sworn enemies).

64 There is only one occasion when Caesar is shown to be "bent" by persuasion. In Spain, after Afranius surrenders and implores Caesar to allow his troops to return home as civilians, Lucan states, Caesar facilis volutque serenus/ flectitur atque usus belli poenamque remittit (4.363-364); as discussed in the introductory
powerful speechmaking (both by himself and by his followers) serves to advance his goals at two critical points in the poem. In Book Five, alone and armed with nothing but angry words, Caesar confronts a dangerous mutiny that threatens to derail all his plans, but his words are enough to defuse the situation: *tremuit saeva sub voce minantis/ volgus iners* (5.364-365). More important is the sequence of speeches that marks the beginning of Caesar's campaign in Book One. After Caesar has crossed the Rubicon and is encamped at Ariminum, the tribune Curio arrives and further inflames Caesar's already considerable passion for civil war with a speech of encouragement (1.291-295). Thus bolstered, Caesar addresses his troops, but they remain troubled by the enormity of civil war and unconvinced by Caesar's decorous appeal to injured legality, just as Pompey's troops are unimpressed by his address in Book Two. What distinguishes Caesar's speech from Pompey's, however, is that at this point his centurion Laelius steps in and makes a ferocious appeal to the ideal of soldierly loyalty; this exaltation of brute force exactly targets the emotions of the assembled army, and so the men respond with clamorous and heartfelt enthusiasm: *his cunctae simul adsensere cohortes* (1.386). Even where Caesar's own rhetoric fails him, *Caesarian* rhetoric is therefore consistently effective. Fantham contrasts the reaction of Caesar's troops here to the tepid response of Pompey's men in Book Two (in her note on 2.596-597), but there is also a striking foreshadowing of the response of Ptolemy's courtiers to Pothinus' speech in Book Eight: *adsensere omnes sceleri* (8.536). These are the only two appearances of the verb *adsentire* in any form in the poem, and a further link is suggested by the correspondence of *cunctae* to *omnes*. Is

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section, however, this concession is not as great as it might at first appear. It is notable that even in Book Ten, at the moment of Caesar's greatest weakness, it is not Cleopatra's verbal skills but her sexual charms that succeed in distracting Caesar from his political and military goals: *nequiquam duras temptasset Caesaris aures:/ voltus adest precibus faciesque incesta perorat* (10.104-105).
it a coincidence that the two greatest crimes of the civil war, namely the initiation of the war itself and the murder of Pompey, are both set in motion through a piece of brutal and powerful rhetoric (the speeches of Laelius and Pothinus), which is then greeted with universal acclaim (expressed by the same verb form)?

One of the reasons why Pothinus can defeat Acoreus in debate is that he better understands the rhetorical imperative to relate his speech to his audience: Lucan describes him as melior...nosse tyrannos (8.482). If Acoreus had appealed less to old-fashioned pietas (the rhetorical category of honestum) and more to callous expediency (the category of utile), he might have made more of an impact; compare Pothinus' forthright embrace of utile and eschewal of rectum at 8.488. Acoreus' scruples are entirely out of place in the brave new world of Caesars and Ptolemies. In a clear dig at his opponent, who is described as a lifelong cultor deorum, and who preaches respect for the ethical guidelines laid down by his gods (as indicated by the phrase sacra...pignora at 8.481), Pothinus issues the sweeping declaration, exeat aula/ qui volt esse pius (8.493-494). Caesar likewise has no use for old-fashioned pietas, insisting in his speech to his troops at Pharsalus that it belongs no more to the battlefield than it does (according to Pothinus) to the palace: non vos pietatis imago/ ulla nec adversa conspecti fronte parentes/ commoveant; voltus gladio turbate verendos (7.320-322). It is thus pietas that prevents Pompey from driving home his advantage against Caesar in the battle outside Dyrrachium and ultimately costs him the war, as Lucan laments: dolet heu semperque dolebit,/ quod scelerum, Caesar, prodest tibi summa tuorum,/ cum genero pugnasse pio (6.303-305). In contrast to the traditional Egyptian gods revered by Acoreus, as well as the traditional Roman gods invoked by Pompey on the field of Pharsalus as allies against

65 Caesar is also termed inpius at 8.783.
Caesar (at 7.349-351), the deities of Caesar and Pothinus reveal themselves not in venerable laws, institutions, or ethical strictures but in the fact of present strength and success. For Pothinus, obedience to the will of the gods takes the form of alignment with the winning side: *fatis accede deisque,/ et cole felices, miseris fuge* (8.486-487). Addressing a Hellenistic monarch amid an assembly of Hellenistic courtiers, Pothinus invokes the distinctively Hellenistic deity of Tyche in his emphasis on the amoral *Fortuna* (8.486); Tyche, it should be noted, enjoyed a considerable cult in Hellenistic Alexandria. The native Egyptian Acoreus and his native Egyptian gods are equally obsolete in such a setting.

Acoreus' spiritual isolation from the environment of Ptolemy's court is vividly illustrated by the speech of the *satelles/ regis* (9.1010-1011) who bears the gift of Pompey's head to Caesar at the end of Book Nine, for the minion *infanda commendat crimina voce* (9.1013) in a speech that seems a grotesque parody of Acoreus' own language and scruples. Where Acoreus speaks of *sacra...pignora patris* (8.481), the minion boasts, in relation to Pompey's murder, that *tanto te pignore, Caesar,/ emimus* (9.1020-1021). Again, Acoreus speaks of the *meritum* (8.480) binding Ptolemy to Pompey, while the *satelles* terms the murder a *meritum* that binds Caesar to Ptolemy; moreover, the value of the crime as a *meritum* consists precisely in its monstrous violation of the principles of gratitude and loyalty that were asserted by Acoreus: *nec vile putaris/ hoc meritum, facili nobis quod caede peractum est./ hospes avitus erat, depulso sceptra parenti/ reddiderat* (9.1026-1029). In Ptolemy's (and Caesar's) universe, the terminology of virtue is thus harnessed to the service of vice, just as Pothinus in his speech of Book Eight exploited the traditional model of Egypt in order to advance his

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66 See the Pauly-Wissowa article on Tyche for the latter's prominence in Alexandria (p.1679).
nefarious and modernizing agenda. This similarity in mindset between Lucan's Pothinus and the anonymous satelles of Book Nine is no accident, for, according to Plutarch (Caesar 48.2), Caesar was presented with the gift of Pompey's head by the same figure (Theodotus) who had argued for Pompey's murder in the council of Ptolemy. By assigning these two wicked acts to two separate characters instead (Pothinus and the satelles), Lucan emphasizes the extent to which Acoreus is outnumbered by the enemies of pietas at Ptolemy's court. Lucan also underscores Pompey's isolation in the midst of his Egyptian captors through a similar distortion of historical fact: Caesar records that Pompey entered the small boat where he would meet his death *cum paucis suis* (Bellum Civile 104.3), while Plutarch states that Pompey was accompanied by two centurions, a freedman, and a slave (Pompey 78.4), but Lucan makes no mention of these companions, implying that Pompey must face his murderers all alone, just as Acoreus was alone in resisting their evil designs.

**Alexander**

Through the characterization of Acoreus and Pothinus, the ὁγόν at Ptolemy's court encapsulates in microcosm not only Pompey's recent defeat by Caesar but also the overthrow of the ancient civilization of Memphis by the new regime at Alexandria. While the Roman Republic is only now succumbing to Caesar, Egypt has long since yielded to the corrupting despotism of the Ptolemies, and Acoreus is merely one last, pathetic remnant of the vanished Utopia evoked by Lentulus.67 This juxtaposition of

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67 The difference between the stages of decline reached by Egypt and Rome at the time of the Roman civil war is neatly illustrated by the fact that Pompey manages to continue his struggle against Caesar for seven whole books (which include minor victories as well as major defeats), whereas Acoreus' ineffectual resistance of Pothinus' agenda is confined to a mere seven lines (8.475-481); the defence of pious legality may be a lost cause in Egypt, but in Rome it is still worth fighting for, even after Pharsalus, as Cato insists at 9.262-266.
Caesar’s recent subjugation of Rome with Egypt's longstanding enslavement to the
Ptolemies goes beyond a simple doubling for poetic effect. There is a causal link as well,
for Lucan assigns both disasters to the same ultimate source: Alexander the Great. In
life, Alexander accomplished the Greek conquest of Egypt, and now his prized corpse
serves as the symbolic authority for the entire Ptolemaic regime, a fact proclaimed by the
location of his tomb at the Ptolemaic capital of Alexandria. At 8.692-699, in an address
to Ptolemy XIII, Lucan complains that Pompey's headless trunk is allowed to lie unburied
while the disgraceful rabble of the Ptolemies rest in lavish pyramids, and Alexander
himself in a sacred grotto: *ultima Lageae stirpis perituraque proles,/ degener, incestae
scepbris cessure sorori,/ cum tibi sacrato Macedon servetur in antro/ et regum cineres
extracto monte quiescant,/ cum Ptolemaeorum manes seriemque pudendam/ pyramides
claudant indignaque Mausolea,/ litora Pompeium feriunt, truncusque vadosis huc illuc
iactatur aquis.* Several observations should be made here. First of all, Lucan casts no
aspersions on the funeral honours of the native Pharaohs, since (as Nisbet observes, p.
183) the latter were not cremated and so cannot be the intended reference of *regum
cineres*; Lucan's indignation is directed exclusively against the new Greek rulers of
Egypt.68 He opens his tirade with a contemptuous reference to the last two of these,
Ptolemy and his sister Cleopatra, stressing that in Ptolemy the whole line comes to an end
(*ultima...perituraque proles*), and not with a bang but a whimper (for Ptolemy is *degener*
from his illustrious ancestor and namesake). At the same time, Lucan looks back to the
dynasty's founder, Ptolemy I, designating the family as *Lagea stirps*, a reference to
Ptolemy's father. After tracing the Ptolemies back to their genetic source, Lucan

68 Similarly, at 10.526-527, Lucan presents Ptolemy XIII himself (*ipse tyrannus*) and his royal line (*regia
Lagi*) as worthy objects of vengeance for Pompey's murder but makes no mention of the earlier native
Pharaohs.
proceeds to condemn the reverential entombment of their ultimate political source, Alexander, denoting the latter by an epithet (*Macedon*) that closely connects him to his fellow countryman Ptolemy. The use of the dative *tibi* with the passive *servetur* instead of an ablative of agent suggests a close personal link between Ptolemy XIII and Alexander: the former is not only honouring the latter but doing so for his own benefit, with a personal stake in the matter (as indeed the Ptolemies did clearly benefit from the exploitation of their connection with Alexander). After he defines the beginning and the end of the Greek regime in Egypt through Ptolemy I and Alexander (at one end) and Ptolemy XIII and Cleopatra (at the other), Lucan issues a sweeping condemnation of the whole line of the Ptolemies from start to finish. *Regum cineres* refers not to the native Pharaohs but to the earliest Ptolemies, who were in fact cremated and buried next to Alexander, while the scornfully described group of *Ptolemaeorum manes seriemque pudendam* enclosed by the *pyramides* are the final Ptolemies, who aped the burial customs of the ancient Egyptians (Nisbet, pp. 183-184). There is thus a clear and unbroken chain leading back from Pompey's murderer, Ptolemy XIII, through his Ptolemaic forebears, to Alexander's associate Ptolemy I and Alexander himself.

Lucan also sets the stage for the council scene by closely associating the unsavouriness of Ptolemy's court with its Macedonian provenance: *omnia monstra/ Pellaee coiere domus* (8.474-475). This description is immediately followed by the appearance of Acoreus: *quos inter Acoreus* (8.475). The Egyptian name Acoreus is sharply contrasted with the Greek epithet *Pellaee*, just as Acoreus himself stands out from the rest of the courtiers through his antiquity and *modestia*. Lucan is suggesting more than an ethnic tension between Macedonian/Greek and Egyptian elements, for
Pellaeus is used in Lucan exclusively of Alexander and his Hellenistic successor-kings, referring to Alexander himself at 3.233, 8.237, and 9.153, to his father Philip at 10.20, to the Seleucids at 8.298, and to Ptolemy and his court (in addition to 8.475) at 5.60, 8.607, 9.1016, 9.1073, 10.55, and 10.511. Alexander therefore casts his shadow over the scene at Ptolemy's court, and not just through the epithet Pellaeus. At the beginning of Book Ten, Lucan delivers a long and vehement tirade against Alexander, whom he condemns as an incitement to world domination, non utile mundo/ editus exemplum, terras tot posse sub uno/ esse viro (10.26-28). Alexander began his career by finding the boundaries (fines) of his native Macedonia too narrow for his ambitions: Macetum fines latebrasque suorum/ deseruit (10.28-29). He then embarked on a wanton course of destruction through the human realm, which culminated in projected assaults against the great natural obstacles of the Ocean and the Nile's source, and only his early death could eventually set a limit (finem) to his mad career: occurrit suprema dies, naturaque solum/ hunc potuit finem vaesano ponere regi (10.41-42). Alexander is thereby reduced to an archetypal vaesanus rex (like Cambyses), proles vaesana Philippi (10.20), and a prototype for future tyrants; as such, he can be regarded as the model for even the contemptible Ptolemy XIII, or rather for the latter's puppeteer Pothinus, who is said to possess a vaesana...mens at 10.333-334. Although Pothinus pleads Egypt's unwarlike mollitia as an excuse for denying Pompey's request for military aid, the sublatus modus gladiis (8.492) that he preaches as the cardinal rule for despots is embodied just as much in Alexander's unbridled campaign of world conquest as it is in the petty realm of Hellenistic court politics; compare Lucan's statement that Alexander gladium...per

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69 McCloskey and Phinney (p. 83) comment on the "subsumption of Ptolemy under the Alexander-type" through Lucan's frequent application of Pellaeus to Ptolemy.
omnes/ exegit gentes (10.31). Pothinus' rejection of modus is therefore analogous to Alexander's rejection of finis, and the murder of Pompey can be said to occur through the same tyrannical disregard for limits to human behaviour that drove Alexander's conquests.

If he stands condemned in Lucan as the ultimate source for the loathsome Ptolemaic regime and hence as culpable for Pompey's murder, Alexander is also one of the driving forces behind the civil war itself, since his example of successful imperialism is a potent inspiration to Lucan's Caesar. In historical fact, emulation of Alexander seems to have played little role in Caesar's actions or propaganda; it was rather Pompey ("the Great") who, with his massively publicized eastern campaigns, consciously followed in Alexander's footsteps. In Lucan, however, when Caesar arrives in Alexandria at the beginning of Book Ten, he takes no interest in the standard tourist attractions of the great city through which he is escorted and only displays enthusiasm (cupide) at his descent into Alexander's tomb: nulla captus dulcedine rerum,/ non auro cultuque deum, non moenibus urbis,/ effosum tumulis cupide descendit in antrum (10.17-19). It is from this (historically unattested) visit that Lucan takes his cue for his diatribe against Alexander, in which he complains of Alexander's bad example to the world; as will be discussed in Chapter Five, Caesar's imitatio and aemulatio of Alexander are then confirmed a little

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70 In addition to his Machiavellian maxim at 8.492, Pothinus speaks of a crimen...purgandum gladio at 8.517-518. The word gladium appears a total of six times in Book Eight in reference to Pompey's murder (see also 8.541, 8.557, 8.603, and 8.607). Only fifty lines before the reference to Alexander's gladium, the reader is reminded of Pompey's murder by an Egyptian gladium when Caesar angrily inquires of the satelles bearing Pompey's head (9.1073-1074), ergo in Thessaliciis Pellaeo fecimus arvis/ ius gladio?

71 Cato's virtue is characterized by attention to finis as well as modus, for Lucan begins his catalogue of Cato's guiding principles with servare modum finemque tenere (2.381).

72 Cleopatra, the very last of the Ptolemies, is likewise aligned with Alexander in her unquenchable thirst for power, for only a few lines after his diatribe against Alexander Lucan introduces her as one who terruit...suo, si fas, Capitolia sistro/ et Romana petit inbelli signa Canopo/ Caesare captivo Pharios ductura triumphos (10.63-65). Cleopatra also describes herself to Caesar as Pharii proles clarissima Lagi (10.86), further reinforcing her connection to the roots of the Ptolemaic regime and thus to Alexander.

73 See Green (pp. 9-17) for a thorough refutation of the idea of Caesar's slavish imitation of Alexander.
later in Book Ten (at 10.176-192) when he undertakes an inquiry into the source of the river Nile, just as (according to Lucan at 10.40) Alexander would have done if death had not forestalled him. In Alexander's city, Caesar is shown to be Alexander's heir, just as Pothinus is (at least on the ideological plane). The uncanny similarity between Pothinus and Caesar is accordingly no coincidence: Caesar's new world order and the Ptolemaic regime embodied by Pothinus are both poison fruit from the same poison tree.\footnote{McCloskey and Phinney state that the Ptolemies "represented a dynasty that, of all the royal houses descended from the Diadochi, best embodied the principles of Macedonian and, by extension, Caesarian absolutism" (p. 83).}

Although there is little evidence that the historical Caesar admired or emulated Alexander to the extent suggested by Lucan, a number of his successors are known to have done so. Upon entering Alexandria after his victory at Actium, Augustus not only (like Lucan's Caesar) paid a visit to Alexander's tomb but even promised the Alexandrians that he would spare their city out of respect to their founder.\footnote{See Plutarch, \textit{Antony} 80.1 and Dio 51.16.4 for Octavian's promise and Suetonius, \textit{Divus Augustus} 18.1 for his visit to Alexander's tomb.} Lucan's own emperor Nero, in addition to taking a keen interest in Alexandria and its inhabitants,\footnote{See Voisin (pp. 519-541) for Nero's general affinity with Alexandria, the Ptolemies, and the Alexandrians.} displayed his admiration for Alexander himself in various ways: he is said to have ordered the gilding of Lysippus' statue of the young Alexander and to have planned an eastern expedition (to the Caspian Sea) composed of a special corps known as the \textit{Magni Alexandri phalanx}.\footnote{The gilding of the statue is recorded by Pliny the Elder (34.63) and the expedition by Suetonius (\textit{Nero} 19); these examples are given and briefly discussed by McCloskey and Phinney (p. 82). See also Voisin for Nero's Alexander-worship (pp. 530-531).} In Lucan's representation of the decadent Ptolemaic regime initiated by Alexander, the shadow not only of Caesar but also of Nero is therefore detectable. Just as Caesar's ethos is mirrored in the cynical and brutal pragmatism of Pothinus, so Ptolemy's whole court (with its three main actors, Acoreus, Pothinus, and...}
Ptolemy) has been persuasively argued by McCloskey and Phinney to be modelled at least in part on Nero's, whereby the pious old Acoreus corresponds to Seneca, Pothinus to the unscrupulous Tigellinus, and the rex puer Ptolemy to the youthful Nero himself. In the world of Lucan's poem, Egypt's present (like Parthia's present) is Rome's future. McCloskey and Phinney conclude, "what emerges from the last three books of the Pharsalia is the picture of a degenerate court in a luxurious Hellenized country, presided over by base flunkies who dominate a weak, cruel, petty and perverted king. But what emerges more clearly is that Lucan's indignation was sparked by the visible reflection of that Hellenistic court on the Palatine. Like Juvenal, Lucan could not endure a Greekized Rome" (p. 87). The system of Hellenistic despotism that Alexander and the Ptolemies have imposed on Egypt will be imported to Rome by the first Caesar and fully implemented by his successors, above all Nero, who will stand in the same relationship to his illustrious ancestor as the degenerate Ptolemy XIII does to Alexander.

The Failure of Refuge

Both Pompey as he dies and Cornelia as she watches attribute his murder to Caesar's malign influence, the former consoling himself with the remark, *quacumque feriris,/ crede manum soceri* (8.628-629), and the latter venturing the assumption that *prior in Nili pervenit litora Caesar* (8.641). In his subsequent report of his father's death, Sextus confesses to a similar reaction: *nec credens Pharium tantum potuisse tyrannum/ litore Niliaco socerum iam stare putavi* (9.134-135). Of course, Caesar is still tarrying in the Troad at the moment of Pompey's demise, but although the man himself has yet to set foot on Egyptian soil and did not in fact give the order for Pompey's murder, Pompey and his wife and son have nevertheless grasped an important truth: the baneful revolution,
inspired by Alexander, that Caesar has only just now launched in Roman laws and morals, and that will eventually culminate in Nero's "Hellenistic" court, has been fully played out in Alexandrian Egypt. Egypt's absence from the field of Pharsalus has not in any way sheltered it from entanglement in the Roman civil war on either a practical or an ideological level. If Caesar can be regarded as Pompey's assassin in the obvious sense that the murder is intended for his benefit, on a more profound level Pompey is murdered by the triumph not of Caesar himself but of Caesarism over the traditional Egyptian system, as emblematized in the triumph of the "Caesarian" Pothinus over the "Pompeian" Acoreus; Pompey thus discovers his hoped-for refuge in Egypt to be already infected by Caesarian qualities, just as was the case with the stars to which he looked for reassurance earlier in Book Eight.

With his flight into Egypt, Pompey attempts to escape both into his own personal past, the era of his eastern conquests (which he associates with Egypt in his speeches of Book Two), and into a vanished Italian Golden Age of autarkic simplicity (evoked by Lentulus at the council of Syhedra), but both escapes are frustrated by the situation he finds there. Under the Ptolemies, Egypt is not a utopian *terra suis contenta bonis*, protected by the Nile and governed by Pharaohs who themselves are governed by a pious set of laws, but a land notorious for both luxury and tyranny; indeed, as McCloskey and Phinney point out (p. 83), 19 of the 29 appearances of the term *tyrannus* in Lucan are in reference to the young Ptolemy. Like Parthia, the new Egypt is inimical to the very idea of *libertas*, as Cicero makes clear in his speech *Pro Rabirio Postumo* when he inveighs against the folly of a Roman knight setting foot in Alexandria (22): *quid enim stultius quam equitem Romanum ex hac urbe, huius, inquam, rei publicae civem, quae est una*
maxime et fuit semper libera, venire in eum locum ubi parendum alteri et serviendum sit?

After citing the appropriate cautionary examples of Callisthenes, killed by Alexander, and Demetrius of Phalerum, killed at the orders of Ptolemy Philadelphus, Cicero returns to the theme of the madness of exposing one's libertas to the whims of a tyrant: plane confiteor fieri nihil posse dementius quam scientem in eum locum venire ubi libertatem sis perditurus (22-24). As for the utopian tradition of Egyptian legality, Tacitus explains Augustus’ decision to maintain an especially close supervision of Egypt on the basis that as a nation it is inscia legum and ignara magistratuum (Historiae 1.11.1), and Lucan's Cato implies the incompatibility of both the Ptolemaic and the Parthian regimes with the Roman ideal of constitutional lex when he laments the shameful paradox that, by killing two of the three triumvirs, Parthia and Egypt have accomplished more for the preservation of Roman laws than Cato's own troops have done: pudeat: plus regia Nili/ contulit in leges et Parthi militis arcus (9.266-267). Ptolemaic Egypt is consequently no refuge for a partisan of either lex or libertas and is so far from preserving Rome's utopian past that instead it reflects Rome's dystopian future (i.e. the court of Nero).

78 The Pro Rabirio passage is discussed by Sonnabend (pp. 98-99). Of course, Egypt's association with political absolutism reaches further back into the past than its recent subjugation to the tyranny of the Ptolemies. Herodotus, for instance, shows Egypt utterly dependent on and subordinate to its Pharaohs (see e.g. 2.147, as well as Vasunia’s discussion on pp. 77-87), while Virgil remarks (in another passage offered by Sonnabend, on pp. 99-100), with reference to the bees' loyalty to their kings, that regem non sic Aegyptus et ingens/ Lydia nec populi Parthorum aut Medus Hydaspes/ observant (Georgics 4.210-212). Sonnabend accordingly observes, "Ägypten wurde seit undenklichen Zeiten von Monarchen regiert. Nach Meinung der Römer mußte ein über viele Generationen erduldetes despotisches Regime geradezu zwangläufig die Wesensart des betreffenden Volkes negativ beeinflussen und schließlich zur Charakterlosigkeit führen" (p. 108). Nevertheless, at least in the Hellenistic period, under the influence of the Egyptological writings of Hecataeus of Abdera (see Murray, pp. 152-161), the old Pharaonic regime began to be praised as a model of constitutionality and restraint; as discussed above, Diodorus (following Hecataeus) portrays the Pharaohs as having been guided by their priests and obedient to a vast array of laws and taboos (1.70-71), and he is also far from attributing unconditional loyalty to the Pharaohs' subjects, who were free either to venerate their rulers after death or to consign them to oblivion on the basis of their conduct during life (1.72).

79 The passage from Tacitus is discussed by Sonnabend (pp. 64-65), who also cites the remarks of Lucan's Cato (p. 65, n. 196)
Moreover, the collapse of traditional Egyptian values directly frustrates Pompey's personal escape into the era of his youthful ascendancy, because the memory of his former patronage of the Ptolemies is obliterated through the renunciation of *fides*. Indeed, not only does Pothinus reject Pompey's former services as valid grounds for supporting the latter in adversity, but he actually cites them as grounds instead for Pompey's murder, since they will already have rendered Egypt suspect to Caesar: *iam crimen habemus/ purgandum gladio, quod nobis sceptrum senatum/ te suadente dedit, votis tua fovimus arma* (8.517-519). Egypt has thereby forfeited all value as a refuge for Pompey to escape to; instead, like Brundisium (which also witnessed a failure of *fides*), it has been transformed into a trap to be escaped from, just as it will prove to be for Caesar in Book Ten.

So it is that Pompey ends up imprisoned on a boat and surrendering all independent control of his person (*iura sui*) to the minions of a tyrant, in accordance with Cicero's account of the experience of Rabirius: *iam venerat horae/ terminus extremae, Phariamque ablatus in alnum/ perdiderat iam iura sui* (8.610-612). At this point in the narrative, in the same way that the plot to murder Pompey arose from a re-enactment of the civil war, in the form of the debate between the "Pompeian" Acoreus and the "Caesarian" Pothinus, so now the actual execution of that plot also entails an example of civil strife, of the slaughter of Roman by fellow-Roman, for it is entrusted to the ex-centurion Septimius (one of Ptolemy's Roman garrison); although the loathsome Septimius was absent from Pharsalus, he will now complete the destruction of Pompey that was begun there: *quis non, Fortuna, putasset/ parcer te populis, quod bello haec dextra vacaret./ Thessaliaque procul tam noxia tela fugasses?/ disponis gladios, ne quo*
non fiat in orbe,/ heu, facinus civile tibi (8.600-604). Once again, the ubiquity of civil
war defeats Pompey's hopes to find refuge from it.

Even after death, there is no escape from Egypt, where Pompey's corpse must
suffer numerous indignities, beginning with a brutal decapitation (8.667-673), a primitive
example of a skill that will only attain perfection in imperial Rome: nondum artis erat
caput ense rotare (8.673). Here too, Egypt points forward to Rome's future despotism,
not back to a virtuous antiquity, for Pompey is merely the first of many Roman victims of
the new Caesarism. Next, although latter-day Egypt has proved depressingly similar to
latter-day Rome in its political and moral depravity, it retains sufficient barbarian
otherness to inflict a further outrage on the remains of Pompey, namely the
mummification of his head according to the national arte nefanda (8.688-691). Instead
of providing a political escape from Caesarian tyranny, Egypt subjects Pompey to the
worst of both worlds, not only Caesarism but also barbarism; this is precisely the fate
against which Lentulus warned Pompey in connection not with Egypt but with Parthia,
land of barbara sacra on the one hand (8.338), completely devoid of libertas on the other
(8.340). Indeed, Egypt's alterity converges with Parthia's through a shared reliance on
poison: compare Lentulus' insistence that, in Parthian warfare, fiducia tota veneni est
(8.388), to the last phase of Pompey's mummification: infuso facies solidata veneno est
(8.691), with an almost identical line ending. The final indignity is then the proud
display of this cruelly preserved head to Pompey's gloating enemy Caesar at 9.1010-
1108.

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80 This detail, although not necessarily implausible (since Ptolemy would presumably not have wanted to
present Caesar with a rotting head), is found in no other source for Pompey's death; Lucan may therefore
have invented it in order to add another level of racially charged horror to the murder.
As for the rest of Pompey, Lucan complains bitterly of the narrow circumscription of his proper domain (the whole Roman world) through Cordus' hasty burial of his headless corpse (with includis suggesting Pompey's confinement): *temeraria dextra,/ cur obicis Magno tumulum manesque vagantes/ includis? situs est, qua terra extrema refuso/ pendent in Oceano; Romanum nomen et omne/ imperium Magni tumuli est modus* (8.795-799). Egypt continues to hold Pompey prisoner, *tu nostros, Aegypte, tenes in pulvere manes* (8.834), and Lucan now beseeches the Roman people to rescue the remains of the exul Pompey from an *invisa tellus*, volunteering to undertake the sacred mission himself: *nondum Pompei cineres, o Roma, petisti;/ exul adhuc iacet umbra ducis. si saecula prima/ victoris timuere minas, nunc excipe saltem/ ossa tui Magni, si nondum subruta fluctu/ invisa tellure sedent* (8.836-840). For Pompey to lie thus, trapped (after his treacherous murder) in an unworthy tomb on hostile soil far from his home, is, again, a fate that, according to Lentulus, awaited him if he ventured into Parthia (8.390-393): *temptare pudendum/ auxilium tanti est, toto divisus ut orbe/ a terra moriare tua, tibi barbara tellus/ incumbat, te parva tegant ac vilia busta?* Remote Egypt is aligned with remote Parthia as a prison rather than a utopian refuge.  

Moreover, Egypt seems to maintain its hold not only on Pompey's physical remains but also on his immortal spirit. After a brief excursion to the celestial plane in the apotheosis scene that opens Book Nine, Pompey's *manes* and *umbra* have returned to Egypt by the beginning of Book Ten, where they prevent Caesar's murder by an Alexandrian mob (10.6-8); his *manes* are subsequently said to inhabit the royal palace of

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81 Lucan's lament for the continued exile of Pompey's remains is apparently undermined by Plutarch's report that they were conveyed by Cornelia back to the family estate (*Pompey* 80.6). See Postgate's discussion, however (pp. lxviii-lxx).

82 See Chapter Two, n. 70.
Alexandria (10.73) and the breast of Pothinus (10.336). Cornelia too has left her heart in Egypt, for all Pompey's efforts to keep her separate and safe from the horrors of civil war. In Book Eight, when she begs to join him on the little Egyptian boat where his doom awaits him, he commands her (along with his son Sextus) to stay behind and watch from a safe distance: *remane, temeraria coniunx,/ et tu, nate, precor, longeque a litore casus/ expectate meos et in hac cervice tyranni/ explorate fidem* (8.579-582). His protective instincts are in vain, however. It becomes clear in Book Nine that, although Cornelia's body has been whisked away to safety, her mind remains in the grip of Egypt's deadly magnetic pull: *linquere, si qua fides, Pelusia litora nolo./ non mihi nunc tellus Pompeio si qua triumphos/ victa dedit, non alta terens Capitolia currus/ gratior; elapsus felix de pectore Magnus:/ hunc volumus, quem Nilus habet, terraeque nocenti/ non haerere queror; crimen commendat harenas* (9.78-83). When he learns of his father's murder, Pompey's son Gnaeus feels the same irresistible attraction and must be restrained by Cato from launching a punitive expedition into the *terra nocens* of Egypt (9.145-166). Like a black hole, guilty Egypt sucks into itself any Roman unlucky enough to fall within its grasp, which, as Lucan observes, explains the Sibylline oracle warning against any *Hesperius miles* setting foot on Egyptian soil: *noxia civili tellus Aegyptia fato,/ haud equidem inmerito Cumanae carmine vatis/ cautum, ne Nili Pelusia tangeret ora/ Hesperius miles ripasque aestate tumentes* (8.823-826). As explored in the next two chapters, even the fortune-favoured Caesar will barely escape from this trap with his life; lured to Egypt, just as Pompey was, on the promise of a utopian land of ancient wisdom, he will find himself instead the victim of the same malign (and modern) forces that doomed his adversary in Book Eight.
Part Two: Caesar (Book Ten)
Chapter Five: Science, Travel, and Megalomania

As discussed above, at the start of Book Ten, Pompey, or rather his ghost, is shown taking a surprisingly active part in the civil war by rescuing Caesar from an Alexandrian riot and, by implication, preserving him for Brutus' worthier vengeance (10.6-8). At the same moment that Pompey appears to have posthumously cast aside his habitual escapism, however, Caesar himself begins to display an uncharacteristic tendency to distance himself from the war that he both instigated and incarnates, and this tendency is manifested through exactly the same escape routes attempted by Pompey in Book Eight: sex (the genre of erotic elegy), science (the genre of scientific didactic poetry), and the ancient civilization of Egypt.

Sexual Escapism

At first glance, Lucan presents Caesar's liaison with Cleopatra as a total and surprising reversal of his customary single-mindedness in the pursuit of his own political and military goals:¹

quam tibi vaesani veniam non donet amoris,  
Antoni, durum cum Caesaris hauserit ignis  
pectus? et in media rabie medioque furore  
et Pompeianis habitata manibus aula  
sanguine Thessalicae cladis perfusus adulter  
admisit Venerem curis, et miscuit armis  
inlicitosque toros et non ex coniuge partus.  
pro pudor! oblitus Magni tibi, Iulia, fratres  
obscaena de matre dedit, partesque fugatas  
passus in extremis Libyae coalescere regnis  
tempora Niliaco turpis dependit amori,  
dum donare Pharon, dum non sibi vincere mavolt. (10.70-81)

¹ In fact, of course, Caesar was very commonly represented in ancient sources as exceptionally lustful and fond of women; see e.g. Suetonius, Divus Julius 50 and Cassius Dio 42.34.3. There is, however, no hint of this vice in Caesar's portrayal by Lucan prior to Book Ten.
Even though Caesar is here said to have forgotten Pompey as well as the civil war (oblitus Magni), in fact he is (at least superficially) aligned with Pompey through his temporary absorption into an elegiac framework and escape from the conventions and expectations of military epic. The elegiac tone of the passage is set by the phrase vaesani...amoris at 10.70, an allusion to Propertius’ statement of the limitless power of love: errat, qui finem vaesani quaerit amoris (2.15.29).² The reference to the amorous inflammation of Caesar’s durum...pectus in the following lines is also significant, for, as Berti observes (in his note on 10.71-72), ”Durus è termine tecnico del lessico erotico latino per indicare l’insensibilità e la renitenza all'amore.”³ What is more, the same words are employed during the scene of Pompey’s reunion with Cornelia in Book Eight to indicate Pompey's vulnerability to Cornelia's distress, which in itself is modeled on that of such elegiac heroines as Ovid's Ariadne and Alcyone: duri flectuntur pectora Magni,/ siccaque Thessalia confudit lumina Lesbos (8.107-108).⁴ Pompey's heart is thereby shown to reside in the world of erotic elegy, which is appropriately located in Sappho's Lesbos, rather than in the military epic that has just reached its climax on the grim

² Propertius 2.15.29 is cited by Schmidt in his note on 10.70. Although love's madness is not a theme unique to elegy, a specific link to Propertius is suggested by the shared genitive phrase vaesani...amoris, while in both passages the word amoris occupies the same metrical sedes at the end of the line and is preceded by a disyllabic 3rd-person singular present-tense verb, and the phrase vaesani...amoris falls within a clause introduced by qui or quis; the two passages are also obviously linked thematically by an emphasis on love’s omnipotence. It can also be noted that Propertius 2.15 shares with Lucan's denunciation of Caesar's amour a reference to Actium (compare Propertius 2.15.44 with Lucan 10.66-67), although in Propertius' case sexual indulgence is praised as a means of avoiding such conflicts. Furthermore, as Schmidt observes (in his note on 10.70), Catullus speaks of love as a vaesana...flamma in his elegiac poem 100 (line 7).

³ Schmidt cites Tibullus (Lygdamus) 3.4.76 and Ovid, Heroides 21.229 and Metamorphoses 14.693 and 758 as examples of the phrase durum pectus in Latin elegy (or, in the case of the Metamorphoses, elegiacally coloured epic).

⁴ The intratextual parallel is cited by Berti (in his note on 10.71-72). See Bruère (pp. 226-228 and 234-235, n. 74-98) for the intertextual, Ovidian heritage of Lucan's reunion scene.
battleground of Thessaly,⁵ and so Caesar's similarly described moment of weakness with Cleopatra reveals a similar (if temporary) defection from his proper martial genre.

If Caesar thus invites comparison with Pompey in his surrender to the escapist allurements of sexual dalliance, each man nonetheless brings his own distinctive traits to his amorous interlude. Pompey is motivated only by the lawful love of his own wife, as Lucan emphasizes when he exclaims upon the power of *iusta Venus* over *mentes aequae* in his introduction to Pompey's exchange with Cornelia in Book Five (5.727-728). Caesar, on the other hand, *miscuit armis*/*inlicitosque toros et non ex coniuge partus* (10.75-76); he is no more concerned with legality in his sexual relations than he was during his crossing of the Rubicon in Book One, when he ignored the desperate plea of the spirit of Rome to proceed no further: *si iure venitis, si cives, huc usque licet* (1.191-192). Caesar's shamelessness, as indicated by Lucan's exclamation *pro pudor* (10.77), is also a recurrent motif throughout the poem, from Lucan's initial description of Caesar onwards, whereas Pompey is shown to be susceptible to proper considerations of *pudor* both in his conduct of the civil war and in his dealings with Cornelia.⁶ The verb *miscere*, which is applied to Caesar's union with Cleopatra at 10.69 as well as 10.75, is likewise a key term, for Lucan frequently employs it to describe the violent confusion of civil war.⁷

At the end of the previous book, for instance, only a hundred lines earlier, Caesar actually

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⁵ George comments that Lucan uses "Lesbos, Sappho's home, as a symbol for romantic (sexual) love" (p. 386).
⁶ Lucan introduces Caesar as one whose *solus...pudor is non vincere bello* (1.145). See e.g. 1.263, 2.446, 2.708, 5.310, and 10.170 for other instances of the portrayal of Caesar as lacking in a proper sense of shame with respect to his waging of civil war through the terminology of *pudor/pudere*. Pompey, by contrast, states very conscientiously that, as one of his motives for sending Cornelia away, *me iam Marte parato/ securos cepisse pudet cum coniuge somnos* (5.749-750), while his general respect for *pudor* is also suggested both by his own words in his addresses to his troops (at 2.568 and 7.380) and by the fact that Lentulus makes frequent appeal to this concept in dissuading Pompey from the project of a Parthian alliance (at 8.349, 390, 419, and 452).
⁷ *Miscere* denotes the chaos of civil war at e.g. 1.74, 1.354, 1.682, 6.806, and 7.510.
boasted, *civilibus armis/ miscuimus gentes* (9.1076-1077); the combination of the form *armis* (emphatically placed at the end of the line) with the perfect of *miscere* clearly connects these lines to the phrase *miscuit armis* at the end of 10.75.⁸ An unnatural process of *miscere gentes* is, of course, precisely what is now occurring through Caesar's (and subsequently Antony's) miscegenation with Cleopatra, as emphasized by Lucan at 10.69 through the contrast between the juxtaposed terms *Ptolemaida* and *nostris*, which function as ethnic differentiators: *nox illa...quae prima cubili/ miscuit incestam ducibus Ptolemaida nostris*. Whether Caesar is making love or war, he cannot avoid confusing boundaries. A similar verbal correspondence links 10.75 with a phrase of Lucan's diatribe against Alexander (a mere forty lines previously), which is occasioned by Caesar's admiring visit to Alexander's tomb upon arrival in Alexandria. Lucan sums up the career of Caesar's chosen role model as follows: *ignotos miscuit amnes/ Persarum Euphraten, Indorum sanguine Gangen* (10.32-33). The phrase *miscuit amnes* thus occupies the same metrical *sedes* as the *miscuit armis* of 10.75, and with an assonance and partial alliteration of *armis* and *amnes*. The effect of these verbal parallels is to suggest that, although Caesar has temporarily ceased and desisted from his active prosecution of the civil war, he continues to propagate the moral chaos that underlies the conflict, merely shifting the theatre from battlefield to bedroom. Moreover, if Caesar now shows a lack of propriety by indulging in erotic pastime while still polluted by the bloodshed of Pharsalus, *sanguine Thessalicae cladis perfusus* (10.74), he has already flaunted his contempt for conventional scruples on the morning after the battle by enjoying a hearty breakfast on the field itself amid the heaps of unburied corpses (7.786-796). By contrast, Pompey very properly takes steps to prevent the promiscuous

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⁸ Schmidt observes (but does not discuss) this verbal correspondence (in his note on 10.75-76).
intermingling of the erotic with the military spheres, sequestering Cornelia in Lesbos as Pharsalus approaches and only returning to her side once the battle is lost.

Scientific Escapism

Contrary to appearances, Caesar's (temporary) surrender to Cleopatra's charms thus constitutes no significant reversal of his usual characterization in Lucan. In any case, the only possible escape that Cleopatra can offer Caesar from the world of civil war is in a morally inferior direction, as he declines from strength to weakness, from a proud Roman commander into the minion of a foreign harlot (although, at least in Stoic terms, he is in fact merely exchanging one equivalent vice for another). A further ostensible departure from Caesar's wont, but one suggestive instead of genuine spiritual progress, occurs at the end of the banquet held in honour of the peace treaty he has brokered on behalf of Cleopatra, when he turns to the old priest Acoreus to question him in general about Egypt's history, geography, customs, and religion (10.178-181) and in particular about the double riddle of the mysterious source and anomalous summer flood of the river Nile (10.188-192), a speech introduced as follows: longis Caesar producere noctem/ inchoat adloquiis, summaque in sede iacentem/ linigerum placidis conpellat Acorea dictis (10.173-175). The first surprise of these lines consists in the mere fact that Caesar now chooses to embark on a lengthy conversation (longis...adloquiis) with no apparent goal other than to round off the night in pleasant pastime (producere noctem).

In Book Two, Brutus initiated a nocturnal dialogue with Cato on the subject of

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9 The idea that Caesar's questioning of Acoreus represents a real departure from his habitual demonization in Lucan is most clearly expressed by Chambert, who writes, "C'est là un aspect du personnage qui contraste singulièrement avec l'image du chef belliqueux et insatiable que Lucain a donnée de lui jusque-là, comme si l'instinct de conquête et de domination s'était soudain mué en désir d'apprendre et de connaître...Son image diffère ici sensiblement de celle que Lucain donne de lui d'ordinaire, celle de l'agitation violente et incontrôlé, plus proche du caractère 'barbare'" (pp. 328-329); see also Malcovati (pp. 76-77) and Nehrkorn (pp. 178-180). The opposite view is briefly argued by Ahl (p. 228) and Ozanam (pp. 284-285), who will be cited as appropriate in the following discussion.
participation in the civil war, and, likewise by night, Pompey invited his helmsman to discuss the stars in Book Eight, but Lucan's Caesar has been consistently represented as a supremely solitary and narcissistic figure, obsessed with the realization of his own ambitions, who shows no concern for genuine communication with his fellow human beings. Accordingly, in the first nine books of the poem, Caesar's speeches only ever take the form of harangues to his soldiers or commands to his subordinates. For example, although, in Book Five, Caesar comes knocking on Amyclas' door in the night in the same way that Brutus does on Cato's, Caesar is interested only in Amyclas' prompt obedience to his commands, not in Amyclas' opinions about the feasibility of the projected voyage, which he either ignores outright (after Amyclas' list of storm signs at 5.540-556) or contemptuously dismisses (in response to Amyclas' desperate plea to return to shore at 5.568-576).

The manner of Caesar's address to Acoreus is also striking, since Lucan describes his speech with the phrase placidis...dictis (10.175); this is in stark contrast with the imperious tone adopted by Caesar towards Amyclas, on which Lucan comments, sic fatur, quamquam plebeio tectus amictu,/ indocilis privata loqui (5.538-539), and which, as Helzle has demonstrated, is characteristic of Caesar's speeches throughout the poem. In fact, the term placidus here aligns Caesar very closely with his interlocutor, the "Pompeian" Acoreus, who is first introduced as iam placidus senio (8.476); the link between the two passages is strengthened by the fact that these are the only two occasions in the poem when the word is applied to human demeanour as opposed to natural phenomena. The suggestion of a newfound placiditas in Caesar's bearing then finds apparent confirmation in the deferential opening of his request to Acoreus, whom he
praises as *o sacris devote senex, quodque arguit aetas,/ non neglecte deis* (10.176-177); given the wanton disregard for both antiquity and piety displayed by Caesar in his looting of the treasury of Saturn and felling of the sacred grove in Book Three, his respectful attitude towards Acoreus' long years in the service of Egypt's gods is particularly uncharacteristic.

It is, however, not the style but the substance of his speech to Acoreus that holds out the greatest hope for Caesar's redemption. In making his request for information on Egypt and the Nile, Caesar repeatedly disavows his customary role as the prime initiator and wager of civil war and associates himself instead with two activities that are traditionally portrayed as contributing to spiritual improvement: philosophical travel to Egypt and the practice of natural science. In terms of the first of these, Caesar asserts that the pragmatic pursuit of his military ambitions was only partly responsible for his arrival on Egypt's shores: *fama quidem generi Pharias me duxit ad urbes,/ sed tamen et vestri* (8.184-185). He thereby casts himself as one in a long line of awestruck pilgrims, likening himself to such sages as Plato (8.181-182) and Eudoxus (8.187), who were both said to have made the journey to Egypt in search of its ancient wisdom.

Among the mysteries into which Egypt was said to have inducted Plato and Eudoxus were those of the natural universe, in particular astronomy, and it is this domain for which Caesar now professes a particular admiration. Just as he claims to have made for Egypt with two distinct goals, both to hunt down Pompey and to be instructed in Egypt's wonders, so he prefaces his assertion of equality with Eudoxus with the statement that he has always found time in the midst of his campaigns for observation of the heavens: *media inter proelia semper/ stellarum caelique plagis superisque vacavi*
Although the historical Pompey does not appear to have shown any interest in astronomy, the Pompey of Lucan’s poem proceeds from an astronomical interrogation of his helmsman during life to a personal inspection of the stars and planets after death in Books Eight and Nine respectively, that is, the two books preceding the narration of Caesar’s visit to Egypt; Caesar’s passion for the stars thus serves to align him with his adversary Pompey, just as does his amorous interlude with Cleopatra a little earlier in Book Ten.

It is one thing for Caesar to deny a monomaniacal obsession with the civil war and to suggest that his mind holds room for higher preoccupations, but the conclusion of his speech, after his request for information on the Nile, is far more unexpected, for he there pledges to renounce the war altogether in exchange for an assurance of the sight of the Nile’s source: \textit{spes sit mihi certa videndi/ Niliacos fontes, bellum civile relinquam} (10.191-192). Lucan’s Caesar does not merely wage civil war: he embodies it in all its destructive frenzy. In offering to relinquish civil strife, he is at the same time rejecting his own baser self, which is the moving force behind the conflict. Caesar’s words therefore imply that his interest in the Nile is both a proof of moral progress (insofar as he is prepared to make the offer in the first place) and a source of future progress (once his curiosity is satisfied); this was not the case for his professed interest in astronomy, which, according to his own statement, was indulged \textit{media inter proelia} (10.185), and which must therefore have co-existed with his impious pursuit of civil war without abating it in the slightest.

\footnote{As Holmes observes (1989, note on 10.185-186), there is some support for this self-presentation in Caesar’s \textit{Bellum Gallicum}, where he is said to have made exact measurements of the length of the nights while in Britain (5.13).}
As has already been noted in Chapter Two, the spiritually redemptive potential of scientific inquiry is a recurrent theme in Seneca, particularly in the *Naturales Quaestiones*. Inwood (forthcoming) observes that, for Seneca, the spiritual value of science takes two complementary forms: "Studying physics provides direct instrumental support to what we might call the enterprise of ethics, but it also fulfills something very important and fundamental in our natures, the built-in drive for contemplation of nature" (p. 20). In other words, the pursuit of science is both an aid to virtue and a virtue (or at least a spiritual good) in itself. Seneca’s most coherent statement of the latter view of science as a divinely ordained vocation occurs not in the *N.Q.* but in a section of his earlier treatise *De Otio* (5) that is worth considering at length. He begins by asserting the teleological value of the contemplative life, arguing that contemplation is one of the two natural goals of human life (the other being action). The desire to know the unknown (*cupido ignota noscendi*) is built into human psychology. Great labours are undergone to this end, and the compulsion affects common people as much as the great explorers. This

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11 Nothing in the relative chronology of the lives of Seneca and Lucan forbids Lucan's knowledge of this work during the period of composition of the later books of the *De Bello Civili* (the first three books are believed to have been published in 62 or 63). As Griffin points out (1976, pp. 399-400), the only secure *terminus post quem* for the *Naturales Quaestiones* is February of 63 or possibly 62, the date of the Campanian earthquake mentioned at the beginning of Book Six; this date also provides an effective (if vague) *terminus ante quem* for Book Six of perhaps a few months afterwards, because the earthquake is clearly a very recent occurrence at the time of the book's composition, as is indicated by the term *audivimus* (suggestive of fresh news) at 6.1.1, the phrase *in hoc tempus* at 6.1.3, and the description of some of the buildings of Herculaneum as still actively tottering at 6.1.2. If Hine's case for taking 3, 4A, 4B, 5, 6, 7, 1, and 2 as the correct order of the books of the *Naturales Quaestiones* is accepted (see his argument on pp. 3-23), it is therefore entirely possible for Lucan to have had access to at least Books Three to Six for the final two (or three, depending on the date of the earthquake) years of his life, which would have been ample time to reflect upon them and incorporate them into his work. At least two extended allusions to Book Three have accordingly been detected by scholars: see Hosius (1892, p. 352) and Holmes (1989, p. 338). It is also not implausible to infer an awareness of the later books of the *N.Q.*, especially as Narducci notes a probable allusion to the preface of *N.Q.* 1 (the penultimate book) in Lucan's account of Pompey's apotheosis in Book Nine (pp. 343-345), while, likewise in Book Nine, Wick (in her note on 9.640) finds evidence of Lucan's familiarity with *N.Q.* 2 (the final book).

12 See Inwood (forthcoming) for a full discussion of Seneca's thoughts on this issue (pp. 9-32); all the Senecan passages that I present here (with the exception of those on megalomania and on the Nile) are there discussed by Inwood. See Berno for a thorough treatment of the instrumental use of science in support of ethics in the *Naturales Quaestiones*. 
is all part of Nature's plan for the human race, who are created to be inquisitive and appreciative observers of her glories;\textsuperscript{13} the location of the human race and the design of the human form are alike proof of the providential origin of scientific curiosity, since both are designed to facilitate contemplation of the heavens. By the celestial phenomena that have already been revealed, the human spirit is led on to investigate the great \textit{naturales quaestiones} that still remain unsolved. Seneca then offers an account of the soul's unstoppable progress through all the mysteries of the cosmos, in an echo of Lucretius' famous lines (1.62-79) on Epicurus' triumph over nature: \textit{cogitatio nostra caeli munimenta perrumpit nec contenta est id, quod ostenditur, scire.} In conclusion, the philosophical goal of life in accordance with nature entails the worshipful admiration of nature's grandeur: \textit{secundum naturam uiuo si totum me illi dedi, si illius admirator cultorque sum.}

Although there is no reason why Lucan would not have been familiar with the \textit{De Otio}, it is the \textit{Naturales Quaestiones} that most obviously underlies Lucan's Nile dialogue, and both of Seneca's justifications for science, as instrumental to virtue and as a holy vocation, can be found there. The preface to Book Three, for instance, which also serves as an introduction to the entire work, concludes, after a long catalogue of moral desiderata, with a series of arguments for the use of natural science as an aid in accomplishing them (\textit{NQ} 3.Pref.18). This preface is also particularly concerned with the issue of remedies for the vices of the ambitious and powerful, that is, for the special vices of Lucan's Caesar. Seneca thus begins his defence of his chosen topic with a decisive rejection of the genre of historiography in favour of the study of moral philosophy (\textit{NQ} 3.Pref.5). He then contrasts the study of nature (\textit{deorum opera celebrare}) with an

\textsuperscript{13} See also \textit{De Otio} 4.2.
unhealthy interest in the misdeeds of such war-criminals as Alexander and Hannibal (NQ 3.Pref.5-6), two characters with whom Caesar is very closely aligned, whether by Lucan or by the broader literary tradition. Not only are moral philosophy and natural science preferable activities to military historiography, but they can even assist in counteracting the megalomaniacal mindset wrongly celebrated by historians: philosophy offers to eminent men the salutary lesson of Fortune's unreliability (N.Q. 3.Pref.7-9), while the cosmic perspective afforded by natural science (animo omnia vidisse) teaches contempt for the pursuit of a petty earthly empire (N.Q. 3.Pref.10). The latter theme is then developed much more fully in the (chronologically) later preface to Book One, where Seneca holds out the widened perspective that results from inspection of the universe as a powerful antidote to the vices of avarice and ambition (1.Pref.7-11). At the same time as Seneca presents science as an aid to morality, however, he also presents morality as an aid to the inherently worthwhile practice of science; because the greatest good of the soul consists in meditation on higher things (in both a spatial and a spiritual sense), the moral purity sought by the Stoics is only a means to the end of freeing the mind for cosmic contemplation and communion with god (1.Pref.6-7 and 11-17). Without science, even if we have already subdued our particular vices, we have yet to attain the greatest spiritual boon of all, escape from our own selves: nihil adhuc consecuta es; multa effugisti, te nondum (1.Pref.6).

What is more, Seneca claims a moral benefit not merely for natural science in general but also for the science of the Nile. Seneca's Nile book (4A) immediately follows

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14 Lucan's hostile association of Caesar with Alexander will be discussed below; the inhabitants of Ariminum liken Caesar's arrival in Italy to Hannibal's at 1.255. Petronius' Bellum Civile departs from the historical record in order to show Caesar crossing the Alps in a manner that clearly aligns him with the Hannibal of Livy, Book 21 (see Grimal, 1977, pp. 154-159).
on Book Three and, like Book Three, contains a preface exploring the connection between science and ethics. Here, Seneca concerns himself with the moral progress of his addressee Lucilius, who has taken up the position of procurator in Sicily, and whom Seneca urges to guard against the moral pitfalls attendant on the possession of high office, especially the flattery of subordinates. Once again, then, Seneca has chosen to target the vices of political power. In response to these temptations to egotism, the proficiens must flee both the corrupting world and, once again, his own self: fugiendum ergo et in se recedendum est; immo etiam a se recedendum (N.Q. 4A.Pref.20). Seneca proceeds to offer Lucilius his account of the Nile precisely in the service of such self-escape. To prevent Lucilius from feeling inordinate pride in his authority over the province of Sicily (4A.Pref.21-22), Seneca will lead him away from there in the contemplation of Egypt (4A.1). Moreover, the aspect of Sicily in which Lucilius is to be discouraged from taking an excessive interest is exactly its involvement in the political and military history of the Mediterranean, above all its central role in the penultimate stage of the Roman civil wars as the battleground between Sextus Pompey and the triumvirs: longe te ab ista provincia abducam, ne forte magnam historiis esse fidem credas (4A.Pref.21). As a diversion from such reflections on Sicilian history, Seneca proposes to discuss not the ancient history of Egypt but rather its chief natural phenomenon, the Nile. As in the preface to Book Three, Seneca thus opposes natural science to the study of military history. In other words, where, in Lucan, Caesar

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15 In summing up Sicily's historical significance at the end of the preface, Seneca devotes a mere 17 words to the Punic wars, whereas 70 words are allocated to the events of the civil war. The emphasis on the civil war is even more striking in the light of Seneca's complete omission of Sicily's greatest claim to fame in the annals of ancient military history, namely the ill-fated Athenian expedition against Syracuse during the Peloponnesian war.  
16 Inwood (2005) connects the criticisms of historiography in the prefaces to N.Q. 3 and 4A (p. 174).
promises to abandon the civil war in exchange for the science of the Nile, Seneca holds out the hope that the same science can also guard against the moral risks arising from Lucilius' potential interest in the events of that same civil war; for both Caesar and Lucilius, the Nile seems designed to offer an identical double escape, both from oneself and from civil war.

Although, in the preface to Book 4A, the science of the Nile seems to function simply as an aid to virtue, it then reappears in Book Six (on earthquakes) as a virtue in its own right. To begin with, in response to an imagined question from his addressee Lucilius about the pretium operae of the proposed investigation, Seneca declares that scientific comprehension of the awe-inspiring universe is its own highest reward: quo nullum maius est, nosse naturam. neque enim quicquam habet in se huius materiae tractatio pulchrius, cum multa habeat futura usui, quam quod hominem magnificentia sui detinet nec mercede sed miraculo colitur (6.4.2). Shortly afterwards, Seneca has occasion to mention the results of an expedition dispatched by Nero to investigate the Nile's source; in this context, he praises Nero as ut aliarum virtutum ita veritatis in primis amantissimus (N.Q. 6.8.3). Amor veri, the pure joy of nosse naturam, is thus the crowning glory of Nero's virtues and expresses itself precisely in curiosity about the Nile.17

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17 Although scholars have mostly read this passage as either a throwaway piece of courtly flattery of Nero (e.g. Lana, pp. 14-15) or a covert criticism of the latter (e.g. Gauly, pp. 199-201), Seneca's praise of Nero for dispatching an expedition to increase the sum of human knowledge is in perfect harmony with the themes of Books Six and Seven, where (as will be explored in the next chapter) Seneca repeatedly celebrates the achievement of scientific progress (this harmony is noted by De Nardis, pp. 142-143 and Romm, p. 156); given that Seneca elsewhere presents the pursuit of veritas as the primary and laudable goal of science (see especially 7.32.4 as well as 7.29.3 and 6.3), the specific designation of Nero as veritatis...amantissimus also seems like more than a hollow gesture of deference. Seneca has thus taken the opportunity of Nero's expedition to integrate the theme of inquiry into the Nile into his moral evaluation of natural science.
As has long been recognized (e.g. by Schmidt, p. 37), it can hardly be a coincidence that Lucan's Caesar professes his own curiosity about the Nile with language remarkably similar to that of *N.Q.* 6.8.3: *sed, cum tanta meo vivat sub pectore virtus,/ tantus amor veri, nihil est, quod noscere malim/ quam fluvii causas per saecula tanta latentes/ ignotumque caput* (10.188-191). Caesar is therefore claiming the mantle of a pure-hearted Senecan philosopher-scientist as well as that of a philosopher-pilgrim to Egypt in the tradition of Plato and Eudoxus. Like Pompey, however, Caesar carries with him a substantial weight of psychological baggage wherever he travels, whether that travel takes place in body or in mind. As discussed in Chapter Two, both the manner (signified by *saepe* and *aut...aut*) and the content of Pompey's questioning of his helmsman betray his characteristic anxiety and indecision. Similarly, just as was the case for his erotic relations with Cleopatra, Caesar brings himself, his own particular set of spiritual deformities, to his investigation of the Nile. His behaviour over the previous nine books of the poem, his actions on arrival in Egypt, and the very wording of his request to Acoreus all conspire to cast Caesar's interest in Egypt and the Nile in a profoundly unsavoury light. For Caesar, neither scientific nor Egyptological curiosity is a path to virtue; rather, they are both tainted by the same mindset that has motivated him throughout the poem, namely the tyrannical megalomania of a Hannibal or an Alexander.

Caesar vs. Nature

The keynote of Caesar's portrayal in Lucan is his refusal to accept any barriers to his ambitions, as is apparent from Lucan's first sketch of his character in Book One (1.144-157), where an impression of ferocious and rampaging dynamism is conveyed by the description of Caesar as *inpellens quidquid sibi summa petenti/ obstaret* and by his
comparison to a lightning bolt that cannot be prevented from ranging as it pleases in its destructive course (nulla...exire vetante/ materia). Among the many examples in the De Bello Civili of Caesar's extreme impatience towards obstacles and delays is his increasingly angry confrontation with Metellus as the latter bars his access to the treasury of Saturn (3.112-153), as discussed in the introduction. This is indeed so well-established a feature of Caesar's persona that he accuses the Massilians of placing too much trust in his reputation for cursus in daring to defy him: vana movet Graios nostri fiducia cursus:/ quamvis Hesperium mundi properemus ad axem,/ Massiliam delere vacat (3.358-360). In fact, the Massilians are correct in their estimation (although it does not save them), for midway through the siege, dux...inpatiens haesuri ad moenia Martis/ versus ad Hispanas acies extremaque mundi/ iussit bella geri (3.453-455).

Caesar's relationship to the obstacles of the natural world, especially its bodies of water and more especially its rivers, is highly adversarial. This antagonism takes two often related forms: the imposition of mighty engineering projects on the natural landscape and the crossing of natural barriers. Lucan provides several extensive accounts of the former, as in his description of Caesar's erection of massive siegeworks outside Dyrrachium in Book Six and his attempt to block off the harbour of Brundisium in Book Two, which are characterized with language highly evocative of the hubristic domination (or attempted domination) of nature, such arrogance is particularly suggested by a

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18 See Rosner-Siegel for the significance of this simile to Lucan's overall characterization of Caesar.  
19 Berti (pp. 213-214), relating Acoreus' catalogue of the Nile-exploring tyranni at 10.268-282 to the popular rhetorical and philosophical theme of the antagonism between tyrants and nature, lists as examples of Caesar's hostility to the natural sphere the blockade of Brundisium in Book Two, the felling of the sacred grove at Massilia in Book Three, and the attempted crossing of the Adriatic in Book Five.  
20 Masters has shown that, in such passages, Lucan is in close dialogue with Caesar's own version of events in his Commentaries, and that Lucan consistently downplays or omits the laudable strategic considerations provided by Caesar himself for his engineering projects (see Masters' discussion of the Brundisium episode
comparison of these two projects with Xerxes' bridging of the Hellespont, a comparison that, although only implicit in Book Six (at 6.55-56), is rendered very explicit by an extended simile during the narrative of Brundisium in Book Two (2.672-677).\textsuperscript{21}

Mastery through engineering also characterizes Caesar's relationship with rivers, along with the theme of the penetration of barriers. Even before the action of the \textit{De Bello Civili}, Caesar famously conquered the Rhine through an ingenious bridge, an accomplishment briefly described by Lucan (3.76-77) with the same expressive term \textit{vincula} that he applies (at 2.670) to the blockade of the harbour at Brundisium.\textsuperscript{22} During the civil war itself, in addition to the obvious example of the Rubicon, there are two rivers towards which Caesar demonstrates overt hostility in the course of his campaigns: the Aternus and the Sicoris.\textsuperscript{23}

In Book Two, when he is threatened with the destruction of the only bridge over the Aternus, the river protecting the Pompeian garrison of Corfinium, Caesar exhorts his men to seize the crossing with the following declaration: \textit{non, si tumido me gurgite Ganges/ summmoveat, stabit iam flumine Caesar in ullo/ post Rubiconis aquas} (2.496-498). This incident falls less than a hundred lines after a catalogue of the rivers of the Apennine range (2.405-427), which Lucan employs as a prelude to his narrative of Caesar's conquest of central Italy. Although this is not the only river catalogue in the poem (Lucan also provides a rather sinister catalogue of Thessalian rivers at 6.360-380),

\textsuperscript{21} See Fantham's note on 2.672-677 for a discussion of Xerxes' bridge as "a paradigm of arrogance".

\textsuperscript{22} Caesar's own pride in this engineering feat is apparent from his thorough account in the \textit{Bellum Gallicum} (4.17), which begins with his assertion that any other manner of crossing the Rhine would have been consonant with \textit{neque sua neque populi Romani dignitas}, and which proceeds to catalogue the difficulties posed to the ambitious project \textit{propter latitudinem, rapiditatem altitudinemque fluminis}.

\textsuperscript{23} These two episodes are briefly discussed as instances of Caesar's antagonism towards the element of water by Schönberger (p. 82). See also Loupiac's fuller discussion along the same lines (pp. 96-98).
it is distinguished by its fervent patriotism;\textsuperscript{24} Lucan prefaces the catalogue with a hyperbolic assertion that the Apennines are the world's highest mountains (2.397-398) and goes on to celebrate the mighty Po, which alone survived the blaze of Phaethon's chariot (2.412-415), and which would rival both the Nile and the Danube in magnitude if these did not enjoy the unfair advantage of an admixture of waters from some external source (2.416-420).\textsuperscript{25} Lucan thereby connects his love of Italy with an admiration for its rivers, implying the violation of those same rivers through the subsequent invasion of Italy, a process already begun with the crossing of the Rubicon in Book One. This implied campaign of aggression against the rivers of Italy is then vividly illustrated by Caesar's personal confrontation with the Aternus.\textsuperscript{26}

Rivers also play an important role in Caesar's conquest of Spain in Book Four. Lucan begins by defining the battleground of Ilerda in terms of the local rivers, the Sicoris and the Cinga (4.13-23). Soon after the commencement of hostilities, Fortune and the gods threaten Caesar with the withdrawal of their favour and the wreck of all his hopes through a cataclysmic flood of the Sicoris. When its waters recede, Caesar's first act is to reassert his control through the imposition of technology:

\textit{utque habuit ripas Sicoris camposque reliquit primum cana salix madefacto vlime parvam texitur in puppem caesoque inducta iuvenco vectoris patiens tumidum super emicat amnem. sic Venetus stagnante Pado fusque Britannus navigat Oceano; sic, cum tenet omnia Nilus,

\textsuperscript{24} Fantham comments that "L.'s verbal map is a vehicle of patriotic pride and a celebration of his adopted country" (p. 153).
\textsuperscript{25} A rivalry with the Nile is also implied by Lucan's account of the Po's resistance to Phaethon's conflagration, since, according to Ovid, the Po was dried up with all the rest of the world's rivers during the catastrophe, and only the Nile escaped by concealing its source in remote regions (\textit{Metamorphoses} 2.254-259); Lucan is thus engaged in a patriotic correction of Ovid's version.
\textsuperscript{26} Schönberger (p. 83) points out that Book Two contains further evidence of the opposition of rivers and Caesar in the language used by Pompey to instruct his son to rouse the peoples of the east against Caesar: \textit{Euphraten Nilumque move} (2.633).
conseritur bibula Memphitis cumba papyro.  
his ratibus triaecta manus festinat utrimque 
succisum curvare nemus, fluviiique ferocis 
incrementa timens non primis robora ripis 
imposuit, medios pontem distendit in agros.  
ac, ne quid Sicoris repetitis audeat undis, 
spargitur in sulcos et scisso gurgite rivis 
dat poenas maioris aquae. (4.130-144)

Having dared to hinder Caesar's designs, the river is (in a crescendo of domination) 
crossed in boats (made to Caesar's ingenious design), tamed with a vast bridge (secure 
against fluvii..ferocis/ incrementa), and punished (dat poenas) by division into 
channels.  

Here it is the hubris of Cyrus rather than Xerxes that is evoked: according to 
Herodotus, when one of his sacred horses was drowned during the crossing of the river 
Gyndes, Cyrus angrily retaliated by cutting the Gyndes into 360 channels.  
The campaign then ends, as it began, with the mention of two rivers, the Sicoris (again) and 
the Ebro, between which the Pompeian army has been trapped and cut off from all water 
supply, and which torment the thirsty Pompeians into surrender with their visible 
proximity (4.332-340).

The traversing of the flooded Sicoris is explicitly compared to the use of boats in 
Egypt cum tenet omnia Nilus (4.135), while the adjective tumidus, used here of the 
Sicoris and by Caesar himself in his hypothetical defiance of the Ganges at Corfinium

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27 In Caesar's own narrative of the campaign at Ilerda, the first two stages of Lucan's account of the 
subduing of the Sicoris (boats and the bridge, described at Bellum Civile 1.54) are separated from the third 
(the division into channels, described at 1.61) by a substantial intervening sequence of events at Massilia 
as well as further events at Ilerda). In Caesar's account, the digging of channels is unrelated to the flood 
(which has by now abated); he is merely attempting to render the river fordable for his cavalry. Lucan thus 
combines unrelated elements and ignores Caesar's strategic considerations in order to give the impression 
of a single, concentrated, and deliberate campaign of retribution against the Sicoris. Another important 
divergence between the two accounts consists in Lucan's omission of the bridge of boats over the Ebro 
erected by the Pompeians to aid their flight after Caesar's taming of the Sicoris (as recounted in Bellum 
Civile 1.61-62); just as with his omission of Pompey's earthworks at Brundisium in Book Two (on which 
see Masters, pp. 31-32), Lucan's goal is to present Caesar as the sole antagonist of Nature and her rivers.
28 See Herodotus (2.189-190) for the story, which also appears as an exemplum of anger in Seneca's De Ira 
(3.21); the parallel is noted by Loupiac (p. 98).
(tumido...gurgite), also points forward to the Nile's inundation, which Acoreus describes with the noun tumor (10.326) and the verbs tumere (10.229 and 234) and tumescere (10.224). Tumere also appears in another passage that suggests enmity between Caesar and flooded rivers: when Pompey penetrates the fortifications with which Caesar has encircled him at Dyrrachium and spreads his army through the surrounding plains (much to Caesar's chagrin), Lucan likens the outbreak to the awesome destructive force of the Po in flood (tumens, 6.272) in an extended epic simile (6.272-278). Where, on the physical plane, Caesar masters swollen rivers with boats and bridges, he will seek an intellectual dominance over the swelling of the Nile by the discovery of its causes. In the comparison with Xerxes in Book Two, on the other hand, it is not a river but Xerxes himself who is termed tumidum...Persen (2.672). Caesar regards the natural forces that stand in his way as impudent and presumptuous, but for both Xerxes and Caesar, it is their own imperialism towards nature that is truly the sign of a swollen head.

Another aspect of rivers that emerges from Lucan's account of the Ilerda campaign is the widespread literary convention of a metonymy between river-names and country-names, as evidenced by the Ebro (Hiberus), which praestat terris...nomen (4.23). A similar metonymy frequently connects Egypt with the Nile in ancient literature. In Homer, Aiguptos is used interchangeably of the country and the river (Neilos does not appear until Hesiod), but the relationship is reversed by Aeschylus, and the Nile (together with its related concepts and images) becomes thereafter a standard device for the

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29 Rosner-Siegel observes on this simile, "In comparing Pompey's tactics and the deployment of his troops to an overflowing river, Lucan recalls the fire/water conflict we have encountered so often in relation to Caesar's activities and again a river-adversary is placed in his path" (p. 175).
30 See Fantham's discussion of the connotations of tumidus in her notes on 2.496-497 and 672-677.
denotation of Egypt. In Roman poetry, the technique is often applied to the description of foreign conquests, in a reflection of the actual inclusion of images of rivers (along with other topographical features) in triumphal processions; the Nile is found in this sense in post-Actium poetry. The bond between Egypt and the Nile, however, goes far beyond mere metonymy and sets the Nile apart from such other ethnically representative rivers as the Euphrates and the Rhine. From the Ionian scientists onwards, the Nile was consistently portrayed as the defining feature of Egyptian geography and ethnography and as the basis for Egypt's security, prosperity and distinctive social and political institutions. As discussed in Chapter Three, Lentulus sums up Egypt as follows in the council of Syhedra: *in solo tota est fiducia Nilo* (8.447). Such absolute dependence rendered Egypt extremely vulnerable to any failure of the Nile's flood, and at least one would-be foreign conqueror, the Persian king Artaxerxes III, is said to have attempted to exploit this weakness by discovering the Nile's source and diverting its vital waters away from Egypt. Lucan's readers could also bring to the text an awareness of Caesar's legendary skills in exploiting a precise knowledge of local geography in the furtherance

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31 See Froidefond for the Greek origins of this motif (p. 23 and pp. 73-74) and Postl for its common occurrence in Latin poetry (pp. 215-219). Examples in Lucan are 2.633, 7.832, and 8.559.
32 See Hunink's note on 3.76 for a discussion of the triumphal practice. Virgil thus includes rivers in his account of the procession of vanquished foes in Augustus' triumph at the end of *Aeneid* 8 (8.726-728: the Euphrates, the Rhine, and the Araxes), and Horace does likewise at *Odes* 2.9.20-22 (although not describing an actual triumph); see Nisbet and Hubbard's note on *Odes* 2.9.22 for a list of other examples of this motif. At 3.73-79, Lucan imagines the triumph Caesar would have enjoyed upon his entry into Rome if he had only refrained from civil war and remained content with the conquest of Gaul; among the *belli facies* that would have been carried in the procession is the bridging of the Rhine (3.76-77).
33 Virgil (*Aeneid* 6.800 and 8.711-713) and Horace (*Odes* 4.14.45-46) both express Egypt's defeat by Augustus in terms of the fear, grief, or submission of a personified Nile.
34 See Froidefond (pp. 72-74) on Aeschylus and (pp. 123-129) on the Ionian scientific tradition. For the Nile's indispensability to Egyptian life, see e.g. Herodotus 2.13-14. For Greek and Roman views of the Nile's strategic value, see Bonneau (pp. 74-83).
35 See the treatise *De Inundatione Nili* by Pseudo-Aristotle (Rose, pp. 193-194).
of his conquests. Consequently, when Caesar asks Acoreus to divulge first the secrets of Egypt's general physical geography, *terrarium...situs* (10.178), and next the secret of the Nile's source, the reader is predisposed, both by Caesar's actions within the poem and by the poem's literary and historical background, to take this not as innocent curiosity but as a sinister effort to gather military intelligence on a country whose survival is so inextricably intertwined with the miracle of its great river.

Quite apart from Caesar's exploitation of natural phenomena in the service of his specifically military designs, his incessant hostility towards the natural sphere, particularly where rivers are concerned, suggests that, for him, the practice of Nile science would serve a function far removed from the pious project envisaged by Seneca, who celebrates scientific inquiry as a sacred vocation for the human race. Caesar's actions in the first seven books of the poem are a monstrous parody of the triumphant progress of the soul through the secrets of the cosmos that was pictured in the *De Otio*; insatiable curiosity is recast as the insatiable lust for dominance of a rampaging conqueror. By attributing scientific enthusiasm to a character whom he has already established as an embodiment of dictatorial hubris towards natural phenomena, Lucan implies that Caesar has reduced science to an instrument not for worshipping the universe but for subordinating it, both physically, through such feats of scientific engineering as his bridges and earthworks, and spiritually, through the violent wrestling of secrets from the heart of a reluctant Nature.

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36 Consider, for instance, Caesar's account of his dispatch of Gaius Volusenus on an exploratory expedition to Britain in advance of his first invasion attempt (*Bellum Gallicum* 4.20-21).

37 Berti thus comments on Lucan's view of the quest to find the source of the Nile (p. 213), "Si profila l'idea della sfida del tiranno contro la natura: questo, trovando nel Nilo una forza superiore che sfugge al suo dominio (dominio ' intellettuale' in questo caso), tenta empiamente di forzare i limiti di conoscenza imposti dalla natura, sottraendo al fiume il suo segreto e riducendolo sotto il proprio controllo..."
The fact that Caesar regards science as a means to transgress boundaries rather than as a noble end in its own right becomes apparent when it is science itself setting a limit to his freedom of action, for on such occasions he willfully rejects its conclusions. In Book Five, for instance, he abuses the science of meteorology in order to deceive his troops about the reliability of winter weather for seafarers and to persuade them to make a January crossing of the Adriatic, which nearly ends in disaster (5.409-455).

Subsequently, intent on making his own crossing back to Italy, Caesar ignores the fruits of the skipper Amyclas’ considerable expertise in atmospheric phenomena, even though he boasts to Acoreus that he always finds time for the observation of *caeli plagae superaque* (10.186); instead, he recklessly pits himself against a cataclysmic storm in yet another instance of his violent aggression towards natural obstacles (although in this case the obstacle defeats his incursion, forcing him to return to shore).

If nature is regarded as either itself divine or the product of divine providence, then any aggression against a natural phenomenon can be seen as an act of impiety. This is especially true when the phenomenon in question is invested with a strong religious colouring. There are two instances in the poem where Caesar's transgression of a natural barrier is characterized as a religious violation, each relevant to the moral evaluation of his scientific interest in Egypt and the Nile: the crossing of the Rubicon, which is not merely a river but a holy boundary whose transgression prompts a warning vision of the personified goddess of Rome herself (1.183-227); and the felling of the venerable sacred grove at Massilia to provide lumber for Caesar's insatiable war machine, which is such a

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38 The conjunction of the two sections of Aratus' poem, on the stars and on weather signs, makes it clear that astronomy proper and the study of atmospheric phenomena of the sort catalogued by Amyclas were closely associated in the ancient mind.
terrifying sacrilege that Caesar's own soldiers at first shrink from the act, obliging him to strike the initial axe-blow with his own hand (3.399-452).

How does Caesar's aggressive disregard for religious scruples affect a reading of his curiosity about Egypt and the Nile in Book Ten? Egypt is a land whose ancient rites and taboos were a literary topos, and where an unequivocal distinction was made between respecters and violators of such taboos, e.g. between a Darius and a Cambyses. Among the many sacrileges perpetrated by the latter while in Egypt was his murder of the Apis bull, whose divinity he tried to challenge by stabbing it with his dagger and proving it flesh and blood (Herodotus 3.29), just as Lucan's Caesar himself cuts down the first tree of the grove. Cambyses' blasphemy was embodied not merely in violent acts but also in the experience of forbidden sights, as when he dared to inspect the mummified corpses interred in Memphis' tombs or to enter the sacred temple of the Cabeiroi, access to which was barred to everyone but the priest (Herodotus 3.37); similarly, the desecration of Lucan's grove entails its exposure to the harsh light of day (admisere diem, 3.445) and brings to an end its age-old seclusion from the eyes of the uninitiate. As Leigh observes, the admission of daylight into a space of primitive shadows and terrors is a common ancient metaphor for the triumph of reason over ignorance, in other words for scientific progress, as in Lucretius (1999, pp. 174-176). The grove episode therefore combines Lucretian science with Cambysean sacrilege in Caesar's assault on an ancient

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39 See Herodotus 3.38 and (especially) Diodorus Siculus 1.95.4-5 for the contrast between Darius and Cambyses in their attitudes towards the traditional laws and customs of Egypt.
40 It is worth noting that, in the literary model for this scene, Ovid's account of the felling of the sacred grove of Ceres by Erysichthon (Metamorphoses 8.738-776), there is no parallel for Lucan's emphasis on the sacred inaccessibility of the Massilian grove; Erysichthon's impiety consists solely in his murder of a sacred tree, not in his invasion of a sacred space, for, as Ovid's description of the votive offerings placed on the great central oak makes clear (8.744-745), Ceres' grove must have been frequented rather than piously shunned by ordinary worshippers in times past. Lucan has thus adapted his model in order to align Caesar more closely with the type of Cambyses.
tradition. Against this background, Caesar's interrogation of Acoreus, from whom he seeks to extract the secrets both of Egypt's gods and of the natural universe, may appear less like the reverent approach of a pilgrim than a manifestation of hubris, in spite of its deferential opening. Moreover, like the Rubicon, the Nile was a boundary river, held by many geographers to constitute the border between Asia and Africa; it was also sacrosanct, an object of as much reverence for the Egyptians as Lucan's grove is for the Gauls. When Caesar arrives in Egypt, the reader of Lucan's poem has thus been led to expect not only a general act of desecration but also a specific assault on the sacred river Nile; for the reader who is so predisposed, Caesar's display of interest in the Nile is unlikely to be regarded as a genuine escape from the depraved mentality with which he has hitherto waged war on Rome, on Nature, and on the gods.

Caesar in Egypt

The impression of Caesar's tyranny over the natural sphere receives a powerful reinforcement from his first action upon arrival in Alexandria, namely an eager (as expressed with the adverb cupide at 10.19) visit to the tomb of Alexander the Great, which (as discussed in the previous chapter) is the occasion of a scathing tirade by Lucan against Alexander's program of world conquest. Significantly, Lucan denotes the extent of Alexander's territorial acquisitions in terms of the pollution of rivers by the blood of

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41 Caesar's disregard for Egyptian taboos actually appears in the historical record, for Dio reports that the Egyptian revolt against Caesar was motivated in part by pious outrage at the looting of temple property (42.34.1-2). Lucan's omission of this detail (if in fact he knew of it), which is surprising in the light of his indignant account of Caesar's looting of the temple of Saturn in Book Three, can be explained by his reluctance to provide the Alexandrian mob with a legitimate casus belli against Caesar. In Lucan, it is not the despised rabble of Alexandria but the saintly Acoreus who (through Caesar's interrogation at the banquet) is made the victim of Caesar's impiety.

42 See e.g. Herodotus 2.16-17 and 4.45, Strabo 1.2.25 and 1.2.28, and Pomponius Mela 1.8-9 and 1.20.

43 See Plutarch 353A on the Egyptians' reverence for the Nile, Herodotus 2.90 for a specific Egyptian taboo concerning the Nile, and Herodotus 2.111 for the story of a Pharaoh who was punished with blindness by the gods for throwing a spear into the Nile in anger at its excessive flood; Pliny the Elder (5.57) records that it was considered nefas for kings or prefects to sail on the Nile during its rise.
the local inhabitants, just as Caesar was said to have stained the rivers of Thessaly with Roman blood in Book Seven: *ignotos miscuit amnes/ Persarum Euphraten, Indorum sanguine Gangen* (10.32-33). The phrase *ignotos...amnes* suggests not only the violation of remote rivers but also their exploration (that is, the process of rendering known the formerly unknown), and the climax of Lucan's diatribe consists precisely of a critique of Alexander's exploratory ambitions; like Caesar, Alexander scorns all natural barriers, such as those posed by the Ocean and the Libyan desert: *Oceano classes inferre parabat/ exteriore mari. non illi flamma nec undae/ nec sterilis Libye nec Syrticus obstitit Hammon* (10.36-38). So far, Lucan's hostile portrait of Alexander is in perfect accord with that offered by his uncle Seneca, who likewise presents Alexander as a bloodthirsty aggressor against both the human and the natural worlds. In *Epistulae Morales* 94, for instance, a denunciation of Alexander's mad career of ambition and cruelty reaches its climax in Alexander's planned transgression of the Ocean: *it tamen ultra Oceanum solemque, indignatur ab Herculis Liberique vestigiis victoriam flectere, ipsi naturae vim parat* (94.63). Seneca also condemns the Ocean project on two occasions in the *Naturales Quaestiones*, at 5.18.10 and 6.23.3. Where Lucan diverges very sharply from Seneca, however, is in his emphasis on Alexander's antagonistic

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44 See 7.116, 7.700, and 7.789-790 for Caesar's pollution of the rivers of Thessaly, as well as Loupiac's discussion (p. 160). As Schönberger observes (p. 85, n. 6), aggression against the Ganges has already served to link Caesar with Alexander in Lucan: compare 2.496-498 and 3.230-234.

45 Holmes (1989) comments on 10.32-33, "'He reached undiscovered rivers' or 'he mixed rivers with blood' would be unsurprising. Combining the two he [Lucan] puts together the intrepid explorer with the monstrous killer, both elements of Alexander's madness."

46 The close correspondence between Lucan's diatribe and *Epistulae Morales* 94.62-63 is observed by Berti in notes on 10.20-52, 10.27-28, 10.29, and 10.36. See also *E.M.* 119.7. The theme extends beyond Seneca the Younger to the general rhetorical tradition on Alexander; in the first *Suasoria* of Seneca the Elder, for instance, with the set topic of the dissuasion of Alexander from a voyage across the Ocean, there can be found many arguments urging respect for natural limits and boundaries (see 1.1-4, 1.9-11, and especially 1.3). According to Quintilian, this was a popular topic for *suasoriae* (3.8.16). See Morford (1967a, pp. 13-19) and Bonner (pp. 273-274) for the influence of the declamatory tradition on Lucan's portrait of Alexander.
relationship with the Nile, for Lucan’s catalogue of the extravagant enterprises that Alexander was only prevented from undertaking by his premature death concludes not with the attempt on the Ocean (as in Seneca) but with the quest for the source of the Nile:

\[\text{isset in occasus mundi de vexa secutus/ ambissetque polos Nilumque a fonte bibisset:/ occurrit suprema dies, naturaque solum/ hunc potuit finem vaesano ponere regi} \ (10.36-42).\]

Although Alexander's interest in the Nile's source is reasonably well attested,\(^{47}\) it was by no means a rhetorical commonplace like the plan to cross the Ocean, and it certainly receives no mention in any of Seneca's denunciations of Alexander.

Another significant departure in Lucan from Seneca's portrait of Alexander lies in his emphatic and close association of Alexander with Caesar as exemplars of tyranny, an association driven home through the probably fictitious account of a pilgrimage by Caesar to Alexander’s grave.\(^{48}\) In *Epistulae Morales* 94.64-66, Seneca provides three Roman examples of excessive ambition after his lengthy castigation of Alexander: Pompey, Caesar, and Marius. Caesar is unemphatically placed in the middle of the list, is discussed in the fewest words, and receives the mildest criticism; unlike Pompey and Marius, he is chastised only for his political ambition within the Roman state and not for his conquests of foreign lands and peoples. Indeed, it is not Caesar but Pompey who seems most closely paired by Seneca with Alexander as a type of imperialist

\(^{47}\) There is good evidence (stemming from the account of Alexander’s admiral Nearchus) for Alexander’s temporary excitement at the thought that he had discovered the Nile's source in India (Vasunia, pp. 280-281), while, according to Maximus of Tyre (41.1), Alexander took the opportunity of his visit to the oracle of Ammon to request an answer to the riddle of the source. Alexander’s circle also included three men (Aristotle, Callisthenes, and Nearchus) credited with theories on the cause of the summer inundation (Vasunia, pp. 281-282). The exploratory expedition mentioned by Acoreus is more doubtful but is also attested (see Berti’s skeptical discussion in his note on 10.272-275).

\(^{48}\) There is no reason to suppose that Caesar did not visit the tomb during his general sightseeing tour of Alexandria, but such a visit is positively attested only for Augustus after Actium ( Suarez, *Divus Augustus* 18.1); see Green (p. 18. n. 19) for the probably fictitious character of this episode.
megalomania,⁴⁹ and Seneca nowhere attributes to Caesar that habit of aggression against the natural sphere for which he condemns Alexander.⁵⁰ In Lucan, Caesar's visit to the tomb occurs less than 150 lines before his interrogation of Acoreus. Given that Lucan (at 10.26-28) inveighs against Alexander as a pernicious example and inspiration for all would-be global empire-builders, it seems clear that the ambition to uncover the Nile's source is to be included among the lessons in hubris imparted by Alexander to his admirer Caesar. Such a lesson is particularly suggested by the key term *ignotus*, which appears in the account of Alexander's pollution of the remote Euphrates and Ganges with the blood of the local inhabitants (10.32-33), and which Caesar then uses to express his keen interest in the Nile's source, its *ignotum...caput* (10.191);⁵¹ Caesar's scientific inquiry into the Nile is thereby put on a moral level with Alexander's violent penetration of the world's other exotic rivers.

On numerous occasions, Seneca erects a sharp moral divide between the conqueror and the scientist, between the tyrannical desire to subjugate the world militarily and the philosophical yearning to comprehend it rationally, and Alexander is his favourite example of the former type. In the *De Beneficiis*, for instance, Seneca distinguishes the wise man's freedom to traverse the lofty spaces of the universe in contemplation from Alexander's insatiable appetite for the acquisition of new territories by warfare (7.2.5-3.3); similarly, in the preface to Book Three of the *Naturales*

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⁴⁹ Seneca thus describes Alexander as not *sanus* in his ambitions (94.62), while Pompey is motivated by *insanus amor magnitudinis falsae* (94.64). See Griffin (1976, pp. 184-188) for Seneca's complex and balanced view of Caesar; see Green for the historical Pompey's self-identification with Alexander (together with the lack of such self-identification by the historical Caesar).

⁵⁰ In his comparison of Caesar and Alexander, Appian remarks on the two leaders' defiance of natural obstacles (2.149-150), as well as (in a separate section) on their scientific and philosophical interests (2.154), but Appian is not engaging in moralizing invective, nor does he attribute any interest in the Nile to either man.

⁵¹ There are only two other occurrences of the word in Book Ten, both of them in Acoreus' speech and in reference to the Nile (at 10.195 and 282).
Quaestiones (and hence to the work as a whole), transoceanic voyages of conquest (Alexander is implied but not named here) are rejected in favour of cosmic awareness, animo omne vidisse (3.Pref.10). On the level of genre, as discussed above, the same preface emphatically rejects the writing of history, with its focus on the bloody crimes of Alexander or Hannibal, in favour of science and philosophy. Again, in the moralizing epilogue to Book Five of the N.Q. (5.18), which is concerned with the uses and abuses of the divine gift of the winds, Seneca first condemns the expeditions undertaken by Alexander in support of his goal of world dominion (5.18.10) but goes on to praise voyages of geographical discovery as the proper, divinely ordained purpose of this natural phenomenon (5.18.14). Finally, in the prefaces to both Books Three and One, Seneca argues for the moral value of scientific inquiry on the grounds that a fully cosmic perspective can provide a powerful antidote to Alexander's characteristic vice of political and military ambition. Indeed, Seneca elsewhere states outright that Alexander could have derived precisely such a humbling lesson from his study of geometry, whose findings make a mockery of his eponymous greatness (Epistulae Morales 91.17):

Alexander Macedonum rex discere geometriam coeperat, infelix, sciturus, quam pusilla terra esset, ex qua minimum occupaverat. ita dico: infelix ob hoc, quod intellegere debeat falsum se gerere cognomen. quis enim esse magnus in pusillo potest?

Alexander was, however, distracted by his lunatic designs from applying himself to this discipline with the necessary rigour: erant illa, quae tradebantur, suptilia et diligentissime intentione discenda, non quae perciperet vesanus homo et trans oceanum cogitationes

52 Likewise, the context of errasse in oceano ignota quaerentem at N.Q. 3.Pref.10, as well as of scrutatur maria ignota in Epistulae Morales 119.7, makes it clear that Seneca is assigning the motive of territorial conquest rather than of scientific discovery to the Ocean expeditions condemned in these passages.
53 See 3.Pref.10 and 1.Pref.8-11.
suas mittens (E.M. 91.17). In other words, for Seneca, Alexander's megalomania was doubly incompatible with the practice of science, because it not only hindered scientific investigation but also was susceptible to explosion by a scientific worldview: it would have been difficult for Alexander to embark on his geometric studies without shedding at least a portion of his colossal arrogance, and it would have been impossible for him to retain that arrogance in the face of a true understanding of the world's dimensions. By asserting a close and causal link from Alexander's hubristic example, which Seneca unequivocally condemned, to Caesar's Nilotic inquiry, which (together with Acoreus' response) is actually modeled on Seneca's own Naturales Quaestiones, and by showing scientific curiosity coexisting with imperialist megalomania within the same individual and within a mere 150-odd lines (through Caesar's combined pilgrimage to Alexander's tomb and interrogation of Acoreus), Lucan is therefore deliberately collapsing the vast distance asserted by Seneca between tyrants like Alexander and his cherished project of natural science.

Caesar's act of homage to Alexander is immediately (at least in Lucan) followed by a base surrender to the sins of the flesh, which at first take the form of illicit sexual activity, in his liaison with Cleopatra. As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, however, Alexander's ethos of destructive chaos, combined with a contempt for limits and boundaries (expressed in Caesar's mingling of the erotic with the military spheres and

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54 Lucan compresses the interval between the arrivals in Alexandria of Caesar and Cleopatra into three and a half throwaway lines (10.53-56). According to Plutarch's account, on the other hand, a significant amount of time must have elapsed between Caesar's arrival and his meeting with Cleopatra, since it was Caesar's ongoing difficulties with Pothinus that prompted him to send for Cleopatra (Caesar 48.5-9). Lucan has perhaps chosen to highlight Caesar's changeable nature (a key marker of a vicious personality in Stoic thought) by showing him making a swift descent from the pursuit of political and military ambition (as manifested by his visit to Alexander's tomb) to indulgence in corporeal pleasures; Lucan's goal may also have been to suggest a continuity between the one type of vice and the other, since (as I argue above) Caesar's dalliance with Cleopatra constitutes a less complete departure from the example of Alexander than it may at first appear.
of Roman blood with that of the Ptolemies), continues to drive Caesar's actions. Caesar then proceeds from the vices of the bedroom to those of the table, in the lavish banquet held the next night to celebrate his restoration of Cleopatra to the throne. It is only after he has fully sated himself with such pleasures that, at the banquet's conclusion, he makes his request for initiation into Egypt's deepest mysteries as the rightful heir to the tradition of the Greek philosopher-pilgrims of old. Caesar's behaviour in Egypt falls far short of the high standard set by such venerable sages, however. According to his biographical tradition, for instance, to prove his worthiness of Egypt's secret lore, Pythagoras took the trouble to learn the Egyptian language, was circumcised by the Egyptian priests, and generally endured a regimen of austerity. Similarly, Eudoxus of Cnidus, explicitly cited by Caesar in his speech to Acoreus, is said to have shaved his beard and eyebrows to conform to priestly rules of bodily purity whilst studying in Egypt (Diogenes Laertius 8.87). Furthermore, both Eudoxus and Plato (also cited by Caesar) were prepared to devote a substantial period of time to their Egyptian inquiries, thirteen years according to Strabo (17.1.29). Caesar therefore displays his characteristic arrogance, together with his characteristic impatience of any obstacle or delay, when he presumes to rank himself with such paragons of self-abnegation at the same time that he expects all of Egypt's secrets to be revealed to him after only two nights in Egypt (at least according to the apparent chronology of Book Ten), both of them spent on carnal self-indulgence. Indeed, not only is a hedonistic banquet a generally inappropriate context for pious inquiries, but this particular feast includes a grievous abomination against the quintessentially Egyptian

55 See Diogenes Laertius (8.3), Clement of Alexandria (Stromata 1.66), and Porphyry (Pythagoras 7-8).
56 According to Diogenes Laertius (8.87), however, Eudoxus only remained in Egypt for sixteen months (which is of course still a considerable length of time when compared to the apparently brief duration of Caesar's visit in Lucan's account).
practice of zoolatry, for a mere twenty lines before Caesar's request for enlightenment, as noted in Chapter Four, Lucan records that the flesh of Egypt's sacred animals is served up to the assembled guests (10.158-159).

Caesar's participation in the banquet renders him an unlikely candidate for the role of Senecan philosopher-scientist as well as for that of philosopher-traveler to Egypt. It is true that the combination of high-minded philosophy and convivial meals has a long and respectable history in ancient literature, most obviously in Plato's *Symposium* or Plutarch's *Symposiaca*; the banquet of Alexandria, however, belongs not to the genre of the symposium but rather to that of satire and diatribe. It is held to commemorate Caesar's ensnarement by Cleopatra's wiles, an occasion that Lucan describes in words dripping with scorn for both parties (10.105-108). There follows a long and ringing denunciation of *luxus*, in which every extravagance of the banquet is sketched in loathing detail: the ornamentation of the walls, floor, ceiling, doors, and couches; the quality of the cups and plates; the exotic provenance of the servers; the splendour of Cleopatra's raiment and jewels; and so on. Lucan is clearly drawing on the philosophical contrast between *natura*, the simple law according to which the wise man aims to live, and unhealthy and unnecessary *luxus*. What is more, such *luxus* not only is spiritually (and physically) unhealthy for the individual in question but also entails the

57 Thus far, scholars have in general only discussed the relationship between the Nile dialogue and its banquet context in generic terms, that is, by examining the Virgilian model of the didactic song of Iopas at Dido's banquet in Book One of the *Aeneid* (see Schrijvers, pp. 29-30, and Rossi, pp. 240-245), rather than in terms of the moral and philosophical implications of the banquet setting for the pursuit of science, which is the focus of the present discussion. Although Eichberger asks whether "die üppige Gasterei" is "gerade der rechte Hintergrund" for a scientific discourse (p. 66), he answers in the affirmative on the grounds of the symposiastic tradition; as evidence that Caesar's scientific curiosity is rooted in his passions, Ozanam (p. 284) briefly notes that his questioning of Acorus "apparaît au terme d'un banquet où sa volupté a été rassasiée" and also cites the inflammation of Caesar's cupidity at 10.171 and 10.148, but he does not make any further exploration of the banquet's significance.

58 See Coffey (p. 88) for the generic affiliation of Lucan's banquet scene with satire and Bonner (pp. 269-273) for the influence on Lucan (in the banquet passage and elsewhere) of the rhetorical *locus communis de divitiis*. 
ravaging of the natural universe. Cleopatra's pearls are thus described as *maris rubri spoliis* (10.139), whereby, as Berti observes, "la ricerca di pietre preziose" is "assimilata ad una despoliazione cui viene sottoposta la natura per assecondare i caprici del lusso degli uomini" (note on 10.139). It is no coincidence that Lucan concludes his account of the banquet, thirty lines afterwards, by stating that *discit opes Caesar spoliati perdere mundi* (10.169); Caesar is receiving a lesson in global despoliation, on the natural as well as on the human plane. Likewise, the forests of Africa are pillaged of their precious citrus-wood for Cleopatra's tables, a pillaging that is explicitly associated with Caesar's subsequent conquest of Juba's African realm in a way that suggests the assimilation of nature into the paradigm of traditional empire-building: *sectos Atlantide silva/ inposuere orbes, quales ad Caesaris ora/ nec capto venere Iuba* (10.144-146). The same Moorish *silva* has already been presented as a victim of Roman luxury and imperialism in Book Nine, in an episode that (with the mention of a *nemus ignotum*) recalls Caesar's felling of the sacred grove at Massilia: *in nemus ignotum nostrae venere secures,/ extremoque epulas mensasque petimus ab orbe* (10.429-430). This theme is also apparent in the description of the food, which Lucan criticizes for exceeding the natural imperative to satisfy hunger through an ostentatious display of luxuries sought out from every corner of the globe: *infudere epulas auro, quod terra, quod aer,/ quod pelagus Nilusque dedit, quod luxus inani/ ambitione furens toto quaesivit in orbe/ non mandante fame* (10.155-158). The banquet is accordingly characterized by the same scorn for natural limits as

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59 As Berti points out (in his notes on 10.155-156, 156-157, and 158), the contrast between the use of food in the satisfaction of natural hunger and its abuse in the unnatural display of wealth is a frequent motif in both Lucan and Seneca, as is the motif of the exploitation of the whole world's resources in the service of luxury. Holmes (1989, note on 10.156) observes that, according to the cliché, exotic luxuries are sought only by sea and land; by adding *aer* to the list, "Lucan gives the common tripartite division of the world, lifting the universality of the pursuit of food to a cosmological level."
was the career of Alexander; where the latter sought to conquer the world through armed force, so his heir Cleopatra, who will one day emulate him more closely with her designs on military-political empire, is even now engaged in plundering the entire world, particularly the natural world, of its luxuries. In such an environment, the Nile is reduced from a magnificent natural phenomenon to a greedily exploited source of human delicacies; the indignity to the Nile is underscored by its emphatic placement last on the catalogue of the natural phenomena violated for the banquet, after terra, aer, and pelagus.\(^{60}\) Caesar's receptiveness to the corrupting example of such world-devouring luxus is suggested by the fact that the words toto quaesivit in orbe (10.157) occur only seven lines after Lucan's characterization of Caesar's motives in waging civil war with the phrase nefando/ Marte paratus opes mundi quaesisse ruina (10.149-50), where quaeisse occupies the same sedes as the subsequent quaesivit. Caesar is being taught to extend to nature the same mindset with which he has already been waging war on humankind.

Like Lucan, Seneca repeatedly rails against the pursuit of corporeal pleasures and worldly goods, and this is particularly true of the Naturales Quaestiones, where he opposes the lofty pursuit of natural science to the gratification of such physical urges as hunger and thirst (1.Pref.4). In the preface to Book Three, Seneca holds up scientific inquiry as not only superior but also an antidote to the tyranny of bodily appetites, since thereby discedemus a sordidis. deinde animum ipsum, quo sano magnoque opus est, seducemus a corpore (3.Pref.18). As for avarice, the contemplation of cosmic wonders ought to impart a healthy scorn for earthly riches of the sort on display in Cleopatra's palace (1.Pref.7-8). The incompatibility of scientific curiosity with the pursuit of bodily

\(^{60}\) The Nile is also assimilated into the luxuries of the banquet a few lines later, when its miraculous waters are placed in crystal vessels to be poured on the guests' hands (10.159-160).
vice also emerges in the epilogue to Book Seven, where Seneca, discussing the idea of progress in human comprehension of the natural universe, asserts that such progress is significantly retarded by the distracting mania for ever-new manifestations of luxuria and impudicitia, to which his contemporaries devote all their energies, with nothing to spare for science or philosophy (7.31-32). Seneca also frequently integrates criticism of luxus, particularly that of the table, into the body of his specific scientific inquiries: at the end of his account of atmospheric lights, he complains at length of the abuse of the natural gift of reflective surfaces in the service of luxuria (1.17); he inveighs against the madness of gold-mining during his discussion of underground sources of wind (5.15); a mention of the discovery of fish in underground pools triggers a diatribe against the fashion for letting guests observe the decorative death throes of the mullet on the table before consuming it (3.17.2-18.7); and he concludes his book on hail and snow with an exclamation upon the madness of hauling snow and ice from the mountains to chill the drinks and upset the digestion of Rome's elite (4B.13). The last passage is particularly significant, for it moves beyond a simple excoriation of excess into a defence of the moral benefits of natural science, on the grounds that the latter allows for a proper understanding of the composition of snow and hence a true estimation of its negligible value (4B.13.2), as well as promoting comprehension of the diseased metabolic processes that drive the unnatural craving for chilled drinks (4B.13.5-11). The rejection of gustatory luxus is thus inextricably bound up with the practice of scientific inquiry in the Naturales Quaestiones.

It is true that Lucan's description of Cleopatra's banquet does not appear to be modeled on the diatribes against luxus that punctuate the N.Q. (although other prose
works by Seneca, particularly the *Epistulae Morales*, may well have been more influential). Nevertheless, the *N.Q.* is unique among extant ancient scientific treatises in its systematic, deliberate, and well-advertised integration of the critique of vice in general and of *luxus* in particular into a variety of specific scientific inquiries. Consequently, when Lucan situates a scientific discussion of the Nile that (in both language and content) strongly evokes Seneca's treatment of the same topic in the *N.Q.* within the context of a vigorous denunciation of Cleopatra's *luxus*, the reader cannot help but be reminded of the close connection drawn by Seneca between the critique of *luxus* and the exposition of numerous scientific topics over the course of the *N.Q.* Seneca's Nile book itself may have included such a critique at some point during its now-lost concluding section (attacks on *luxus* are after all to be found in both Books Three and 4B, which bracket the Nile book); at any rate, in the book's preface, Seneca emphatically includes freedom from the specific vices of avarice and luxury among the virtues to which Lucilius should aspire, and in which Seneca hopes to reinforce his friend through the ensuing investigation of the Nile: "adice invictum muneribus animum et in tanto avaritiae certamine numquam suppositam manum lucro; adice victus parsimoniam" (4A.Pref.18). In the *N.Q.*, however, the condemnation of *luxus* and the practice of

61 See Berti's notes on e.g. 10.112, 113, 117, 127-135, 147, and 158 for the Senecan background to Lucan's banquet scene.
62 In the case of Lucretius, for instance, criticism of luxury is limited to the proem of Book Two (2.20-36), the analysis of the disease of erotic passion at the end of Book Four (4.1124-1132), and a few passages from his account of the rise of human civilization in Book Five (5.1007-8, 1113-19, and 1412-35); in other words, Lucretius makes no effort to integrate such criticism into his discussion of specific topics in the science of natural phenomena, as when he reports on the phenomena associated with gold mining without any overt condemnation of the latter (6.808-815). Pliny the Elder does issue frequent condemnations of *luxus* over the course of his *Naturalis Historia* (see Beagon, pp. 75-79 and 190-94), but (unlike Seneca) he does not present the countering of *luxus* as a major justification for the study of natural science. The divergence of approach between the scientific works of Seneca and Plutarch is particularly striking; of the latter's thirty-nine brief Ἀττικὴ Φυσικὴ, only one (36), which asks why bees tend to sting those who have just committed an immoral sexual act, features any kind of moralizing, while Plutarch's treatise on the nature of cold describes without disapproval (at 951C) the same practice of the use of ice at banquets that is denounced so vehemently by Seneca in Book 4B of the *N.Q.*
scientific inquiry are assigned to one and the same individual, namely the author Seneca. In Lucan's banquet scene, on the other hand, these two distinct but (at least in Seneca) closely paired activities are distributed between two very opposite characters: Lucan himself (or rather his authorial persona), who strongly condemns the banquet's excesses in Senecan language, and Caesar, who initiates a scientific inquiry on a Senecan topic (employing the Senecan phraseology of *amor veri*, as discussed above) only after he has uncritically participated in the same banquet and enthusiastically embraced the vices on parade there. This sharp disjunction between the characters of moralist and of scientist at the banquet of Cleopatra carries profound implications for Lucan's view of the moral dimensions of the entire scientific project.

Seneca's vigorous assertion of the moral utility of scientific inquiry must be understood in the context of a philosophical critique of science that is occasionally reflected even in Seneca's own works; in the *De Beneficiis*, for instance, he quotes a diatribe by the contemporary cynic philosopher Demetrius, who argues that the investigation of nature's innermost mysteries is neither practically feasible nor morally edifying (7.1.5-7), while the condemnation of the use of snow for luxurious banquets in the *Naturales Quaestiones* occurs in response to an imagined interjection from Seneca's addressee Lucilius, who challenges the moral usefulness of inquiry into the physical constitution of snow and hail (4B.13.1). By placing Caesar's scientific inquiry at the conclusion of a banquet that (with Caesar's full co-operation) violates all the principles of natural limit asserted by Seneca in the *Naturales Quaestiones* and elsewhere, Lucan is making his own contribution to a philosophical debate of which Seneca was keenly aware.
On the one hand, Caesar's scientific interests have not discouraged him in the slightest from the indulgence of corporeal pleasures, both in Cleopatra's bed and at her lavish table, just as (by his own admission) his astronomical inquiries have always occurred media inter proelia (10.185-186), that is, in a context of imperialist warfare that is ill-suited to the cosmic perspective enjoyed by the practitioner of natural science in Seneca's optimistic conception. It is only when his physical appetites are sated that Caesar turns to philosophy, as a kind of digestive aid or dessert: postquam epulis Bacchoque modum lassata voluptas/ inposuit, longis Caesar producere noctem/ inchoat adloquis (10.172-174). Note that the modus to Caesar's carnal excesses is here imposed not by ratio or natura but by the exhaustion of pleasure, lassata voluptas.63 Moreover, even though Caesar's hunger and thirst have temporarily abated, the dreams of avarice stirred in him by Egypt's treasures are still very much alive and unsatisfied, a fact emphasized by Lucan immediately before the Nile dialogue begins (10.169-171). Through the character of Caesar, Lucan is thus seeking to demonstrate that there is no Berlin Wall separating the practice of science from the gratification of more primitive urges, for Caesar's professed amor veri happily co-exists with his lust, gluttony, and cupidity, affording him no redemption. Indeed, it is not simply the case that, in the manner predicted by Demetrius the Cynic, Caesar's scientific interests have not actually contributed toward the acquisition of virtue; the context of the banquet suggests that, for Caesar, science is not merely not an aid to virtue but actually a vice in its own right, that Caesar's appetite for knowledge is as fundamentally unwholesome as his newly

63 Berti (in his note on 10.172-173) comments that “il termine voluptas, riproponendo l’idea di un pasto il cui scopo non è quello di saziare la fame, ma di appagare fino allo sfinito (lassata) i piaceri dei sensi, ribadisce la condanna morale nei confronti del banchetto, sulla linea di tutta la precedente descrizione.” Berti cites as parallels two disapproving passages by Seneca on the exhaustion of voluptas (De Beneficiis 4.6.3 and Epistulae Morales 89.22).
stimulated appetites for sex, food, drink, and riches. When he makes his inquiry into the Nile, Caesar has only just received a potent lesson in the rapacious exploitation of the natural universe in general and of the wondrous Nile in particular, a lesson that Lucan explicitly associates with Caesar's own habitual imperialism through the reference to Caesar's imminent seizure of Africa at 10.145-146. This juxtaposition of natural science with the unnatural banquet implies that, far from being an antidote to *luxus inani/ambitione furens* (10.156-157), science is (or rather, in the wrong hands, can be) another manifestation of such ostentatious *luxus*; just as Cleopatra flaunted her superior wealth in the form of delicacies obtained from the far corners of the globe (as well as from the Nile), so Caesar (in addition to his newfound desire for Cleopatra's material riches) has resolved to seek out the exotic and hitherto inaccessible secrets of the Nile's remote source and miraculous inundation, in order that he may display his superior knowledge to an admiring world.

The persistence of Caesar's avarice also casts doubt on the strength of his promise to leave the civil war behind, for, at least according to Lucan's remarks in Book Ten, Caesar's goal in waging this war, *civilia bella gerenti* (10.147), was precisely the acquisition of riches through the world's ruin (10.149-150). In other words, Caesar's essential motivations remain unchanged even as he embarks on his declaration of scientific virtue to Acoreus. Furthermore, even if Caesar is genuinely prepared to desist from the civil war, Lucan's narrative forbids the reader from interpreting Caesar's pledge as the fruit of a newfound yearning for peace, since the preceding account of the banquet concludes: *discit opes Caesar spoliati perdere mundi,/ et gessisse pudet genero cum paupere bellum,/ et causas Martis Phariis cum gentibus optat* (10.169-171). Caesar has
now set his sights on the rich pickings of Egypt, and it is perhaps not insignificant that he promises Acoreus, *bellum civile relinquam* (10.192), rather than simply *bellum relinquam*. His fundamental urge to devour the world in warfare remains undiminished by his interest in the Nile. Indeed, not only has natural science failed to deter Caesar from his tyrannical ambitions in the manner predicted by Seneca, but he may even be harnessing science in the service of those ambitions: as noted above, Caesar's questions to Acoreus, including and especially his inquiry into the Nile's source, can easily be regarded as the gathering of vital military intelligence for his projected campaign against the *Phariae gentes*.

The Interrogation of Acoreus

Even if his scientific curiosity is sincere in the sense that it does not conceal an agenda of territorial conquest, the very language of Caesar's initially deferential speech to Acoreus ultimately reveals the same arrogance and impatience towards human and natural obstacles that have characterized him for the previous nine books of the poem. Caesar, like Pompey before him, has carried his own distinct vices with him into the realm of scientific inquiry, which has altogether failed to mitigate his egomania and thereby confirm Seneca's optimistic view of the moral value of science. To begin with, Caesar's interrogation contains three increasingly terse imperative forms, barked in rapid succession within the first six lines: the quadrisyllabic *edissere* (10.178), the (positional) spondee *profer* (10.180), and the trochee *prode* (10.181). Pompey's reported questioning of his helmsman, by contrast, takes the form only of indirect questions, not indirect

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64 Schmidt remarks that a reading of Caesar's promise to abandon the civil war at 10.191-192 against the background of Lucan's characterization of Caesar's state of mind at 10.170-171 refutes the opinion of those scholars "die meinten, im 'Wissenschaftler' Caesar eine positive Beurteilung durch den Dichter feststellen zu können" (p. 252).
This is in accordance with the general scheme noted by Helzle, who (as has been noted above) observes that the relative frequency of imperative forms in the speeches of Pompey and Caesar serves to distinguish the two men as, respectively, mild-mannered and domineering (pp. 133-134).

The last of these imperatives, prode, which is emphatically placed at the beginning of 10.181 in the phrase nosci...volentes/ prode deos, is significant for its content as well as for its grammatical form. Betrayal of trust has long formed part of Caesar's modus operandi, and Lucan has twice employed prodere (or its cognate proditio) to denote such betrayal. In Lucan's epitaph for Curio, it is Caesaris aurum (4.820) that is said to have corrupted the formerly upright statesman and induced him to betray the rights of the senate (prodita iura senatus, 4.801). At Ilerda, Petreius and Afranius scornfully reject any bargain for their own lives as part of their soldiers' price for the proditio of their cause to Caesar: numquam nostra salus pretium mercesque nefandae/ proditionis erit (4.220-221). Prodere is therefore a word fraught with menace, especially in relation to Egypt, a country that Caesar now covets for his own. Of course, it is not Egypt as such but Egypt's gods whose betrayal Caesar now demands from their high priest Acoreus, seeking not merely a political defection like Curio's but the commission of sacrilege, on a par with the felling of the sacred grove. 65 Caesar is instructing the last faithful representative of the old Egyptian religious order to surrender the holy secrets entrusted to him. Although Caesar's curiosity is subsequently directed at

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65 Prodere is often used in the poem for divine secrets whose revelation is prohibited. At 1.631-632, the haruspex Arruns exclaims in horror at the ghastly entrails of a sacrifice, vix fas, superi, quaecumque movetis/ prodere me populis. Similarly, at 5.176-177, the verb is used to express the restrictions imposed on the Pythia's freedom to divulge future events: accipit et frenos, nec tantum prodere vati/ quantum scire licet. At 7.151-152, although the revelation denoted by prodere (namely portents of the upcoming battle of Pharsalus) in fact takes place, the verb occurs in a phrase (with non...abstinuit) that strongly suggests at least the possibility (and perhaps the desirability) of the suppression of secrets: non tamen abstinuit venturos prodere casus/ per varias Fortuna notas.
the Nile rather than at religious lore per se, the Nile does after all lie at the heart of Egyptian religion, and the aura of blasphemy permeating Caesar's initial set of demands at 10.177-181 consequently taints his questions about the Nile as well.

Caesar makes several other revealing statements in the course of his questioning of Acoreus. As part of his general antipathy towards barriers, Caesar is resentful of the limit imposed on his power and prestige by the existence of rivals in any sphere and is, in short, intensely competitive. When he first appears in the poem, Lucan sums up his motivations: *nec quemquam iam ferre potest Caesarve priorem/ Pompeiusve parem* (1.125-126). In his own speech on arrival at Alexandria, however, Caesar emphatically rejects the idea not only of a superior but also of an equal partner in empire: *frustra
civilibus armis/ miscuimus gentes, si qua est hoc orbe potestas/ altera quam Caesar, si
tellus ulla duorum est* (9.1076-1078).66 Similarly, when he comes to address Acoreus, far from rising above himself in the contemplation of nature's majesty, Caesar puts his own ego front and centre in his inquiries; just as Cleopatra exploited the natural world to obtain the luxuries demanded by her ostentatious banquet, Caesar treats natural science as a means of competitive display. He insists on his entitlement to Egypt's teachings with implicit disparagement of his predecessors, asking (10.181-183), *si Cecropium sua sacra
Platona/ maiores docuere tui, quis dignior umquam/ hoc fuit auditu mundique capacior hospes?* and boasting, *nec meus Eudoxi vincetur fastibus annus* (10.187). On these lines, Ahl comments, "Caesar now claims for himself philosophical, not just military virtue. He has won his battle with Eudoxus, as well as with Pompey; his calendar will rule the year as he will rule the cities of the world. Surely the honor accorded Plato cannot be

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66 Caesar is also said to be unwilling to share even a tiny corner of Italy with Pompey in Book Two: *adhuc, quamvis possederit omnem/ Italian, extremo sedeat quod litore Magnus,/ communem tamen esse dolet* (2.558-560).
denied him, for he has made himself master and regulator of the cosmos. Megalomania could hardly extend further" (p. 228). Having proved his military prowess on the field of Pharsalus, Caesar must now assert his supremacy in the sphere of science as well.

The inappropriateness of Caesar's self-identification with these reverent philosopher-pilgrims to Egypt has already been discussed, but Caesar's specific wording merits closer examination. First of all, in the comparison with Plato, Caesar's description of himself as pre-eminently mundi capax (10.183) is a potentially significant piece of diction. On the one hand, this phrase can be understood as a perfectly respectable metaphor for the ability to understand the workings of the universe, and comparable (but not identical) expressions for scientific talent can be found in Pliny the Elder. It should not be forgotten, however, that the basic meaning of capax is spatial: "Able to hold a lot, capacious, roomy" (OLD 1).

In three of the four other instances of the word in the De Bello Civili, it carries the spatial rather than the intellectual sense; only twenty-three lines before its use by Caesar, it appears as such in the description of the banquet's jewelled goblets: gemmae...capaces/ excepere merum (10.160-161). Furthermore, in the only other attested occurrences of the combination of the words mundus and capax in Latin literature (according to the Thesaurus Linguae Latinae), it is mundus itself that is described as capax, as is appropriate for an entity defined by Pliny the Elder as extra

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67 See Pliny the Elder 2.54 (caeli interpretes rerumque naturae capaces) and (with reference to Caesar) 7.91: animi vigore praestantissimum arbitrator genitum Caesarem dictatorem, nec virtutem constantiamque nunc commemoro, nec sublimitatem omnium capacem quae caelo continentur. Both these examples are given by Berti in his note on 10.183; Berti also cites Seneca, Epistulae Morales 89.2 (nobis autem...singula quaeque ostendi facilium possunt, universi nondum capacibus), but universi there refers not to the cosmos but to the whole of philosophy.

68 Holmes (1989) observes (in his note on 10.183) that 'Lucan's poetically abbreviated expression has a slight hint of paradox here, since capax retains suggestions of 'able to contain'."

69 See also 1.512 and 5.153.
According to Pliny (2.3), some philosophers asked whether anything could lie beyond the apparently unbounded mundus, whether there was anything that mundus ipse non capiat, although Pliny condemns such inquiries as futile madness. Here we have Caesar's answer to this philosophical conundrum: he himself contains the all-containing universe the way a goblet does wine. Rather than bringing Caesar closer to god, as promised by Seneca, science gives rise to the illusion that he is in fact god, the great all-encompassing primary deity of the Stoics.

If capacior hints at "capacious" here, another sense of capax may also be also be operative: "capable of having or getting" (OLD 3), as in the Tacitean phrase capax imperii. After all, possession of the world is clearly in play in Book Ten. Lucan thus states, with regard to Cleopatra, that the issue decided at Actium was an mundum ne nostra quidem matrona teneret (10.67). Shortly afterwards, Caesar himself is subsequently credited with designs on mundus, during the banquet. First of all, Lucan

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71 Seneca, on the other hand, celebrates the inquiring spirit of the mind that proclaims, illud...scrutor, quod altra mundum iacet, atrumne profunda vasitias sit an et hoc ipsum terminis suis eludatur; qualis sit habitus exclusis, informia et confusa sint, in omnem partem tantundem loci obtinentia, an et illa in aliquem cultum discripta sint; hic cohaereant mundo, an longe ab hoc secesserint et hic vacuo volentur (De Otio 5.6). It should be noted that, in both of the passages from Pliny quoted in note 67 above, the term capax is not applied to human comprehension of the universe as a spatial entity, merely to comprehension of the workings and laws of the universe (rerum...naturae, 2.54) or of everything contained within the bounds of the universe (omnium...quaet caelo continetur, 7.91); Pliny (unlike Lucan's Caesar) thus avoids the paradox of suggesting that the human mind is capax of something which itself (in the spatial sense) is uniquely and supremely capax.
72 See Tacitus, Historiae 1.49, as well as Annales 1.13.
73 This is not only true of Book Ten: in Book Two, Cato declares, with respect to both antagonists of the civil war, that sibi ius promittere mundi (2.320); in the same book, Pompey boasts of the wide extent of his triumphs with the words pars mundi mihi nulla vacat (2.583); in Book Three, Lucan states that Fortune's goal in the civil war is to subject the whole world to Caesar, virum toti properans inponere mundo (3.393); in Book Five, the civil war is defined as a conflict to decide the mundi...regnum (5.226); immediately before Pharsalus, Pompey describes the issue of the war as mundi/ discrimen (7.108-109), and in his subsequent address to his troops he expresses the consequence of Caesar's victory with the counterfactual condition (referring to the gods of Rome), si socero dare regna meo mundumque pararent (7.352); on the same occasion, Caesar addresses his troops collectively as domitor mundi (7.250), appeals to their spem mundi (7.270), and instructs them, prosternti mundum (7.278); Lucan describes Pompey as domitor mundi in the following book (8.553); and in Book Nine, the issue of the conflict between Pompey and Caesar is again defined as quem dominum mundi facerent civilia bella (9.20). The reader is accordingly well prepared to read Caesar's ambitions into his self-declaration as capax mundi in Book Ten.
characterizes his motivation in waging civil war as *nefando/ marte paratus opes mundi quaesisse ruina* (10.149-150); although *mundi* should probably be read as dependent on *ruina*, the reader's first impression is of a dependence on *opes*, that is, of a man greedily seeking the entire world's wealth through impious warfare. That first impression then receives confirmation immediately prior to Caesar's interrogation of Acoreus, when Lucan reports, *discit opes Caesar spoliati perdere mundi* (10.169). It would then be only a short step from the desire to acquire the world's riches to a desire for the acquisition of the world itself. In any case, whether the phrase *mundi capacitas* hints at Caesar's belief that he contains the universe or at his ambition to possess the universe (or both), it is expressive of a megalomania that, in Caesar as in his model Alexander, spills over from the military realm into that of geographical inquiry.

The military overtones are explicit in Caesar's self-comparison with Eudoxus at 10.187, with the verb *vincetur*. Caesar's egotistical jostling with Eudoxus is neatly conveyed by his choice of words to describe their respective calendars: Eudoxus' is termed *fasti*, the Latin *mot juste* for a calendar, that is, for a mere record of time, but Caesar asserts his possession and control of time itself through the phrase *meus...annus*, which recalls his angry characterization of *meum aevum* as one of total war under his leadership in his speech to the Massilians in Book Three (3.371-372). Furthermore, when he claims his calendrical reform as his own (*meus*) unique achievement, Caesar's narcissism has the effect of obscuring his dependence on the fruits of others' labour, for, as the ancients well knew (or at least believed), Caesar's calendar was in fact (like that of Eudoxus) largely inspired by Egyptian traditions of chronology, as well as by the

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74 See the arguments of Holmes (1993, p. 266) for associating *mundi* with *ruina* rather than *opes*. 
Alexandrian astronomer Sosigenes.\textsuperscript{75} There is a certain irony in Caesar's boasting, in Alexandria, to an Egyptian sage, of his worthiness as a scientist on the basis of a project that was itself owed to Egyptian science and to an Alexandrian scientist.\textsuperscript{76} This is in harmony with Caesar's portrayal elsewhere in the poem, as in his address to his mutinous soldiers in Book Five, when his reluctance to share credit prompts him to deny their part in his victories (5.339-349), an ungenerous habit of speech that the soldiers actually include in their list of grievances at the outset of the mutiny (5.291-295).

Caesar then proceeds to voice his heartfelt desire to solve the mysteries of the Nile, prefacing this with the allusion to Seneca's praise of Nero at \textit{N.Q.} 6.8.3, as discussed above: \textit{cum tanta meo vivat sub pectore virtus, tantus amor veri} (10.188-189). It is true that the ancient Greco-Roman society was not so prone to the habit of false modesty as some modern cultures; indeed, in the preface to his Nile book, Seneca actually recommends the practice of listing one's own real moral strengths as a counterweight to the misleading flattery of subordinates (4A.Pref.14-18). Nevertheless, there is something unseemly and arrogant in Caesar's assertion of his own intellectual \textit{virtus} and \textit{amor veri}, especially when these are coupled with the chest-thumping anaphora of \textit{tanta} and \textit{tantus}.\textsuperscript{77} After all, Cato, the only genuine embodiment of pure virtue in Lucan's poem, only ever speaks of \textit{virtus} in general terms as a guiding principle

\textsuperscript{75} See e.g. Appian, \textit{Civil Wars} 2.154 and Macrobius, \textit{Saturnalia} 1.16.39 for the attribution of Caesar's calendar to Egyptian learning in general and Pliny the Elder 18.210-212 for the specific contribution of Sosigenes.

\textsuperscript{76} Scholarly attention has hitherto been exclusively focused on the chronological awkwardness entailed by Caesar's speaking in 48 B.C. of a reform that would only be introduced two years later (see e.g. Berti's note on 10.187); to my mind, however, the point is not when Caesar is speaking but where he is speaking, since he is boasting of an achievement (and claiming it emphatically as his and his alone) that is in fact entirely owed both to the foreign country (or rather city) in which he is currently residing and to the national tradition of scholarship whose venerable representative he is currently addressing. The chronological issue fades into the background if Lucan's main goal in these lines is to showcase Caesar's monumental arrogance through an act of shameless plagiarism.

\textsuperscript{77} Nehrkorn is therefore wrong to assert that, in these lines, Caesar "vergisst sich selbst, seinen Hochmut, seine Herrschsucht, seine kalte Berechnung" (p.179).
in life and never claims to possess it himself to any great extent, and so it is left to his
admiring friends and comrades, along with Lucan's authorial persona, to make the
attribution. In Book Two, for instance, Brutus addresses Cato as *virtutis iam sola fides*
(2.243), praises his life of *longae...virtutis* (2.258), and, in an anticipation of Caesar's
self-description, ascribes *tanta...virtus* to Cato (2.263), whereas Cato in his response to
Brutus merely refers generally to the path of *virtus* (2.287).\(^78\) Philosophical virtue may
thus be a quality whose boastful assertion in fact guarantees its absence.\(^79\) Moreover, if
Caesar's *virtus* is called into question, so is his *amor veri*, for at the end of the previous
book Lucan portrays Caesar as an artful deceiver more explicitly than at any other point
in the poem: upon being presented with the grisly gift of Pompey's severed head, Caesar
bursts into crocodile tears, upon which Lucan exclaims indignantly, *quisquis te flere
coevit/ impetus, a vera longe pietate recessit* (9.1055-1056), introducing Caesar's
subsequent speech with the biting preface, *nec non his fallere vocibus audet/ adquiritque
fidem simulati fronte doloris* (9.1062-1063).

Instead of offering Caesar the enlightenment granted to such previous pilgrims as
Plato and Eudoxus, travel to Egypt has only renewed his megalomania (through his visit
to Alexander's tomb), provided additional fodder for his avarice, and taught him the (to
him) entirely new vices of lust and gluttony. This would have come as no surprise to
Seneca, who frequently challenges the moral utility of travel, and who even makes a

\(^78\) Similarly, at the temple of Ammon, when Labienus urges Cato to consult the oracle, he refers to him as
*durae...virtutis amator* (9.562), but Cato himself only asserts the general principles of virtue's immunity to
Fortune (9.570) and of God's habitation in the virtuous breast (9.579). Lucan extols Cato's *virtus* in his

\(^79\) Chambert (p. 329) suggests a military connotation to *virtus* here, citing a parallel from Lucretius (1.62-79); it should be observed that, when Caesar is first introduced in Book One, Lucan describes him as possessing *nescia virtus/ stare loco* (1.144-145), with *virtus* clearly designating martial vigour. In
consequence, Caesar's military *virtus* contaminates the philosophical *virtus* ascribed by Seneca to the Nile-
exploring Nero (although Chambert does not consider the Senecan model for Caesar's expression at 10.188-189).
specific argument against the usefulness of travel to Egypt and personal inspection of the Nile's flood (Epistulae Morales 104.15). Moreover, whatever his views of the ancient civilization of Egypt may have been (and the loss of his treatise De Situ et Sacris Aegyptiorum forbids certainty on this point), Seneca certainly harboured no illusions as to the moral quality of the latter-day Egyptians, above all Alexandrians, among whom he had spent several years of his youth. This is clear from the Ad Helviam, for instance, where he speaks of his former residence as Aegyptus infida (9.8) and as loquax et in contumelias praefectorum ingeniosa provincia (19.6); he also inveighs against the luxuria of the Ptolemaic court in reference to the library of Alexandria (De Tranquillitate Animi 9.5) and against that of Canopos (next door to Alexandria) at Epistulae Morales 51.3. In short, if travel in general and travel to Egypt in particular have exerted a morally deleterious rather than a beneficial influence on Lucan's Caesar, this is in perfect harmony with Seneca's views. Nevertheless, Seneca entertains no such doubts as to the spiritual value of scientific inquiry: even though actual travel to the land of the Nile may hold no promise of moral improvement, meditation on the Nile's marvels, together with the other marvels of the cosmos, is the exalted vocation of the human spirit. Seneca thus seeks to rescue Lucilius from the temptations attendant on the latter's physical travel to Sicily through a mental voyage to the Nile, by which Lucilius can escape not only Sicily but himself, a se recedere (4A.Pref.20).

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80 See also E.M. 28.1-8 and 69.1-4 and De Tranquillitate Animi 2.13-15, as well as Chapter Two (n. 68). Seneca would also not have been surprised to find ambition, luxury, avarice, and lust inhabiting the same breast and complementing rather than counteracting one another, since, in his De Ira, he lists them all in a catalogue of vices that share with anger the quality of illusory greatness, and that alike inspire the violent transgression of natural and human laws (De Ira 1.21).

81 See Bogun (pp. 229-236) for Seneca's generally hostile attitude towards the Egypt of the later Ptolemies and early empire.
It is obvious from Caesar's words to Acoreus, however, that he has not succeeded in escaping himself in the slightest through his scientific interests, no more than he did so in Cleopatra's embraces. Whereas, in the prefaces to Books Three and 4A of the N.Q., Seneca emphatically differentiates science (including the science of the Nile) from history (including the history of the civil wars), Lucan shows the utopian promise of science to be irredeemably entangled in the nightmare of history. Caesar may pledge to leave the civil war behind, but the civil war has not yet left him, for he remains animated by the same dictatorial belligerence that has characterized him in his prosecution of the impious conflict throughout the poem; escape from civil war has consequently eluded him as much as self-escape. Whether his goal in inquiring about the Nile is to gain practical military intelligence for use against Egypt or to prove his mastery both over his scholarly rivals and over nature itself, science not only has failed to serve as an aid to virtue in Caesar, in accordance with the utilitarian doubts voiced by Demetrius the Cynic, but has even been transformed into a potent instrument of his vice and a symptom of his megalomania.

82 König remarks that "Lucan aus Caesars amor veri etwas Ähnliches machen wollte wie aus seiner clementia, nämlich eine Heuchelei, hinter der sich etwas Niedriges verbirgt" (p. 446). Ozanam likewise perceives a vice in the scientific curiosity attributed to Caesar by Lucan, but he diverges sharply from my interpretation when he insists on Lucan's perfect agreement with Seneca in this respect: "La curiosité, si elle peut être le fait du sage peut...également, si elle est détournée de son objet et de sa fin, être une véritable passion et une forme de démesure; sur ce point, poésie [i.e. Lucan] et philosophie [i.e. Seneca] se rejoignent" (p. 285). According to Ozanam (p. 284), who is followed by Chambert (p. 331), Seneca's moral evaluation of scientific inquiry "dépend surtout de l'esprit du chercheur; pour Sénèque, plus que l'acte lui-même importe l'esprit dans lequel il est fait: Non quid sed quemadmodum feras interest...Il y a donc une bonne curiosité et une mauvaise curiosité." The quotation from De Providentia 2.4 cited in support of this assertion, however, refers not to action but to the endurance of hardship and certainly makes no specific mention of scientific curiosity. Ozanam goes on to discuss the beginning of De Beneficiis 7: "après avoir rappelé la position de Démétrius le Cynique sur l'inutilité de la plupart des connaissances, Sénèque oppose aussitôt l'attitude d'Alexandre, de Cyrus et de Cambyse qui désirèrent dépasser les bornes de la nature à celle du sage qui possède le monde entier sans aucun effort. Il assimile ainsi le désir de connaître dont les excès viennent d'être condamnés, à la cupiditas qui animait les mauvais princes: la formule finale s'applique à la fois au désir de conquêtes et au désir de savoir, tous deux expression d'une même convoitise: quidquid cupiditati contingit, penitus hauritur et conditur, nec interest quantum eo quod inexpelible est, congeras" (p. 285). Ozanam's analysis seems, however, to entail a profound misreading of the relevant
Moreover, because Caesar brings to his scientific investigation a mindset very alien to the one envisaged by Seneca, any satisfaction of his curiosity will serve only to inflame his already considerable hubris. After all, what greater proof of his own cosmic importance could he desire than the exclusive revelation of two great secrets of the natural universe, the location of the Nile's source and the explanation for its summer flood, which have eluded all previous generations? If Acoreus is to promote Caesar's escape from his omnivorous ambition, he must therefore avoid confirming Caesar in his inflated self-opinion by granting him privileged access to the mysteries of the Nile. Just as Caesar, in his questioning of Acoreus, both evokes the language of Seneca's *Naturales Quaestiones* and, at the same time, radically departs from the ideal of scientific virtue.

Chapters of the *De Beneficiis*. The diatribe by Demetrius the Cynic quoted at the outset of Book Seven (7.1) does not state that scientific curiosity arises from an unhealthy lust for knowledge, or that it constitutes (potentially) a vice in its own right, merely that natural science offers no practical help in combating vice. In the next section (7.2), Seneca urges total freedom from *voluptas, cupiditas,* and *ambitus* upon the wise man; the connection between this passage and the previous diatribe lies not in an association of scientific curiosity with excessive *cupiditas* (since Demetrius nowhere characterizes the motives of the scientific inquirer with such terminology) but in the implication that scientific *quaestiones* are unnecessary for the achievement of the virtues here enjoined by Seneca. Finally (rather than "aussitôt" after the Demetrius diatribe, as stated by Ozanam), at 7.2-3, Seneca gives a catalogue of potentates whose insatiable desire to acquire the world through warfare is contrasted with the wise man's serene possession of cosmic space through contemplation; it is on this passage that Ozanam rests his argument that Seneca is criticizing the insatiable desire for knowledge. The problem with such a reading is that Seneca does not attribute this motive to any of the conquerors listed, whose penetration of unknown regions is said to arise purely from a desire for conquest, for the acquisition of territorial empire. This is apparent even (or perhaps especially) when Seneca refers to an exploratory voyage commissioned by Alexander: *illi ne ea quidem erant quae tenebat aut vicerat, quum in Oceano Onesicritus praeemissus explorator erraret, et bella in ignoto mari quaereret* (7.2). In other words, Onesicritus is dispatched not to increase Alexander's knowledge of the world but rather to open up new areas for Alexander's imperial warfare and expansion, which is exactly the criticism that Seneca makes of the abuse of the winds for military expeditions in the *Naturales Quaestiones* (5.18). Again, when Seneca proceeds to contrast the contemplative life of the wise man with the ambitions of empire-builders, the latter are described purely as military aggressors, not as cosmic investigators: *non habet [i.e. sapiens] mittendos trans maria legatos, nec metanda in ripis hostilibus castra, non opportunis castellis disponenda praesidia: non opus est legione, nec equestribus turmis* (*De Beneficiis* 7.3). Seneca is differentiating the philosopher from the warlord, not the virtuous scientist from the vicious scientist. There is thus not the slightest suggestion, either in this passage or (as far as I can tell) in any other extant work by Seneca, that scientific curiosity as such can ever be a marker of tyrannical megalomania; for Seneca, although applied science, i.e. technology, is frequently turned to evil (as he argues in *Epistulae Morales* 90), observational science, the contemplation and exploration of the universe for the purpose of revealing its wonders, is at best the crowning glory of the virtuous life and at worst merely impractical (as in the Demetrius diatribe), never a vice. Consequently, such a stance seems original to Lucan.
celebrated in that treatise, so in Acoreus' response, as the next chapter will explore, although the scientific content and even the wording of his discussion of the Nile are clearly derived (at least in part) from the *N.Q.*, Seneca's progressivist ethos of rational inquiry is nowhere to be seen. Seneca does not seem to have considered the moral dangers of natural science for a tyrant like Caesar, and so it is left to Acoreus to devise a form of scientific discourse that will foster Caesar's virtue rather than his vice.
Chapter Six: Acoreus vs. Pothinus II

In the face of his questioner's ravenous appetite for discovery, Acoreus' first response appears to be the same as Amyclas' was in Book Five, namely a craven surrender to the irresistible force of Caesar's personality and an enthusiastic assent to all his demands: *fas mihi magnorum, Caesar, secreta parentum/ prodere*\(^1\) ad hoc aevi *populis ignota profanis./ sit pietas aliis miracula tanta silere;/ ast ego caelicolis gratum reor ire per omnes/ hoc opus et sacras populis notescere leges* (10.194-198). At 10.180, Caesar claims that the gods are *nosci...volentes* (picking up *nosci* again in *noscere* at 189), but Acoreus goes one better and responds that the gods are not only willing but eager (*caelicolis gratum*) for their secrets to become known (*notescere*, a cognate of *noscere*). Similarly, with *secreta parentum/prodere ad hoc aevi populis ignota profanis* (*ignotus* too being a cognate of *noscere*), Acoreus echoes the climactic phrase *noscique volentes/prode deos* that concludes Caesar's series of imperatives (10.180-181), with *prodere* falling emphatically at the beginning of the line like Caesar's *prode*.\(^2\) Acoreus is deferentially employing Caesar's own language to reassure him that his wishes will be fulfilled, just as Amyclas' *haud dubitem praebere* (5.558) imitates Caesar's *ne cessa praebere* (5.536). Even within these first ingratiating lines, however, there are hints of disapproval of Caesar's ambitions. The term *profanis* (10.195), for instance, implies that a barrier between sacred mysteries and the uninitiated is about to be breached. Moreover, although Acoreus assigns the condemnation of Caesar's impiety to anonymous *alli* at 10.196 and expressly dissents from it, the mere inclusion of such criticism is a subtle

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\(^1\) I here adopt the reading *prodere* with e.g. Berti instead of *edere* with e.g. Housman. See Berti's note on 10.195, with its cogent argument on the basis of the conventional usage of these two verbs by Latin writers generally and Lucan specifically, as well as Holmes' analysis of the greater depth of meaning offered by *prodere* (1993, p. 268).

\(^2\) Acoreus' *ignota* also echoes Caesar's hope to learn the Nile's *ignotum...caput* (10.191).
rebuke. After all, Caesar himself merely states it as a fact that the gods are

nosci...volentes (10.180) without acknowledging the possibility of a contrary opinion. In spite of Acoreus' ostensible endorsement of Caesar's views, there is thus the faint suggestion that Caesar has requested an act of sacrilege.

In any case, in the body of his speech, Acoreus effectively recants his initial acquiescence and provides no definitive answer to either of Caesar's questions about the Nile (on its anomalous summer flood and mysterious source); instead, he devotes the rest of his speech (130-odd lines) to a lesson in scientific humility. ³ Acoreus' speech thus offers a perfect complement to Caesar's, for where Caesar began his address to Acoreus on a note of false deference but then proceeded to trumpet his intellectual achievements, Acoreus undermines his own deferential opening through an account of the Nile that is designed precisely to deflate Caesar's scholarly pretensions.

On the issue of the flood, Acoreus rejects all attempts to arrive at a scientific explanation and attributes them dismissively to vana fides veterum (10.219), vana vetustas (239), and rumor (255). On the surface, these phrases are highly evocative of an ethos of scientific progressivism. Seneca, for instance, begins his discussion of earthquake science with an overview of opiniones veteres, which he criticizes as parum exactas...et rudes (Naturales Quaestiones 5.2). Moreover, as Berti points out (in his note on 10.219), Lucan himself also employs such language to distinguish credulous antiquity

³ My interpretation of the Nile dialogue is thus opposed at every step to that of Nehrkorn, who argues that Caesar has in fact experienced a spiritual transformation from his Egyptian sojourn, that this transformation is in fact evident in his speech to Acoreus, and that the latter does in fact deem Caesar worthy of Egypt's holiest secrets and divulges them accordingly: "in diesem Augenblick, verwandelt durch das erste, überwältigende Erlebnis Ägyptens, ist Caesar fähig, etwas von seinen göttlichen Geheimnissen zu erfahren. Und der 'heilige' Priester wird sie ihm nicht vorenthalten" (p. 180). The contradiction between Acoreus' sweeping promise to Caesar and his subsequent failure to deliver any substantial revelations is noted by Syndikus (p. 69).
from modern rationalism.⁴ Although Acoreus thereby pays lip service to the ideal of progress, in fact he shows little interest in the scientific method as the ancients practised it. It is significant that, of the five theories mentioned by Acoreus, for only one (the theory that the flood is caused by melting snow in Ethiopia) does he bother to provide a refutation on scientific grounds.⁵ The detailed rebuttal of opposing viewpoints is of course the standard procedure for scientific treatises, including ones on the Nile, as witnessed by the discussions of Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, and Pseudo-Aristotle.⁶

Having embarked upon what at first sight appears to be a respectably scientific treatment of the topic, Acoreus seems reluctant to observe the standard protocols of scientific debate. Another such protocol entails the conclusion of the catalogue of others' erroneous theories with the writer's own preferred one, as once again demonstrated by the three above-named authors.⁷ Acoreus, on the other hand, merely asks rhetorically (10.237), *quis causas reddere possit?* Where he does offer a concrete explanation, it belongs to the realm of religion rather than science; "progress", for Acoreus, entails a retreat from the rational to the mystical. He accordingly stresses the dependence of human beings on a mysterious higher power, which thoughtfully provides the blessings of the Nile in the midst of the heat of summer, exactly when they are most needed:

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inde etiam leges aliarum nescit aquarum,
nec tument hibernus, cum longe sole remoto
officiis caret unda suis: dare iussus iniquo
temperiem caelo mediis aestatibus exit
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⁵ Building on Syndikus (pp. 68-69), Holmes (1989) comments, "At first examined and refuted, then characterized as false, finally simply catalogued, they [i.e. the various theories of the inundation] are not here for Lucan to eliminate the false and thus arrive at the truth. Rather their variety illustrates the greatness of the Nile before the struggles of mortals to comprehend (while, irrationally, their erroneous opinions add their own mystery to the river)" (p. 339).
⁷ See Herodotus 2.24-26, Diodorus Siculus 1.41.4-9, and *De Inundatione Nili* 10 (Jacoby fr. 646).
The Nile is performing a duty (officiis...suis) for a world that has need of its services (opus est), not only freeing (liberat) the human race from burning heat in response to its pleas (imploratus) but also maintaining the cosmic balance of elements (neu terras dissipet ignis), all under the command (as denoted by iussus and iussit) of a higher power (natura parens).

The other explanations provided by Acoreus are simply variations and elaborations on the theme of a providential dispensation impenetrable to further investigation by human ratio. At the end of his catalogue of the various theories, in a passage that will be analyzed below, he emphatically declares it as his own opinion that the Nile belongs to a special class of rivers created along with the universe as a whole and still operating under the creator's direct control (10.262-267). In addition, at the very beginning of his discussion, Acoreus provides an account of the astrological dynamics governing the rise of the Nile: 8

immensae Cyllenius arbiter undae est. hunc ubi pars caeli tenuit, qua mixta Leonis sidera sunt Cancro, rapidos qua Sirius ignes exerit et varii mutator circulus anni Aegoceron Cancrunque tenet, cui subdita Nili ora latent, quae cum dominus percussit aquarum igne superiecto, tunc Nilus fonte soluto, exit ut Oceanus lunaribus incrementis, iussus adest, auctusque suos non ante coartat, quam nox aestivas a sole receperit horas. (10.209-218)

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8 See Housman (pp. 334-337) for an analysis of the rather convoluted grammar and science of this passage.
This seems like more than merely a colourful and elaborate expression of the exact time of the flood, along the lines of Acoreus' later statement that the Nile *contra...incensa Leonis/ ora tumet Cancroque suam torrente Syenen/ inploratus adest* (10.233-235). If Acoreus is actually offering a serious explanation of the phenomenon here, it is in harmony with his other theory of a special class of rivers governed by unique laws laid down at the creation of the cosmos, for the laws of stellar influence are similarly ancient: *sideribus, quae sola fugam moderantur Olympi/ occurruntque polo, diversa potentia prima/ mundi lege data est* (10.199-201). The impression of well-ordered cosmic hierarchy is heightened by the use of the phrases *arbiter undae* (10.209) and *dominus...aquarum* (10.214) to characterize Mercury, the planet responsible for the Nile's rise, as well as (once again) the word *iussus* (10.217) to describe the performance of the Nile's action at the bidding of its dominant planet. Here too, moreover, the Nile is presented as an elemental counterweight to destructive fire, since Mercury causes it to rise precisely when *rapidos...Sirius ignes/ exerit* (10.211-212), in other words precisely when the world stands in need of its cooling waters; Mercury (along with the Nile) is thus implicitly opposed to Mars, planet of *fulmina* (i.e. fire).10

As for Caesar's curiosity about the source of the Nile, Acoreus produces a catalogue (to be discussed further below) of previous would-be conquerors of the Nile, all of whom have failed miserably in this objective (10.268-282). Indeed, not only has the source of the Nile not yet been made known, it is in fact fundamentally unknowable, for

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9 For a contrary view see Holmes (1989, note on 10.210-218), who regards this passage as no more than a device to date the Nile's flood as precisely as possible and to emphasize the regularity of its occurrence.

10 Berti comments (in his note on 10.199-208), "Lo scopo di questo preambolo mi pare si quello di inquadrare l'esposizione del problema dell'inondazione del Nilo in una visione cosmologica più ampia, così da rappresentare tale fenomeno in accordo con l'armonia delle sfere celesti e rientrante in un ordine provvidenziale che coinvolge l'universo intero."
its obscurity has been ordained by providence. This becomes evident when, with the same illusory acquiescence that marks the beginning of his speech, Acoreus agrees to reveal the Nile's source (once again with the verb *prodere*) but then immediately qualifies his promise: *tua flumina prodam,/ qua deus undarum celator, Nile, tuarum/ te mihi nosse dedit* (10.285-287). He subsequently expands on the idea of divine concealment (again employing *prodere*): *arcanum natura caput non prodidit ulli,/ nec licuit populis parvum te, Nile, videre,/ amovitque sinus et gentes maluit ortus/ mirari quam nosse tuos* (10.295-298). *Arcanum* suggests the sanctity of the Nile's secret by associating it with religious mysteries. 11 Caesar yearns to know (*noscere*) the secret of the Nile, but nature prefers *mirari* to *nosse*, reverent awe to rational contemplation; the wonders of the Nile, which Acoreus termed *miracula* (a cognate of *mirari*) in his preface to Caesar (10.196), and whose divulgence was said to be in accordance with the will of the gods, are in fact destined never to be explained. Moreover, if the gods have ordained ignorance, it follows that the quest for knowledge becomes an act of impiety, in spite of Acoreus' initial rejection of the idea that *pietas* demands *miracula tanta silere* (10.196). 12 This implication is reinforced by Acoreus' unhistorical inclusion of the notoriously sacrilegious Cambyses on his list of prior explorers of the Nile (10.279-282). Furthermore, by his repetitions of *prodere* at 10.285 and 295, Acoreus suggests that the *proditio* sought by Caesar, which he at first promised to deliver, in fact runs counter to the laws of god and nature. Acoreus' sacred trust remains intact, for even if he could not

11 Of the ten other instances of *arcanus* in the *De Bello Civili*, three (6.431, 6.440, and 6.569) refer specifically to religious (or magical) rites and mysteries, and four refer to divinely guarded secrets about the nature of the universe or the course of future events (5.137, 5.198, 6.514, and 9.554).

12 Of course, it can be argued that Acoreus has remained entirely faithful to the letter (if not the spirit) of his initial promise to Caesar: if *miracula tanta silere* is read not as "to refrain from explaining such great wonders" but as "to refrain from *proclaiming* such great wonders", then Acoreus has certainly not been silent about the miracles of the Nile (the summer flood and mystery of the source), since he has in fact described them in some detail, even though he refuses to subject them to a rational analysis.
prevent the betrayal of Pompey in Book Eight, he has avoided betraying the Nile to Caesar.

Acoreus and Seneca

There are thus two basic and related themes to Acoreus' speech, the providential arrangement of the world and an associated providential bar to the expansion of human knowledge. What is the origin for this pious and obscurantist view of Nile science? Although the quest for Lucan's sources has sometimes seemed as vexed and baffling as the quest for the Nile's, Lucan's reliance on Book 4A of the *Naturales Quaestiones* for the scientific content of Acoreus' account was established by Hermann Diels and is accepted by all current scholars. According to Berti (p. 162), Lucan's primary object in the whole Nile digression is in fact popularization: to take Seneca's treatise, strip it of its more specialist and technical elements, and render it available to the readers of poetry (presumably a wider audience). Far from slavishly reproducing Seneca's point of view, however, Acoreus' speech can in fact be shown to diverge sharply from it with respect to the two key themes of providence and obscurantism.

It should be stated at the outset that, in comparing the accounts of the Nile in Lucan and Seneca, we are considerably hampered by the loss of the latter section of Book 4A (concerning the Nile) of Seneca's *Naturales Quaestiones*, perhaps as much as half the book. The defect is to some extent remedied by a summary of the doxographical portion of Seneca's Nile book preserved in the treatise *De Mensibus* by the sixth-century Byzantine scholar John Lydus (4.107), but John's summary is far from comprehensive. It

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13 See e.g. Gross (pp. 170-174), Holmes (1989, pp. 321-338), and Berti (p. 162); Holmes, however, shows that, although *N.Q.* 4A was Lucan's main source for the Nile section, it was by no means his only source.
14 Lucan's departure from his Senecan model in several key aspects of Acoreus' speech was first noted by Syndikus (pp. 68-70), whose specific observations will be cited as appropriate.
15 This is Gross' estimate of the proportion of lost material (p. 170).
is therefore useful to begin by considering Seneca's general view of science, as presented in the *Naturales Quaestiones* and elsewhere, in order to establish the scientific ideology that is likely to have informed the lost section of Book 4A.\(^\text{16}\)

With regard to Acoreus' emphasis on providence, the disposition of the world for the good of humankind by a benevolent deity is of course a Stoic commonplace; the proof of this doctrine occupies much of Book Two (on Stoicism) of Cicero's *De Natura Deorum*.\(^\text{17}\) At least in Seneca, however, this providential factor complements without replacing the search for rational explanations. In fact, as Rosenmeyer notes (pp. 109-116), the attribution of natural causes to divine planning is conspicuously absent from most of the actual scientific discussion of the *Naturales Quaestiones*. The treatment of lightning as an admonition from the gods (2.32-51), for example, is both preceded and followed by a long examination of its causes and effects as a naturally occurring atmospheric phenomenon, and Seneca contrasts the Stoic (and his own) view of the natural causation of lightning with that of the superstitious Etruscans, who *omnia ad deum referent* (2.32.2); for Seneca, while lightning (like any other phenomenon), as part of the cosmic fabric, can in fact serve to predict the future, it has not been designed by a providence directly concerned with such services to the human race.\(^\text{18}\) It is in consequence entirely alien to Seneca's usual methodology to resort to pious formulas and avoid rational argument in accounting for a problem of natural science like the Nile.

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\(^\text{16}\) See Gross (pp. 175-176) for the summary's incompleteness, which forbids interpreting the absence of a particular theory in John Lydus' account as conclusive proof of its absence in Seneca's Nile book.

\(^\text{17}\) The benefits of the Nile's flood for the human race are in fact cited as one proof of a benevolent providence at *De Natura Deorum* 2.52.

On the question of providence, the difference between Acoreus and Seneca is largely one of emphasis: the latter is less willing than the former to subordinate serious scientific debate to theodicy. With respect to the other of Acoreus' two themes, the unknowability of the cosmos, however, the divergence of approach is far more striking. For Acoreus, opacity to human ratio is built into the very fabric of the cosmos, but Seneca regards scientific inquiry not merely as permissible but as a divinely ordained activity; this is apparent from the essay De Otio (5) and the preface to the first book of the Naturales Quaestiones, as discussed in the previous chapter. As for the idea of a permanent, divinely imposed barrier to the expansion of human knowledge, Seneca makes the case for gradual scientific progress with guarded but unmistakable optimism in two passages at the end of Book Seven (7.25.3-5 and 7.30.5-6);\textsuperscript{19} this is the ideal to which Acoreus alludes with phrases like vana fides veterum but then rejects in favour of a pious and fundamentally conservative obscurantism. In the first of the two passages, Seneca remarks that no one should be surprised if the comprehension of comets remains imperfect, since most of the essentials of astronomy (such as an accurate understanding of the movement of the planets) are relatively recent discoveries. He thus predicts that veniet tempus quo ista quae nunc latent in lucem dies extrahat...diligentia (7.25.4), and that future scientists will look back in wonder at the ignorance of his own era (7.25.5). In the second passage, Seneca asserts that every age brings new advances (7.30.5). As with Acoreus' use of the phrase arcanum caput at 10.295, Seneca goes on to compare scientific mysteries to sacred ones (arcana); for Seneca, however, the religious analogy

\textsuperscript{19} See Edelstein (pp. 167-177) for a discussion of Seneca's idea of progress in the context of the development of Stoic thought. See also Ozanam (pp. 279-281) for Seneca's general rationalism and hostility towards superstition.
implies not permanent concealment but the progressive unfolding of truth to successive
generations of knowledge-seekers (7.30.6).\footnote{Although Inwood (2005) rightly remarks on Seneca's "epistemic humility" in this section (p. 189), which is to be contrasted with the more unabashedly celebratory tone of \textit{De Otio} 5, he also stresses that Seneca's "theological language is not anti-empirical, nor is it anti-rational. Seneca is not saying that there are things which we just cannot understand, that god works in intrinsically mysterious ways. He is making a more modest claim...A properly pious appreciation of the relationship of human nature to the divine will induce us to be epistemically modest and to anticipate (itself quite a rational view) that progress in the explanation of the natural world will be cumulative and slow" (p. 190). Even at his more conservative, then, Seneca is to be contrasted with Acoreus, who certainly does assert that there are things which we just cannot understand, and that god works in intrinsically mysterious ways.}

Another, more vigorous formulation of the ideal of scientific progress can be
found in Book Six, as a preface to the account of various theories on earthquakes (6.5.2-3). Seneca here describes the \textit{opiniones veteres} as \textit{parum exactas...et rudes} and offers hope for the improvement of knowledge over time, but he also has high praise for the heroes of early science who launched the whole adventure: \textit{magni animi res fuit rerum naturae latebras dimovere nec contentum exterio eius aspectu introspicere et in deorum secreta descendere. plurimum ad inveniendum contulit qui speravit posse reperiri}. As at \textit{De Otio} 5.6, Seneca here celebrates the penetration of cosmic mysteries. The pioneers' removal of \textit{rerum naturae latebras} (like Seneca's promise at 7.25.4 that future investigators will reveal \textit{ista quae nunc latent}) can be compared with Caesar's ambition to learn \textit{fluvii causas per saecula tanta latentes}, a line taken up and countered by Acoreus through his assertion that \textit{Nili/ ora latent} (10.214) and of the Nile's \textit{natura latendi} (10.271). Seneca also celebrates the act of \textit{in deorum secreta descendere}, whereas Acoreus presents such ambition as both impious and futile, an affront to the mysterious higher power that has elected to keep the Nile's source forever hidden.\footnote{Inwood (2005) observes on the Seneca passage, "In contrast to the superstitious attention to gods which natural phenomena normally evoke, Seneca equates nature and the gods. These are rational gods whose 'worship' requires that we use the methods of rational investigation to go deep beneath the surface world of our ordinary observational experience" (p. 182); Seneca's view of the piety of scientific investigation is therefore exactly opposite to Acoreus'.}
In another important passage of Book Six, Seneca, like Acoreus, opposes knowledge to wonder, *scire* to *mirari*, but to very different effect, since he elevates the former over the latter. After a summary of natural phenomena that (because of their magnitude and rarity) evoke superstitious awe, Seneca comments, *nihil horum sine timore miramur. et cum timendi sit causa nescire, non est tanti scire, ne timeas? quanto satius est causas inquirere, et quidem toto in hoc intentum animo* (6.3.4). The praiseworthy goal of scientific inquiry is the elimination of blind wonder, with all its attendant fears.  

Seneca also proceeds in Book Six to offer *nosse naturam* (6.4.2) as the highest reward of science; in this passage, the concept of wonder (*miraculum*) is not opposed to knowledge but cooperates with it in a marveling appreciation of nature, which *hominem magnificentia sui detinet nec mercede sed miraculo colitur* (6.4.2). Similarly, in the *De Otio*, Seneca states that the human race was created to be an *admirator* of nature (5.8), but such *admiratio* consists precisely in the rigorous and rational investigation of natural phenomena, in the fulfilment of humanity's innate *cupido ignota noscendi*.

These general points of contrast having been established, it remains to consider how Acoreus' account compares with Seneca's writings on the Nile specifically. With regard to the astrological explanation that opens Acoreus' account, the view of astrology held by the Stoics and the learned Roman élite in general is a complex issue. It receives very little mention in the *Naturales Quaestiones*, however, and Seneca never

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22 *N.Q.* 6.3.4, along with Lucretius 6.653, is cited by Berti (in his note on 10.297-298) as a contrast with Acoreus' rejection of *nosse* in favour of *mirari*.

23 See Beagon (pp. 102-113) and Rawson (pp. 306-311).

24 Seneca refers to astrology at 2.32.7-8 and 7.28.1 (comparing it to the predictive use of lightning and comets respectively), in both cases without unequivocally endorsing its findings. As observed by Berti (in his note on 10.199-208), Seneca also makes a brief allusion to the climatic effects of heavenly bodies at 2.11.2, although he certainly does not assign specific functions to specific planets in the manner of
employs it as an explanatory tool for any of the phenomena that he treats; it seems safe to assume that this holds true for the lost conclusion to the Nile book as well.  

At any rate, at least as far the extant portion of Book 4A is concerned, Seneca only refers to celestial phenomena to fix the timing of the inundation: *Nilus ante exortum Caniculae augetur mediis aestibus ultra aequinoctium* (4A.1.2). Acoreus thus appears to depart from Seneca in order to establish the Nile's place within a providential ordering of the heavens that cannot be investigated, merely gratefully accepted.

It is only when Acoreus proceeds to material obviously derived from the *Naturales Quaestiones*, in his discussion of the various theories of the Nile's flood, that a fruitful comparison with Seneca's approach to the question is possible, for a divergence in scientific methodology immediately becomes apparent. Seneca, for instance, has the scholarly courtesy to credit by name the originator of each of the theories discussed, whereas Acoreus condemns his scientific predecessors to languish in anonymity. Moreover, while (as noted above) Acoreus only engages in serious scientific debate with a single one of the five theories he presents, Seneca offers detailed counterarguments for all four explanations included in what survives of the Nile book, including two (causation by Etesian winds blowing the Nile back from its mouth and causation by the sun pulling moisture from the north to the south through underground passages) presented without refutation by Acoreus (at 10.244-254). Even the one occasion where Acoreus does offer a scientific refutation, in his treatment of the theory of causation by

Acoreus. In Book Seven, Seneca actively rejects Epigenes' theories of the causation of comets and other lights in the sky (7.4-10), theories that include the idea of distinct planetary influences on the atmosphere (7.4.2-3).

Although (as observed above in n. 16) this is not necessarily conclusive, it may be significant that John Lydus' summary of the lost portion of Seneca's Nile book makes no mention of a theory of causation by planetary or stellar influence.

See 4A.2.18-21, 2.23-24, 2.27, and 2.30.
melting snow in Ethiopia, serves only to contrast Acoreus with Seneca as fundamentally unscientific. As Diels observed, Acoreus not only follows Seneca in beginning his account of the various explanations with the snow hypothesis but also imitates Seneca in both the structure and the wording of his arguments against it (compare Lucan 10.219-227 to N.Q. 4A.2.17-21). Nevertheless, the scientific tenor of Acoreus' rebuttal is immediately undercut when he concludes it by importing Seneca's celebration of the providential timing of the river from an earlier section of the Nile book (4A.2.1). In that passage, Seneca does agree with Acoreus in assigning the convenient timing of the flood to nature's forethought: *hunc nobilissimum amnium natura extulit ante humanis oculos et ita disposuit ut eo tempore inundaret Aegyptum quo maxime usta fervoribus terra undas altius traheret, tantum usura quantum siccitati annuae sufficere posset* (4A.2.1). The language of this passage is, however, much less evocative of a well- governed cosmos than the comparable lines of Acoreus (10.228-239). Where Acoreus, for instance, speaks of a personified and deified *natura parens* (10.238), Seneca simply refers to a bare *natura*. Seneca's focus is on the marvellousness of the river (*hunc nobilissimum amnium*) rather than on the generosity of its creator, as with his catalogue of the *miracula fluminis* at 4A.2.6. Standing as it does at the beginning of Seneca's discussion, the sentence is designed not to explain the phenomenon but to persuade Lucilius that it is worth explaining. Moreover, the idea of the Nile as nature's gift

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27 Syndikus is the first to note this importation, together with the fact that Lucan thereby cuts short Seneca's scientific treatment of the melting-snow hypothesis (pp. 68-69).
28 Berti downplays the difference in emphasis and tone between N.Q. 4A.2.1 and Lucan 10.228-239 (in his note on the latter section) with the remark that Lucan simply developed in a more organic fashion the seeds of the providential conception of the flood already present in Seneca, and that "[s]i tratta di una visione religiosa o filosofica, coerente con il panteismo stoico di Lucano (e di Seneca)."
29 Similarly, Seneca prefaces his discussion of earthquakes with a listing of their many strange effects, concluding that these render the phenomenon worthy of rational inquiry: *mille miracula movet [sc. terrae*
appears nowhere else in (the extant portions of) Book 4A and in any case does not preclude the sort of scientific analysis that Seneca proceeds to deliver. Acoreus, by contrast, inserts his celebration of providential benevolence into the body of his account of the Nile and offers it as a superior alternative to scientific explanations of the flood with his dismissive question (at 10.237), \textit{quis causas reddere possit?} Like the Etruscans who (with regard to lightning) \textit{omnia ad deum referent} (\textit{N.Q.} 2.32.2), Acoreus concludes by attributing the Nile's timely operation not to natural causes but to a superior power that has designed it as such for the benefit of the world: \textit{sic iussit natura parens discurrere Nilum, sic opus est mundo} (2.238-239).

Seneca himself may be the source for the wording of Acoreus' profession of uncertainty at 10.237 (\textit{quis causas reddere possit?}), since in Book Three of the \textit{Naturales Quaestiones} he comments on certain bizarre aquatic properties that \textit{quorundam causa non potest reddi} (3.25.11). In Seneca's extant works, this is the only instance of such extreme pessimism with regard to the investigation of a natural phenomenon, and, more specifically, it is the only instance of the combination of the standard phrase \textit{causam reddere} with \textit{posse} and a negative (Acoreus' rhetorical \textit{quis...possit?} being likewise negative in effect); a link to Acoreus is suggested by the fact that a property of the river Nile (its promotion of fertility in women) is the first example of an inexplicable phenomenon offered by Seneca at 3.25.11. Seneca, however, goes on to express doubt about the veracity of reports of such mysterious properties: \textit{quod ad me attinet, pono ista inter temere vulgata} (3.25.11). Neither does he include the rise of the Nile in that

\textit{motus] faciemque mutat locis et defert montes, subrigit plana, valles extuberat, novas in profundo insulas erigit. haec ex quibus causis accidant, digna res excuti} (6.4.1).
In any case, he provides a single, reasonably straightforward, and physical (i.e. non-theological) answer for every major *quaestio* featured in the work, even venturing his own personal opinion on various controversial points, such as the role of underground waters (3.15-16) and (in opposition to his fellow Stoics) the nature of comets (7.22-29). Although the incomplete survival of Book 4A means that it is impossible to be certain whether Seneca actually endorsed any one explanation for the

30 Inwood (2005, p. 169) seems to embrace under the same rubric all the phenomena discussed between *quorundam causa non potest reddi* (3.25.11) and *sed difficilis ratio est quorundam, utique ubi tempus eius rei de qua quaeritur non inobservatum sed incertum est; itaque proxima quidem inveniri et vicina non potest causa* (3.26.8); this would mean that the flood of the Nile, briefly discussed at 3.26.1-2, would also be included as something whose *causa non potest reddi*. Between 3.25.11 and 26.8, however, Seneca actually does offer definite *causae* for a number of phenomena, including the formation of quartz (3.25.12) and the disappearance and reappearance of certain rivers, a phenomenon whose *causa* is actually *manifesta* (3.26.3). He also assigns four possible *causae* for the rise of the Nile and promises a fuller *ratio* in his book devoted to the subject (3.26.1-2). It is my opinion that in 3.25.11 Seneca is referring only to the phenomena presented in 3.25.11, namely the effects of certain waters on fertility, for he follows the line *quorundam causa non potest reddi* with a pair of indirect questions headed by *quare*: *quare aqua Nilotica fecundiores feminas faciat, adeo ut quarundam visce longa sterilitate praeclusa ad conceptum relaxaverit; quare quaedam in Lycia aquae conceptum feminarum custodiant, quas solent petere quibus parum tenax vulva est*. Precisely because no rational *causa* can be offered for these phenomena, Seneca doubts their truthfulness. In 3.26.8, on the other hand, he is referring only to the ability of certain springs and regions of the sea to cast out impurities at fixed intervals, a topic whose discussion begins at 3.26.5; and where the phenomena in 3.25.11 are genuinely inexplicable, the explanation for the casting out of impurities is merely *difficilis*. 3.25.11 and 2.6.5-8 thus refer to two completely separate categories, and the phenomena listed between these two passages (the formation of ice and quartz, the summer flood of rivers like the Nile, and the disappearance underground and reappearance of certain other rivers like the Tigris) are also each separate matters to be considered on their own merits.

31 It is true that, as Inwood points out (2005, p. 183), Seneca refers without apparent disapproval to the Epicurean methodology of multiple explanations for phenomena in Book Six of the *Naturales Quaestiones*, when he presents Epicurus’ various theories on the cause of earthquakes and notes that Epicurus criticized those who insisted on a single explanation (6.20.5-7). Seneca, however, appears to distance himself from Epicurus’ caution, for he concludes his account of Epicurus’ conjectures with the remark that even Epicurus regarded air as at least the major cause of earthquakes (*nullam tamen illi placet causam motus esse maiorem quam spiritum*, 6.20.7), a view that Seneca immediately goes on to endorse with the words *nobis quoque placet hunc spiritum esse qui possit tanta conari* (6.21.1), just as he has already stated emphatically that *maxima...causa est...spiritus* (6.18.1). Indeed, the proof and elaboration of this theory occupy the bulk of Book Six. As at 5.4.1 (on wind), Seneca occasionally provides multiple causes for a phenomenon when he believes that it does in fact result from different causes on different occasions, but this practice should be distinguished from the method of asserting multiple causes for a single phenomenon because the single cause operating on it cannot be clearly ascertained. It is only on a few minor points, such as the explanation for hot springs (3.24.1-4), that Seneca is content to present alternative causes for a single phenomenon without expressing a preference. Although Seneca offers several possible causes for the cataclysmic flood at the end of Book Three, he presents them not as alternatives but as operating simultaneously (3.27.1-3 and 3.29.1-5). See Inwood (2005, pp. 171-173) for a discussion of the apocalyptic flood as a unique event entailing special rules of causation. Acreous’ reluctance to commit himself to a single, scientific explanation for the Nile therefore cannot be attributed to Lucan’s Senecan model.
Nile's flood and what that explanation may have been, it is therefore unlikely that Seneca would have simply thrown up his hands in despair of ever arriving at the truth of the matter. On the basis of Seneca's numerous references to underground bodies of water (including a brief discussion of the Nile itself at 6.8.3-5, to be discussed below), Gross makes a strong case for Seneca's assignment of the inundation to the pressure of subterranean waters (p. 180). If Lucan is alluding to Seneca's *quorundam causa non potest reddi* at 10.237, then, he is deliberately extending Seneca's very narrow and dubious category of fundamentally inexplicable aquatic phenomena to include the great mystery of the Nile's flood.

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32 Gross is emphatic on this point, asserting, "Vor allem...dürfte Seneca am Schluß des physikalischen Abschnitts seine eigene Meinung über das Problem der Nilswelle geäussert haben" (p. 170), and, "Es ist nich zu erwarten, daß sich Seneca selbst zu dieser Frage nicht geäussert hat" (p. 180).


34 John Lydus' summary of Seneca's Nile Book does in fact conclude on a note of (in Inwood's terminology) extreme epistemic humility (*De Mensibus* 4.107): ποικίλω, μὲν οὖν αἱ περὶ αὐτοῦ δοξαί, τὸ δ’άληθες κατὰ τοὺς ἄνθρωπους τέως σύνθεμα: κατὰ γὰρ τὸ λόγιον "τὸ δ’άτρεκές ἐν βοθέι ἐστιν". Furthermore, as Gercke observes (pp. 98-99), such humility is not obviously out of harmony with the content or even the language of the views expressed by Seneca elsewhere in the *Naturales Quaestiones*, particularly in the epilogue to Book Seven; Gercke thus cites 7.32.4, where Seneca remarks that, even if all the effort currently wasted on the pursuit of vice were instead devoted to scientific investigation, *vix ad fundum veniretur in quo veritas posita est, quam nunc in summa terra et levi manu quaerimus* (7.32.4). Seneca may well have concluded the lost epilogue of his Nile book on such a note, as asserted by Gross (p. 181). Two things should be kept in mind, however. First, it is by no means certain that the conclusion to John Lydus' doxography can be securely attributed to Seneca, since John does not cite Seneca by name on this point; it may rather have been the opinion of John himself or of a previous epitomist of Seneca's Nile book (if John did not read Seneca directly). The image of truth hiding in the deeps is after all not just a Senecan *sententia* but a philosophical commonplace that can be traced all the way back to Democritus (as observed by Parroni in his note on 7.32.23-24); the only occasion where Seneca cites this maxim verbatim in his extant works is not in his own voice but in a diatribe that he attributes to Demetrius the Cynic (*De Beneficiis* 7.1.5). Second, by his statement at 7.32.4, Seneca signifies not that the truth is fundamentally unattainable, but that unremitting effort and patience are required to reach it (hence the use of *vix* instead of *non*). Even in the case of the comets discussed in Book Seven, which, with their celestial remoteness and infrequent appearances, are far less susceptible to human observation than the terrestrial Nile, there is some hope for progress in human understanding, and Seneca himself has contributed to such progress through his carefully argued case for regarding comets as planets (or planet-like objects) rather than as atmospheric phenomena. Similarly, the key word in John Lydus' conclusion is τέως; it is only up to the present time, rather than for all time, that certainty about the Nile has eluded its investigators. Acoreus, by contrast, with his *quid causas redere possit?* at 10.237, makes the opposite point entirely. For Acoreus, the expenditure of scientific effort, far from being justified and necessitated by the partial and temporary obscurity of natural *causa* as in Seneca, is in fact rendered completely futile, since truth is not merely hidden for the present but will remain so indefinitely.
Acoreus does appear to offer at least one quasi-scientific *causa* for the inundation, for he concludes his account of the different explanations of the Nile's flood as follows:

*ast ego, si tantam ius est mihi solvere litem,/ quasdam, Caesar, aquas post mundi sera peracti/ saecula concussis terrarum erumpere venis/ non id agente deo, quasdam compage sub ipsa/e cum toto coepisse reor, quas ille creator/ atque opifex rerum certo sub iure coercet* (10.262-267). Seneca describes the same theory in Book Three (on terrestrial waters) of his *Naturales Quaestiones*, with reference to the Danube and the Nile:

*aliud est aquarum genus quod nobis placet coepisse cum mundo. sive ille aeternus est, haec quoque aqua fuit semper; sive initium aliquod est illi, haec quoque cum toto disposita est. quae sit haec quaeris? Oceanus et quodcumque ex illo mare terras interluit. iudicant quidam flumina quoque quorum inenarrabilis natura est cum ipso mundo traxisse principia, ut Histrum, ut Nilum, vastos amnes magisque insignes quam ut dici possit eandem illis originem quam ceteris esse.* (3.22)

A comparison of this passage with Lucan 10.262-267 is highly illuminating. The echo of Seneca's *coepisse cum mundo* and *cum toto disposita est* in Acoreus' *cum toto coepisse* indicates Lucan's close reading of his uncle's text at this point, but Lucan is engaged in more than mere uncritical imitation. Acoreus emphatically states his own personal support for the position (*ast ego...reor*); Seneca, on the other hand, associates himself (although not so enthusiastically) with the general theory (*nobis placet*) but not with its specific application to the Danube and the Nile (*iudicant quidam*). Acoreus ascribes creation unequivocally to a divine agency (with *non id agente deo* and *creator/ atque opifex rerum*), while Seneca merely refers to the fact of the origin of the cosmos in impersonal terms (with the passive *disposita* as well as the statements *coepisse cum*

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35 The echo of *coepisse cum mundo* is noted by Diels (p. 394), that of *cum toto disposita est* by Holmes (1989, p. 330).

36 Bonneau overlooks this distinction when she states, "Sénèque disait que le Nil date de la création du monde" (p. 335).
mundo and cum ipso mundo traxisse principia); indeed, Seneca is not even willing to commit himself to the fact of origination (let alone of creation), since it is only one of a pair of alternatives expressed by sive...sive (the other possibility being that the universe aeternus est). Acoreus also stresses the continued supervision of the Nile by the providence that created it (sub iure coercet), an idea with no parallel in Seneca's version. Even if Seneca's passage is read in isolation from the rest of his treatise, it is obvious that he lays far less emphasis on this theory's providential implications than does Acoreus.

Moreover, the idea that any natural phenomenon is fundamentally inenarrabilis is utterly foreign to the progressive ethos of the Naturales Quaestiones. Indeed, on several subsequent occasions, Seneca observes that progress has already been made in rendering both the Danube and the Nile more explicable. First of all, recent discoveries in Germany have established that the Danube does not belong in the category of "special rivers" with the Nile, since the Danube's source is now known, and its rise occurs before the Nile's (4A.1). If the expansion of geographical knowledge has corrected false beliefs about the Danube, why should similar enlightenment not be expected for the Nile? Seneca lays out the problem near the start of his discussion in Book 4A and suggests that the solutions to the two central mysteries of the Nile, its flood and its source, are intimately connected: unde crescere incipiat si comprehendi posset, causae quoque incrementi invenirentur (4A.2.3). As things now stand (as indicated by the phrase nunc vero, which begins the next sentence), these questions remain unanswered, but such ignorance is not necessarily permanent. Seneca accordingly goes on to record two recent

37 As Berti comments (in his note on 10.267), Acoreus' words recall Lucan's description of the operation of divine providence in the Stoic view of the cosmos at 2.7-11: qua cuncta coercet/ se quoque lege tenens (2.9-10).
advances, one negative and the other positive, that have each helped establish first where
the Nile's source is (or is not) and then what the cause of the flood is (or is not). First of
all, the opening up of the Atlantic coasts of western Europe and northern Africa has
disproved the testimony and discredited the theory of Euthymenes, who claimed to have
seen the Nile rising from a freshwater Atlantic and flooding when Etesian winds drove
the sea up the river: *adice quod testimonium eius testium turba coarguitur.  tunc erat
mendacio locus; cum ignota essent externa, licebat illis fabulas mittere.  nunc vero tota
experi maris ora mercatorum navibus stringitur, quorum nemo narrat initium Nili aut
mare saporis alterius* (4A.2.24). Acoreus, by contrasts, presents a similar theory of the
Nile's origination in the Ocean without offering any refutation on the basis of new
evidence (10.255-257). As for the positive advance, in Book Six of the *N.Q.*, a book that
(as discussed above) is much concerned with the celebration of scientific progress,
Seneca reports that an expedition commissioned by Nero has both revealed a possible
source for the Nile and (in doing so) lent support to the theory of underground waters as
the cause of the flood (6.8.3-5); as Gross suggests, this hypothesis may well have been
Seneca's own preferred explanation for the phenomenon.38 Although Seneca approaches
this discovery with his customary caution, stressing that the two water-spouting rocks
reported by the centurions are not necessarily the ultimate source for the Nile, he
nonetheless shows enthusiasm for the advancement of human knowledge about the upper
reaches of the river that the expedition has undeniably accomplished, together with the
insight thereby acquired into the nature of underground waters (6.8.5): *sed sive caput illa
[sc. vis fluminis], sive accessio est Nili, sive tunc nascitur, sive in terras ex priore recepta

38 Seneca states that this theory is found *inter opiniones quibus enarratur Nili aestiva inundatio* (6.8.3),
which implies (in contrast to the view expressed at *N.Q.* 3.22) that the Nile's nature is most definitely not
*inenarrabilis.*
cursu redit - nonne tu credis illam, quicquid est, ex magno terrarum lacu ascendere?

After all, apart from the riddle of the source, the discovery of the Nile's disappearance underground and subsequent reappearance (as indicated by sive in terras ex priore recepta cursu redit) would be a substantial contribution to Nile science, especially for taxonomic purposes, since the Nile would thereby be shown to belong to the same category of rivers as the Tigris (which Seneca discusses immediately before his account of Nero's expedition, at 6.8.2, as well as in his book on terrestrial waters, at 3.26.4). 39

Consequently, exploration can serve as an ongoing corrective to uninformed speculation on both the Danube and the Nile, and it seems safe to assume that Seneca would not have ended his account of the Nile in Book 4A, as Acoreus does, by explaining away the inundation through the doctrine of a unique and inenarrabilis class of rivers. 40

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39 The question of what (if anything) Nero's centurions actually discovered has been the subject of considerable debate over the past century. Most scholars agree that the centurions probably reached the marshes of the notorious Sudd of the southern Sudan (see e.g. Gross, pp. 153-154), although this is doubted by De Nardis (pp. 133-134 and 140-142). The motif of the twin rocks that are said to pour out the waters of the Nile in the centurions' report seems, however, to have been transposed to the remote Sudd from the more familiar environs of Philae (in Upper Egypt), which had long been associated with such a feature (Gross, p. 153). Francken, however, argues that the centurions in fact penetrated into the region of the Ugandan lakes Albert and Edward, where they discovered twin peaks that were subsequently reported by Stanley's expedition (pp. 317-319). In any event, the accuracy of the centurions' report (or of Seneca's understanding of that report) need not concern us here; all that matters for the purposes of the present discussion is that Seneca, whether rightly or wrongly, has presented the expedition as a substantial contribution to the progress of Nile science.

40 It is true that, at the beginning of Book Three (on terrestrial waters in general), Seneca distinguishes the Nile from other rivers as a special case meriting a book of its own: Nilum interim seponemus a turba, propriae naturae ac singularis, et illi suum diem dabis (3.1-2). Nevertheless, Seneca's point is not that the Nile's unique qualities preclude its rational investigation but rather that they render it worthy of such investigation in greater depth than is possible within the general treatment of Book Three. I thus do not accept Gross' contention that Seneca is likely to have ended his treatment of the Nile quaestio along the same lines as Acoreus does at 10.266-267: "Mit einem Ausblick auf überirdische, vom Menschen nicht erfassbare Gesetzmäßigkeiten wird Seneca auch sein Nibeluch beschlossen haben: Die letzte Wahrheit liege in der Tiefe; sie könne von den Menschen nicht erfaßt werden" (p. 181). The extent to which Seneca considered the Nile to be regulated by fixed and unwavering "Gesetzmäßigkeiten" will be discussed below. As for Gross' characterization of Seneca's view of the truth of the Nile as "vom Menschen nicht erfaßbar" and as something that "könne von den Menschen nicht erfaßt werden", Seneca does not adopt such a pessimistic tone with regard to any of the phenomena discussed in the extant Naturales Quaestiones; even God can be apprehended by the mind if not by the eyes (7.30.3). Gross cites two passages (in addition to Acoreus' speech in Lucan) in support of his assertion, namely the conclusion to Book Seven of the Naturales Quaestiones (7.32.4) and the conclusion to John Lydus' doxography of Nile theories; as I have
By contrast, the only expedition mentioned by Acoreus is a completely unsuccessful venture by Alexander (to be discussed below). By dismissing all attempts to subject the Nile’s flood to rational examination as futile, and by attributing not only futility but even impiety to the quest for the Nile’s source, Acoreus emphatically rejects Seneca’s hopes for the advancement of human knowledge through exploration. His focus is not on the future of human science but on the ancient past of the natural universe, at whose creation the Nile too came into being and has been governed ever since certo sub iure by a benevolent and omnipotent providence. Although the idea of natural phenomena like springs and rivers obeying fixed natural laws is not alien to Seneca, he nowhere applies such language to the Nile in his extant writings, and he emphatically prefaces his account of the various theories of the inundation with two facts that seriously call into question the certum ius regulating the Nile (at 4A.2.16): first, the Nile has sometimes carried sea-water; second, and more importantly, it has sometimes failed to flood, and indeed is reported to have done so for nine consecutive years by no less an authority than Callimachus (presumably in reference to Callimachus’ famous lost treatise Περὶ Ποταμῶν), while there is general agreement (constat) on a more recent failure of the inundation for two consecutive years during the reign of Cleopatra (although these would fall after the dramatic date for Acoreus’ speech). Seneca also follows his

argued above, however (in n. 34), neither passage supports the idea that Seneca regarded the question as permanently insoluble. Seneca is therefore more likely to have concluded the Nile book, as he does Book Seven, with a tentative scientific hypothesis followed by an expression of cautious optimism for the future of Nile science, an optimism that would then be (at least partially) borne out by his account of Nero’s expedition in Book Six.

41 Seneca speaks of the ordo rerum, constituta, and iura naturae governing the cycles of certain minor bodies of water both above and below ground at 3.16, but (unlike Acoreus) he does not refer these to the direct control of a Stoic providence.

42 My reading of N.Q. 4A consequently diverges from that of Bonneau, who states that the Nile’s ’crue, par son originalité et sa régularité apparaissait au philosophe [i.e. Seneca] comme un exemple frappant de cette
assertion of the miraculously useful timing of the Nile's flood at 4A.2.1 with the pessimistic observation that the Nile can flow either magnus or parcior, bringing either prosperity or starvation in its wake accordingly (4A.2.2). Acoreus, on the other hand, simply does not consider the disquieting possibility of the Nile's deficiency or outright failure for an instant, even though he is speaking in the autumn of the year that witnessed the lowest Nile flood on record (as a portent of Pompey's murder), according to Pliny the Elder (5.58). Neither is the Nile's flood (when it happens at all) an unequivocal boon to humanity in Seneca's account, since an excessive rise can wreak havoc: si crevit super debitum, nocuit (4A.2.9). Moreover, like Lucan's Libya, Seneca's Nile breeds harmful monsters (as indicated by noxa, a cognate of nocere): ceterum beluas marinis vel magnitudine vel noxa pares educat (4A.2.12). I do not mean to deny that Seneca regarded the Nile as a generally positive phenomenon; the point is that he never idealized it and always approached it rationally, on the basis of the available evidence, as an untidily natural occurrence. The speech of Acoreus, by contrast, has effectively bowdlerized Seneca's account, systematically stripping it of any content that might detract from his picture of the Nile's antiquity, reliability, and providential dispensation.

The Lessons of Egypt

Even though the Naturales Quaestiones provides the factual basis for Acoreus' account, the pious conservatism of Acoreus stands in stark contrast with Seneca's view of the Nile as a naturally occurring and rationally comprehensible phenomenon: what are
Lucan's motives for this surprising contradiction? Diels argues that the passage's mystical overtones are determined by Acoreus' status as an Egyptian priest. The reputation of Egypt as a font of esoteric wisdom would sit ill with the sort of rational, scientific explanation of the Nile that, according to Diels, would have been preferred by both Lucan and Seneca: "Dem Verkünder uralter Weisheit würde eine so rationalistische Erklärung des geheimnisvollen Vorganges schlecht anstehen...Somit ist die Enthüllung oder vielmehr Verhüllung des Achoreus ganz dem Wesen des ägyptischen Priester entsprechend" (p. 393). The extent to which Acoreus' ideology is coloured by traditional representations of Egypt, however, bears closer investigation.

The problem with attributing the peculiarities of Acoreus' account of the Nile to his identity as an Egyptian priest is that Lucan appears to have gone out of his way to avoid any explicit reminders of that identity in the actual content of Acoreus' speech (Lucan's possible reasons for doing so will be explored below). It is true that Acoreus' astrological preface is fully in harmony with his Egyptian provenance. It is further true that his pious sentiments evoke Herodotus' characterization of the Egyptians as

\[\text{θεοσεβεῖς...περισσώς έόντες μάλιστα πάντων ἀνθρώπων (2.37).}\]

45 See Rawson (pp. 307-308) and Merkelbach (p. 78) for the association of astrology with Egypt in the Roman imagination, during the late Republic and the time of Nero respectively; in the latter period, the prominence of the Alexandrian astrologer (and the young Nero's tutor) Chaeremon would have substantially reinforced that association. According to Plutarch (On Isis and Osiris 366a), the Egyptians held the constellation of Leo in special honour because of its link to the timing of the Nile's flood; Plutarch also relates the Egyptian view of the moon's influence on the inundation (367c-368f).

46 More specifically, Bonneau characterizes Acoreus' account of the supreme deity responsible for the Nile as suggestive of Egyptian doctrine: "Pour Lucain, la divinité qui préside au cours du Nil est moins philosophique et plus proche de la théologie égyptienne" (p. 335). Pointing out (correctly) that Lucan lays more emphasis on divine providence than does Seneca in accounting for the Nile, she argues (pp. 334-336) that Lucan's Stoicism has taken on an Egyptian colouring through the influence of Balbillus, a contemporary intellectual and Egyptophile. On the one hand, Bonneau's opposition between Seneca's "philosophical" approach to the Nile and Lucan's incorporation of Egyptian theology seems somewhat forced. None of the phrases cited by Bonneau is necessarily or particularly Egyptian in origin (see e.g. Berti's notes on opifex rerum at 10.267 and dominus aquarum at 10.286), while Acoreus' account of the providential administration of the Nile is in general straightforwardly Stoic (see Schotes, pp. 103-104); on
Nevertheless, in explaining the Nile, Acoreus omits a crucial and highly relevant doctrine of Egyptian religion, for he makes no mention whatsoever of Osiris or any other Egyptian deity, in spite of the fact that, as Plutarch makes clear, the Egyptians were commonly held to have identified the Nile with Osiris and to have mythologized its flood in terms of the interrelationships of the Egyptian pantheon, and even though, in addition to his request for information on the Nile, Caesar specifically and emphatically craves enlightenment on *ritus formasque deum* (10.179), concluding the opening section of his address with the command *noscique volentes/prode deos* (10.180-181).47 This omission of traditional divine machinery is especially surprising for a priest of Memphis, whose cults were devoted to the figures of Isis, her consort Osiris, and the latter’s incarnation Apis (another figure in Nile mythology), as reflected in Lucan’s designation of Acoreus’ long years of service to the gods in terms of the life cycle of the Apis bull in Book Eight (8.479) and in his description of Acoreus as robed in the simple linen garments of the

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47 See De Iside et Osiride 363D-367C; at 364A, Plutarch speaks of the allegorizing interpretation of Egyptian myths in reference to the Nile as a matter of common knowledge. As far as can be judged from the few remaining fragments of his works, Lucan’s contemporary, the Alexandrian scholar-priest Chaeremon, connected Egypt’s gods to its river in this fashion (see e.g. Horst fr. 5.12). Among Roman poets, Tibullus seems to identify (or at least associate) Osiris with the Nile at 1.7.27, while Statius (Silvae 3.2.107-110) appeals to Isis to grant Maecius Celer (the addressee of his poem) knowledge of the cause of the Nile’s inundation. See Bonneau (pp. 233-274) for a very thorough account of the myths of the Nile, as understood in Greco-Roman times; Bonneau points out (p. 253) that Heliodorus in his *Aethiopica* attributes a mythologizing explanation of the Nile to a priest of Memphis (at 9.9.4).
priesthood of Isis during the banquet of Book Ten (10.175).\textsuperscript{48} Surely, if Lucan's goal had simply been to inject a little local colour into his Egyptian narrative, he would have sprinkled Acoreus' speech with references to the exotic mythology of his native Memphis.\textsuperscript{49}

It is also not at all clear that Acoreus' insistence on divine responsibility for the Nile's activity and on the divinely ordained insolubility of the Nile's mysteries, "die Enthüllung oder vielmehr Verhüllung des Achoreus", can be dismissed as the fruit of a typically "irrational" Egyptian mindset. The Egypt of the classical tradition is indeed a land of mystic revelation, as evidenced by the reputed instruction of Orpheus, but it also boasts an expertise in straightforward natural science: its sages are conventionally endowed with superior knowledge of the workings of the universe on both the spiritual and the material levels. The Alexandrian polymath Chaeremon, for instance, writing in Lucan's day (or shortly before), states that the Egyptian priests devoted themselves to scientific research (ἐνεργειακές, Horst fr. 10.6), and that they spent their nights on astronomical observation and their days on geometry and arithmetic (Horst fr. 10.8); Chaeremon was also said to have attributed the investigation of rerum naturas causasque ac rationes siderum (Horst fr. 11) to Egypt's priests, in contrast with Acoreus' refusal to entertain the notion of a scientifically ascertained causa for the Nile.\textsuperscript{50} According to Strabo, for instance (17.1.29), neither Plato nor Eudoxus, the two precedents cited by

\textsuperscript{48} See Bonneau (pp. 221-222) for the cultic association of the Apis bull with the Nile's flood. See Berti’s note on 10.175 for the association of linen garments and the specific epithet liniger with the priesthood of Isis.

\textsuperscript{49} Acoreus' omission of the conventional divine machinery to be expected in a discourse by an Egyptian priest thus mirrors Lucan's celebrated omission of the conventional gods of epic, although the world views of author and character are otherwise far from identical.

\textsuperscript{50} As Horst points out (p. 60, n. 52), Chaeremon's picture of the scientific enthusiasm of the Egyptian priests is in harmony with that of Isocrates' Busiris (21).
Lucan's Caesar, is reported to have learned anything more arcane from his Egyptian sojourn than the fundamentals of astronomy. Caesar must therefore be expecting an answer to his inquiry on the basis of Egypt's reputation as a scientific authority, and Lucan could have put a "rationalistische Erklärung" in Acoreus' mouth without violating the Egyptian context; in fact, as Diels himself points out (p. 382, n. 3), Diodorus attributes precisely such a rational explanation of the Nile's flood to Acoreus' colleagues, the wise men of Memphis, and he also records (although he does not accept) a concrete opinion by Egypt's priests on the question of the source of the Nile. Moreover, even where religious rather than scientific teachings are concerned, the Egyptian priests do not deny the knowability of the fundamental cosmic mysteries, indeed quite the reverse, for they claim a privileged access to such mysteries and are prepared to impart them to such worthy outsiders as Orpheus or Pythagoras,

Acoreus' identity as an Egyptian priest thus leads the reader to expect either an account of Egypt's exotic gods or an authoritative statement of scientific reasoning, but Acoreus delivers neither. If nothing that Acoreus says is necessarily coloured by his Egyptian background, it is conversely true that none of his statements, whether on providential governance or on cosmic inscrutability, is incompatible with the views on

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51 See Diodorus 1.37.7 for the Egyptian theory of the Nile's source and 1.40 for the Memphite theory of the flood. Interestingly enough, although Acoreus does not employ the theory presented at Diodorus 1.40 to account for the Nile's inundation, he does seem to allude to it during his account of the Nile's course (at 10.298-301), as Eichberger suggests (p. 59). According to the summary of the lost portion of Seneca's Nile book preserved by John Lydus, Seneca too attributes a perfectly rational theory of the Nile's flood (causation by rain from clouds driven south by the Etesian winds) to the Egyptians (De Mensibus 4.107); this is one of the theories dismissed by Acoreus as the fruit of vana vetustas (10.239-243). Eichberger (p. 61) notes that this theory is also said to have been attributed to the Egyptian priests by Eudoxus (Aetius 4.1).

52 The following discussion will seek to demonstrate the intellectual respectability of Acoreus' scientific obscurantism as opposed to that of his insistence on a providential ordering to the cosmos, because his statements in the latter vein are very obviously in harmony with the views of the Stoics; see Berti's notes on the Stoic provenance of, for instance, Acoreus' prima mundi lege (10.200-201) and natura paren (10.238).
science expounded by many perfectly respectable Greco-Roman intellectuals and philosophers, including Seneca's own contemporaries, like Demetrius the Cynic. The latter's diatribe against natural science, quoted by Seneca in the *De Beneficiis*, has already been discussed in connection with Demetrius' rejection of the moral utility of science, but Demetrius condemns the goals of natural science as not merely devoid of practical moral benefit (*nec prodest*) but also unattainable in an inherently mysterious universe (*nec licet*): *non multum tibi nocebit transisse, quae nec licet scire nec prodest* (*De Beneficiis* 7.1.5). Similarly, Acoreus insists on the unattainability of knowledge of the Nile's source: *nec licuit populis parvum te, Nile, videre* (10.296). Pliny the Elder provides another instructive point of comparison. At the start of his general account of the cosmos, for instance, Pliny condemns as madness the overreaching of human *ratio* when it tries to extend its comprehension up to and beyond the bounds of our universe (2.1.3-4). Similarly, he describes the astronomer Hipparchus as *ausus rem etiam deo inprobam* for attempting to count the stars (2.95), while Eratosthenes' measurement of the earth is an *improbum ausum* (2.247). Acoreus likewise uses *audere* to characterize the presumptuousness of any claims to knowledge of the source of the Nile: *non fabula mendax/ ausa loqui de fonte tuo est* (10.282-283). Beagon comments, "Nature for Pliny is essentially immeasurable by human minds and to think otherwise is self-delusory and pretentious" (p. 45). Consequently, "when Pliny himself offers explanations of Nature, he does so in very general terms" (p. 45); like Acoreus, Pliny is reluctant to commit himself to a single *causa* for the flood of the Nile.53

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53 Acoreus' astrometeorological account of the Nile is likewise in perfect accord with the doctrines expressed by (e.g.) Germanicus (Breysig fr. 1-5).
55 Pliny merely presents as *maxime probabiles* those explanations that (in different ways) attribute the inundation to the Etesian winds (5.55).
Indeed, Acoreus sounds less like an Egyptian priest and more like Lucan himself, whose endorsement of the idea of the fundamental opacity of the cosmos is suggested by his refusal to commit himself to a single correct explanation in many of his own scientific digressions.\(^{54}\) The cause of the Syrtes is thus assigned to two possible alternatives with a *vel...vel* pairing (9.303-314). On the flooding of the Nile, Acoreus throws up his hands and asks, *quis causas reddere possit?*, while Lucan asserts the impossibility of even proposing a scientific explanation (*vera...causa*) for the proliferation of snakes in Libya and resorts instead to the mythical etiology of Medusa (9.619-623). Most strikingly, in his brief digression on the cause of the tides in Book One (1.412-419), not only does Lucan list three possible causes (wind, moon, and sun, linked by *an...an*) and refuse to commit himself to any one of them, but like Acoreus he assigns the phenomenon instead to a providence that has actually chosen to baffle the natural scientists: *quaerite, quos agitat mundi labor; at mihi semper/ tu, quaecumque moves tam crebros causa meatus,/ ut superi voluere, late* (1.417-419).\(^{55}\) The phrase *causa...late* anticipates and rebukes Caesar's urge to learn *fluvii causas...latentes*. In fact, Lucan is here even more of a promoter of scientific uncertainty than Acoreus himself: in casual asides, the latter twice unambiguously gives the moon as the cause of the tides (10.204 and 216). Lucan therefore joins Acoreus in rejecting the idea, defended so passionately in Seneca's *De Otio*, that nature has actually created the human race precisely in order to investigate and appreciate its innermost secrets. It is simply false to assert, as does Diels, that Lucan

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\(^{54}\) See Schrijvers (pp. 26-28) for Lucan's "Epicurean" use of multiple explanations for natural phenomena.  
\(^{55}\) This passage is cited as a comparandum for Acoreus' viewpoint by Eichberger (p. 55).
would necessarily have preferred a more rational account of the Nile than the one attributed to Acoreus.\textsuperscript{56}

Is Acoreus then simply to be regarded as Lucan's mouthpiece, with no meaningful connection between his Egyptian identity and the content of his speech?\textsuperscript{57} As discussed below, Acoreus' faith in a benevolent providence certainly diverges very sharply from Lucan's usual standpoint in a way that marks out Acoreus as quintessentially Egyptian, but even if an ideological equivalence between character and author is assumed, an Egyptian priest in dialogue with Caesar is a highly appropriate choice of vehicle to provide a coherent statement of a conservative set of views on the relationship between science, tyranny, and morality. As noted in Chapter Three, Egypt was regarded by Greeks and Romans as the world's teacher, both in the sense that, at the dawn of time, it embarked on civilizing crusades abroad and instructed other, younger nations in the arts of life, and in the sense that, in the historical period, the leading lights of Greece made the pilgrimage to Egypt to receive its sacred wisdom and communicate it to their own people.\textsuperscript{58} If the message of Egypt to the human race, beyond its mere factual content, can be summed up as a single concept, it as a sense of perspective: an awareness of one's proper place in the cosmos, together with an acceptance of the limits thereby imposed on

\textsuperscript{56} According to Diels (pp. 392-393), the "rational" theory that Lucan himself preferred is the Stoically influenced one of the sun's evaporation of water from the Ocean by day, which results in the precipitation of excess atmospheric moisture into the Nile by night. This theory is briefly recounted by Acoreus at 10.258-261; Diels sees Lucan himself (along with the Stoic school for which he speaks) in the first-person-plural verb credimus with which Acoreus introduces the theory. The force of credimus is, however, considerably weakened by the preceding litotes of nec non, which is placed at the start of the first line of the passage. When combined with the litotes, credimus signifies nothing stronger than "some of us (the community of thinkers) believe," along the lines of the phrase sunt qui...putent, which introduces another theory in Acoreus' account (10.247-248).

\textsuperscript{57} This seems to be the approach of Syndikus (pp. 68-70), for instance, who treats Acoreus as interchangeable with Lucan's own authorial persona and thereby exempts him from the unequivocal hostility that, according to Syndikus, was Lucan's sole attitude toward Egypt and all things Egyptian; Chambert likewise presents Acoreus as a Stoic, not an Egyptian (pp. 330-331).

\textsuperscript{58} See Froidefond's section on "la Grèce à l'école de l'Égypte" (pp. 137-155).
one's freedom of action. The Egyptians are thus said to have instructed the world in religion, which defines the boundary between the human and divine realms, in the laws that limit the interactions of human beings with one another, and in a carefully maintained balance of social classes: Egypt both embodies and, through the priests who communicate its wisdom to outsiders, actively preaches a utopian model of perfect collectivity and harmony. Allied to Egypt's self-proclamation as the ideal society is a schooling of visitors in humility, a puncturing of pretensions. It is here, rather than in Egypt's supposed irrationality, that the significance of Acoreus' Egyptian background should be sought.

Egypt is a land where cherished assumptions are tested and found wanting. For instance, because the people of Elis pride themselves on the fairness of their administration of the Olympic games, they dispatch a delegation to Egypt and challenge the latter's famous wise men to find fault with their procedures, in the expectation that no improvements can be devised; similarly, Lucan's Caesar hopes to find his own intellectual superiority confirmed on the authority of an Egyptian priest. In the case of Elis, however, the Egyptian sages identify a significant flaw in the current system: the Eleans will administer the games more impartially if they exclude their own citizens from participation in the contests. In another story from Herodotus, the pride of the visiting Hecataeus in his supposedly divine ancestry is rebuked by the vista of the rows upon rows of statues of high priests of Thebes, which reach back in time far beyond the beginnings of Greek history (2.143). Herodotus himself discovers that the hero

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59 For Egypt's lesson in social equilibrium, see e.g. Plato, *Timaeus* 24a-c, Isocrates, *Busiris* (15-20), and Diodorus (1.73-74). For Egypt's invention of laws, see Diodorus 1.14.3; for the exemplary character of Egyptian laws, see e.g. Diodorus 1.69. For Egypt's instruction of Greece in religion, see e.g. Herodotus 2.49-50 and Froidefond (pp. 187-200).

60 See Herodotus 2.160 and Diodorus Siculus 1.95.2.
worshipped under the name of Heracles by the Greeks is nothing but a recent imitation of the truly ancient Heracles of the Egyptian pantheon (2.43-44). The Elean ambassadors are accordingly confronted with the superiority of Egyptian justice in regard to the quintessentially Greek institution of the Olympic games, while Hecataeus and Herodotus receive a lesson not only in genealogical and religious but also in epistemological humility, for all their preconceptions, everything that they and their fellow Greeks believed about their past and their gods, must be discarded in the face of superior Egyptian record-keeping; as Herodotus discovers in conversation with the priests of Memphis, even the defining event of Greek history, the Trojan war, has suffered distortion at the hands of the defining author of the Greek canon, Homer himself (2.113-120). The same effect arises from the narrative of the *Timaeus*, where, after running through the Greek myths about the origins of the human race in a dialogue with one of the priests of Sais, the visiting Solon is informed that all the Greeks are like children in their naive ignorance of the truth of the world's remote antiquity, an ignorance to be corrected by the faithfully preserved lore of Egypt (21E-23C).

Egypt can also offer a salutary lesson in the transience of empire. When, in Tacitus' account, the priests of Thebes are called on by the visiting Germanicus to interpret the hieroglyphs on the city's ruins, they report that these record the mighty deeds of Ramses: *Rhamsen Libya, Aethiopia, Medisque et Persis et Bactriano ac Scytha potitum quasque terras Suri Armeniiique et contigui Cappadoces colunt, inde Bithynum, hinc Lycium ad mare* (Annales 2.60). Here, the rebuke to Roman pride is twofold: first, insofar as Ramses' vast domains extended far beyond Rome's (at least to the east), thus

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61 Plato does, however, offer a patriotic twist on this Herodotean motif by attributing to the Egyptian priest an account of the early history of the world that in fact serves to glorify not Egypt but the vanished civilization of ancient Athens.
imparting a humbling sense of space in the same way that Hecataeus received a humbling
sense of time; second, because if even Ramses' colossal empire has crumbled
Ozymandias-like into dust, such that Tacitus describes the *litterae Aegyptiae* as *priorem
opulentiam complexae*, how can Rome hope for the eternal dominion promised by Jupiter
in the *Aeneid*?  

In addition, Egypt is frequently portrayed as both embodying and preaching a
model of pious self-restraint for rulers. In Herodotus, for instance, the Pharaoh Amasis,
like a good σοφός, advises the tyrant Polycrates of Samos on the need to observe limits
in order to avoid divine φθόνος (3.40-43), while Diodorus goes further, presenting
Amasis as a champion of legality (1.68.5) who urges Polycrates to refrain not only from
acts provoking the envy of the gods but also from tyrannical behaviour towards his
subjects (1.95.1-3). Although Polycrates fails to heed this warning from the wise
Pharaoh, the Egyptian priests actually succeed in their tuition of the Persian king Darius,
whom they teach to be a pious, just, and lawful ruler by instructing him in Egyptian
history and theology (Diodorus 1.95.4-5).  

When first encountered in Book Eight at the council of Ptolemy, Acoreus is
valiantly (if vainly) attempting to dissuade his royal master from tyrannical behaviour,
which, as Diodorus points out, was the traditional edifying function of the high priest at
the Pharaoh's court (1.70.8). In Book Ten, it is similarly in keeping both with the
Egyptian setting and with Acoreus' identity as an Egyptian priest for the visiting tyrant

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62 A similar effect is achieved in Lucan by the narration of Caesar's visit to the ruins of Troy in Book Nine,
immediately before his arrival in Alexandria. As will be discussed below, however, the recital of the
achievements of the great Egyptian Pharaohs can also be seen as serving to inflame rather than to suppress
the megalomania of visiting potentates by inciting them to emulate and surpass those achievements.
63 Note that the successful instruction of Darius follows immediately upon the failed instruction of
Polycrates in Diodorus' account of Egyptian lawgivers; this suggests a conscious parallelism between the
two episodes.
Caesar to be given an analogous lesson in the virtue of respect for limits and boundaries, even though this is not the form of Egyptian lore that Caesar was seeking. Caesar questions Acoreus in the expectation of straightforwardly scientific instruction, such as was bestowed on Plato or Eudoxus, and of a charming ethnographic discourse on this strange land with its strange gods and customs, such as Herodotus relates, but he hears instead the same homily on the virtue of self-restraint that Polycrates and Darius received from Egypt five hundred years before.

The Lessons of Acoreus

Caesar conducts himself throughout the De Bello Civili in accordance with two simple and related beliefs, each symptomatic of a profound megalomania: that nothing is (or should be) impossible for him, and that the universe is arranged for his own personal benefit. The first of these, Caesar's obstinate refusal to accept any divine, human, or natural limits on his mad ambitions, has been amply documented in the previous chapter. The second false assumption, of Caesar's centrality to the cosmos, emerges very clearly in a series of episodes in Book Five. First of all, in response to the mutiny of his soldiers, Caesar scornfully denies their indispensability to his success on the grounds that the gods concern themselves with the fortunes only of great men like him (5.339-343): *humanum paucis vivit genus*. With the mutiny quelled, after he has crossed over to Epirus, he urges Antony in a letter to bring over the rest of his forces from Italy, beginning with a complaint that Antony is delaying the plan of the higher powers, who are presumably keen to get on with the job of advancing Caesar's interests (5.482): *quid superos et fata tenes?* Faced with Antony's continued inaction, Caesar resolves to return to Italy himself in order to expedite matters, even in the teeth of a brewing storm. To begin with, Caesar
assures the nervous skipper Amyclas that his own presence on the boat will keep it safe, for the numina who govern the elements will not abandon their favourite for long (5.577-586). When shipwreck seems imminent, Caesar actually interprets this, too, as proof of his importance in the grand scheme of things, since the entire awesome power of the storm has been raised up by the gods with the sole purpose of his destruction (5.653-656). Of course, this abortive voyage also exemplifies the other of Caesar's twin psychopathies, namely his arrogant rejection of natural (and particularly watery) obstacles and barriers. Similarly, in his interrogation of Acoreus, his self-description as capax mundi and reference to meus annus hint at a highly egocentric view of the universe, while his demand for the revelation of religious and scientific secrets is suggestive of his habitual transgression of boundaries. Although Acoreus is careful not to offend the imperious warlord with an outright refusal, his account of the Nile is precisely targeted to correct both of these facets of Caesar's diseased mind by confronting him with the cosmic perspective that is Egypt's most precious spiritual gift to the world.

Lesson One: You Shall Not Pass

Acoreus' message of humility is most obviously embodied in his catalogue of former rulers who have anticipated Caesar in seeking the source of the Nile (10.268-282). Acoreus begins by attributing this quest to the rulers of the three nationalities that have, in turn, dominated Egypt: quae tibi noscendi Nilum, Romane, cupidó est, et Phariis Persisque64 fuit Macetumque tyrannis (10.268-269). With surprising bluntness, the word

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64 Every translation that I have consulted treats Persis as an adjective (like Phariis) modifying tyrannis, and Berti explicitly so classifies it (p. 213). According to the OLD and Lewis and Short, however, there is no such adjective in Latin, merely the noun Persae, -ae, the adjectival forms being Persicus and (rarely) Persius. Nevertheless, it seems impossible (or at least extremely awkward) to interpret Lucan's Persis as anything other than an adjective, and I therefore adopt such a reading here; Lucan was perhaps constrained by the metrical inadmissibility of the dative plural forms Persicis and Persii.
tyrannis connects Nilotic inquiry to political megalomania, not just for the various rulers in question but also for Acoreus' similarly inclined interlocutor (Romane). It should be noted that, although Acoreus will go on to name only a single tyrannus for each nation cited, the plural forms Phariis Persisque suggest instead a whole host of predecessors; Caesar cannot boast of an extraordinary degree of virtus or amor veri, or that he is intent on boldly going where no man has gone before, since he is merely the last in a very long and crowded line of aspirants to the truth of the Nile: nullaque non aetas voluit conferre futuris/ notitiam (10.270-271). What is more, all these men have ultimately been forced to admit defeat in the face of the Nile's superior power of concealment: sed vincit adhuc natura latendi (10.271). Like the priests consulted by Hecataeus or Herodotus, Acoreus seeks to humble Caesar with a demonstration of the full expanse of historical time; on the other hand, he departs from the model of those priests by additionally asserting Caesar's impotence in the face of the full power of nature.

There follows an account of the expeditions led or commissioned by leaders of the three nations listed, all of whom succeeded (to varying degrees) in dominating the human sphere but failed in their imperialist campaigns against the natural world. While Acoreus refers in general terms to Phariis Persisque...Macetumque tyrannis in the chronological order in which these various nationalities ruled Egypt, his list of specific tyranni is arranged not by chronology but in order of increasing surprise for the reader, a surprise stemming from Acoreus' apparent freedom from the national chauvinism that might have been expected of a priest of the old Egyptian capital of Memphis.

Alexander the Great, the first ruler named in Acoreus' catalogue, is an unlikely choice for two reasons. First of all, although there is reasonably good evidence for
Alexander's interest in the question of the Nile (which is why his name is not as much of a surprise as the ones that follow), documentation for the actual expedition mentioned by Acoreus is tenuous in the extreme, and this may in fact be an original invention by Lucan (or by Acoreus). If one had to choose a representative of the Macetum tyranni who would best exemplify the quest for the Nile's source, it would be Ptolemy II Philadelphus, whose interest in scientific research and whose exploration of the southern reaches of the Nile are both well attested. More importantly, as far as the native Egyptians were concerned, Alexander was not a tyrannus but a national hero, since, in contrast to the Persians who preceded him, he made a point of honouring the native Egyptian deities while in Memphis and was accordingly welcomed as a liberator and crowned as Pharaoh (in Memphis). The first line of Acoreus' account of Alexander seems to embody this tradition of reverence and esteem, since he describes Alexander as summus...regum and (apparently) as one quem Memphis adorat (10.272). Nevertheless, Alexander fails in his effort to master the Nile, since a basic fact of physical geography, the arrangement of the climatic zones of the earth, defeats the scouts he dispatches into distant parts: misitque per ultima terrae/ Aethiopum lectos: illos rubicunda perusti/ zona poli tenuit; Nilum videre calentem (10.273-275). It was a cliché of ancient geography that a torrid middle zone divided the habitable portions of the northern and southern hemispheres from one

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65 See Berti's skeptical discussion in his note on 10.272-275; Berti comments that, while Lucan may have drawn his inspiration for this story from Seneca's notice of a southward expedition by Alexander's companion Callisthenes in the lost section of the Nile book (as preserved in summary by John Lydus, De Mensibus 4.107), Lucan's account does not correspond very closely to Seneca's, and "non si può neppure escludere un'invenzione autonoma di Lucano, che avrebbe arbitrariamente attribuito ad Allesandro questa spedizione, per aggiungere un altro nome - il più significativo ed importante - alla sua lista di tiranni."

66 See e.g. Strabo 17.1.5 and Diodorus Siculus 1.37.5.

67 Diodorus Siculus (17.49.2) attributes the Egyptians' warm welcome of the Macedonian conquerors to the impiety of their former Persian masters. Quintus Curtius Rufus (4.7.5) reports that Alexander arranged the administration of Egypt ita ut nihil ex patrio Aegyptiorum more mutaret. According to Arrian (3.1.4), Alexander sacrificed to the Apis bull and the other Egyptian gods while in Memphis. The (admittedly not very reliable) Alexander-Romance of Pseudo-Callisthenes describes Alexander's coronation as Pharaoh in Memphis in the native ritual (1.34); see Wilcken's discussion (pp. 113-114).
another; this zone constituted an absolutely impenetrable barrier to human movement and a reproof to the pretensions of human empire-builders, who were thereby prevented from extending their reach beyond a fraction of the earth’s surface.\textsuperscript{68} In Acoreus’ account, the mighty Alexander is thus brought up short by the torrid zone, whereas the Nile asserts its superiority over mere mortals by enduring the heat (\textit{calentem}) that drives Alexander’s scouts back north.

The discouraging implications of Acoreus' assertion of a natural bar to human exploration of the Nile are made all the more apparent by a comparison with Seneca's account (discussed above) of the expedition dispatched by Nero \textit{ad investigandum caput Nili} (\textit{N.Q.} 6.8.3-4). According to the report provided by Nero's centurions (as relayed by Seneca), their journey up the Nile was eventually halted by a region of \textit{immensas paludes, quarum exitum nec incolae noverant nec sperare quisquam potest, ita implicatae aquis herbae sunt et aquae nec pediti eluctabiles nec navigio, quod nisi parvum et unius capax limosa et obsita palus non fert}. Although these lines appear to suggest that, just as in Acoreus' account, the further reaches of the Nile have been rendered inaccessible by a formidable feature of physical geography, it should be noted that swamps do not present nearly so insuperable an obstacle to human movement as the \textit{rubicunda perusti/zona poli} that was said to have defeated Alexander's scouts; a swamp, after all, even a vast one, is a localized phenomenon that can always be detoured around when it cannot be penetrated, whereas the torrid climatic zone by definition encircles the entire globe, admitting no ingress, as ancient geographers repeatedly emphasize.\textsuperscript{69} Furthermore, the pessimistic phrase \textit{nec sperare quisquam potest} is not voiced by Seneca

\textsuperscript{68} See e.g. Cicero, \textit{De Re Publica} 6.21 and Pliny the Elder 2.172.  
\textsuperscript{69} See e.g. Pomponius Mela 1.1
himself but attributed to the centurions, who have a vested interest in persuading their audience that they travelled as far up the Nile as they possibly could, in other words that they have dutifully fulfilled Nero's commission to the best of their abilities; in fact, even the centurions' own report suggests that the swamps are not altogether impassable, since at least a small boat (*parvum et unius capax*) is capable of negotiating them, unlike the general category of swamps characterized by Seneca a little earlier in Book Six as completely *ineluctabiles navigio* (6.7.2). The most important distinction between the two Nile expeditions, however, consists in their outcomes, for Nero's centurions conclude their account with the report of a specific and (at least potentially) significant discovery that they observed with their own eyes: *ibi vidimus duas petras, ex quibus ingens vis fluminis excidebat*. In other words, Seneca is not necessarily positing an intractable barrier to future exploration of the river, but even if such a barrier exists, the recent expedition may in fact have already attained the Nile's source and has at any rate made a substantial contribution to Nile science. Alexander's scouts, by contrast, are forced to turn back without having witnessed anything to advance human knowledge of the Nile beyond the mere fact of its continuation through the torrid zone, where human explorers (and lesser rivers) cannot follow: *Nилum videre calentem* (10.275).70

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70 It is worth noting that Acoreus is more pessimistic than not only Seneca but also Lucan himself on the feasibility (although not on the moral desirability) of Nile exploration. According to Lucan, if Alexander's premature death had not intervened, *Nilum...a fonte bibisset* (10.40); in other words, the enterprise was not beyond the means of Alexander, merely beyond his lifespan. In Acoreus' account, on the other hand, the barrier of the torrid zone ensures that all attempts to penetrate the Nile's secrets, whether by Alexander or by any other *tyrannus*, are doomed to failure. Acoreus' point of view should thus not be too readily identified with Lucan's own, even though the language of his catalogue of Nile-explorers contains several clear echoes of Lucan's diatribe against Alexander (as outlined in Schmidt's notes on the latter); Lucan is showing Acoreus manipulating the historical tradition, even inventing an expedition that never in fact occurred, in order to offer an ethical lesson to the visiting Caesar on the basis of his authority as a wise old priest of Egypt.
Acoreus thus begins with the praise of Alexander but ends with the magnification of nature at Alexander's expense; he has increased the Nile's victory by presenting as its vanquished adversary not a member of the despised house of the Ptolemies but the greatest conqueror who ever lived, *summus regum*, and one whom he himself, as a dutiful priest of Memphis, would be expected to exalt instead of denigrate. A significant grammatical ambiguity serves to highlight the transfer of Acoreus' loyalty from Alexander to the Nile. By the order of reading (or hearing), the phrase *quem Memphis adorat* will, as noted above, first naturally be taken as a reference to Alexander: *summus Alexander regum, quem Memphis adorat* (10.272). With the words *invidit Nilo* at the start of the next line, however, the reader is left to wonder whether the Nile rather than Alexander may be the true object of Memphis' adoration. After all, when Acoreus is introduced in Book Eight, his birthplace Memphis is termed *custos Nili* (10.477), a phrase that, although a probable reference to the Nilometer, may also suggest the important role of Memphis in the cult of the Nile's flood, a role repeatedly emphasized by ancient writers;\(^71\) by contrast, Memphis was far less intimately connected to the cult of Alexander, which was localized primarily in Alexandria, and whose high priest was always a Greek, never a native Egyptian like Acoreus.\(^72\) As Berti has shown, moreover,

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\(^71\) This implication of the phrase *custos Nili* is suggested by Diels (p. 395, n. 2).

\(^72\) On Alexander's cult in Egypt, see Fraser, p. 212 and 215, and Hölbl, p. 94 and 111. The tomb in Alexandria was of course the focus for this cult, as Lucan implies when he speaks of the *sacratis...adytis* in which Alexander's corpse was enshrined (10.22-23).

There are two separate problems involved with the phrase *quem Memphis adorat*. First of all, *quem*, although adopted by most modern editors and commentators (e.g. Housman and Berti), is found in only two manuscripts, while the majority read *quos Memphis adorat*; this latter reading (with *quos* referring to the preceding *regum*) is defended by Holmes (1989, note on 10.272) as a reference to the general role of Memphis as traditional centre for the veneration of the kings of Egypt: "Both the divinity of the Pharaoh and the importance of Memphis as Egypt's capital...favour 'quos Memphis adorat', a heading common to all the kings that Acoreus is discussing." The last statement is highly questionable, however. While adoration by Memphis is indeed an undisputed fact in the case of the great Pharaoh Sesostris, this theme is most definitely not applicable to third king on Acoreus' list, Cambyses, who was utterly loathed by the priests of Memphis; is Alexander then not as mighty a king as the vile Cambyses? This is surely not an inference
that Lucan (or Acoreus) would wish to be drawn. In any case, as noted above, it is only in a rather loose sense that Alexander himself can be seen as receiving worship in Memphi, since his cult was centred on his tomb in Alexandria, not in the native Egyptian settlements of the interior. Lucan's limitation of the scope of Alexander's greatness as king to a purely Egyptian context by the relative clause quos Memphis adorat would also be surprising; when a ruler is described as "king of kings" (as with the phrase summus Alexander regum at 10.272), the point is to present him as the greatest of the rulers not only of his own country but of the entire world, in the same way that Sesostris is subsequently said by Acoreus, only five lines later, to have driven a chariot yoked to the necks of kings (.Pharios currus regum cervicibus egit at 10.275, where regum occupies the same metrical sedes as in 10.272). Finally, by the argument of the difficilior lectio, it is easy to see how a scribe would have turned quem into quos in order to allow for an antecedent (regum) that immediately precedes the relative pronoun; in his note on 10.272, Housman thus compares a similar corruption of a relative pronoun that occurs at 10.43 (coincidentally, again in connection with Alexander).

The second problem, given a reading of quem instead of quos, is whether to take Alexander or the Nile as the antecedent of the relative pronoun. Diels was the first to apply the relative clause to the Nile (p. 395, n. 2); according to Diels, Lucan's point is to suggest that Alexander's envy of the Nile (as signified by the following phrase invidit Nilo) is motivated by his pique that the Nile receives worship from Memphis while he does not. As Holmes (1989, note on 10.272) rightly observes, on the other hand, such a small-minded motive does not seem consonant with the voraciously megalomaniacal Alexander depicted elsewhere in Lucan: "We can provide a better explanation for Alexander's envy, in line with his need to conquer every natural obstacle, to know the unknown; it was [the Nile's] apparent boundlessness that he envied, that it seemed greater than him. If we ignore 'quem Memphis adorat' we see a clear contrast between Alexander's worldly greatness and the Nile which still had something which he did not; the adoration of the Egyptians would be ludicrous in this place." Holmes therefore concludes that, in the absence of a better "explanation of the logical connection of Egyptian Nile worship to the context", it is preferable to read quem as referring to Alexander rather than to the Nile (he then proceeds to read quos instead of quem for the reasons outlined above). I believe that just such a logical connection can be found, however, if quem Memphis adorat is read as an attempt to clarify not Alexander's motive for envying the Nile (i.e. resentment of the Nile's worship by Memphis) but Acoreus' own motive for exalting the Nile at Alexander's expense; as a loyal priest of Memphis, Acoreus is determined to celebrate the river whose cults are so intimately linked to his birthplace, even if this necessitates the disparagement of Alexander, who was popular among but not necessarily worshipped by the native Memphite priesthood. After all, there are numerous references to a connection between Memphis and the cult of the Nile in ancient (and Roman) literature, but none that link Memphis with the cult of Alexander. In Apuleius (Metamorphoses 2.28), for instance, the cults of Memphis and the inundation of the Nile are closely conjoined as sacred phenomena when a supplicant appeals to an Egyptian priest per incrementa Nilotica et arcana Memphitica. See Bonneau (pp. 399-401) for the Egyptian custom of throwing sacred offerings into the Nile at Memphis, a custom mentioned by e.g. Pliny the Elder (8.186); Ammianus Marcellinus also mentions a festival at Memphis honouring the birthday of the Nile (22.15.17). Berti (in his note on 10.272), who reads quem as a reference to Alexander, seeks to downplay the significance of the lack of specific link between the city of Memphis and the cult of Alexander by interpreting Memphis here as a synecdoche for Egypt as a whole, so that "La frase contiene un'allusione al culto di Alessandro divinizzato in Egitto." Although Berti cites four instances of such a synecdoche in Lucan (1.640, 3.222, 6.449, and 8.542), all of these passages seem nevertheless to refer to some quality or attribute that is specifically associated by the literary tradition with the city of Memphis, such as exotic religiosity (denoted by the epithet barbara at 8.542), mastery of religious lore (6.449), mastery of astronomical lore (1.640), and Egypt's remote past (3.222); consequently, none of these passages supports the argument that Memphis can be used as a straightforward synonym for modern, Ptolemaic Egypt (the Egypt of Alexander's cult). Berti more plausibly points out that a reference in quem to the preceding Alexander rather than to the following Nile is the reader's first impression, as well as the more natural one (given normal Latin word order), and that Lucan would therefore have been risking a considerable ambiguity if his intention had been to suggest a reference to the Nile. My purpose here is to demonstrate that the ambiguity itself is intended and serves a deliberate function in Lucan's characterization of Acoreus: the reading suggested by word order (a reference to Alexander, whose cult was based in Alexandria) is superseded by the reading suggested by the Egyptological tradition (a reference to the Nile, whose cult was based in Memphis).
Acoreus employs the language of divine epiphany to describe the inundation. The Nile is thereby elevated to the level of deity, while Alexander himself, with the verb *invidit*, is reduced to a small-minded tyrant who begrudges the Nile its mysterious majesty, as might have been expected from Acoreus' earlier classification of all the would-be conquerors of the Nile as *tyranni* (10.269); Alexander's interest in the Nile is the product not of *amor veri* but of petty envy.

The middle member of the catalogue, Sesostris (representing the *Pharii...tyranni*), is a surprise for the same two reasons as Alexander, but to a greater extent. First of all, while Alexander is known to have displayed an interest in the source of the Nile even if the specific expedition recounted by Acoreus may be apocryphal, such curiosity is attributed to Sesostris nowhere else than in Lucan. While absence of evidence does not necessarily constitute evidence of absence, Strabo (17.1.5) emphatically draws a contrast between the Ptolemies' exploratory zeal and the (to him) inexplicable lack of interest in the Nile displayed by the previous rulers of Egypt, adducing as proof the southward expedition of Sesostris, during which the simple observations that could have established the correct reason for the summer flood (i.e. rain in the Ethiopian highlands) were simply never made; this strongly suggests that none of Strabo's sources linked Sesostris to a project of inquiry into the Nile. Again, like Alexander (but much more so), Sesostris is a national hero, the mightiest Pharaoh of them all. According to Plutarch, the people of Egypt idolized his memory just as the Assyrians did that of Semiramis, while Manetho observes that Sesostris was second only to Osiris in the Egyptians' esteem. In fact, a

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73 See Berti's notes on 10.233 and 235.
74 See Berti's note on 10.273 for the tyrannical connotations of *invidia*. As noted by Berti, this emotion is also attributed to Alexander in Lucan's diatribe (at 10.43).
75 See Plutarch (*De Iside et Osiride* 24) and Manetho (*Aegyptiaca*, Syncellus fr. 34).
priest of Memphis (like Acoreus) is said to have impressed the Persian king Darius precisely with a recital of the superior achievements of Sesostris, just as the priests of Thebes proclaimed the accomplishments of Ramses to Germanicus in Tacitus' account. Acoreus would therefore be expected to glorify Sesostris for the edification of the visiting Caesar, and this he appears at first to do: *venit ad occasus mundique extrema Sesostris/ et Pharios currus regum cervicibus egit* (10.276-277). Here is an Egyptian priest patriotically seeking to impress a Roman commander with the extent and power of the bygone Egyptian empire; Acoreus describes Sesostris' proud chariot with the ethnic *Pharios* rather than the personal *suos*, claiming Sesostris' glory for all Egypt. So far, Acoreus may be thought to be contaminated by the same narrow patriotism that characterizes the priests depicted by Herodotus, Diodorus, and other classical Egyptologists. At this point, however, Acoreus succeeds in transcending the constraints of his ethnicity, for Sesostris' preeminence on the scale of human empire is in turn surpassed by the immensity of the natural universe. As Acoreus suggests rather obliquely through an ἀδύνατον expression, this legendary conqueror could no more have reached the headwaters of the Nile than the Rhone or the Po: *ante tamen vestros amnes, Rhodanumque Padumque,/ quam Nilum de fonte bibit* (10.278-279).

As befits a native Egyptian priest, Acoreus deals more kindly with the native Pharaoh Sesostris than the foreign (if popular) interloper Alexander. Alexander's many

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76 See Diodorus 1.58.4 (Diodorus uses the name Sesoōsis instead of Sesostris).
77 In his note on 10.278-279, Berti explains this clause as a variation on the conventional ἀδύνατον expression along the following lines: "Sesostris would sooner have reached the Rhone and the Po than the source of the Nile; he did not reach the Rhone or the Po (according to all the historical accounts); he therefore most certainly never reached the source of the Nile." As Berti points out, the model here is Virgil: *ante leves ergo pascentur aethere cervi/ et freta destituent nudos in litore piscis,/ ante pererratis amborum finibus exul/ aut Ararim Parthus bibet aut Germania Tigrim,/ quam nostro illius labatur pectore vultus* (Eclogues 1.59-62).
achievements are only touched upon with the brief epithet *summus...regum*; the focus is on the failure of his attempt to explore the Nile's source, not on the roll of successful conquests enumerated in Lucan's diatribe at the beginning of Book Ten. Acoreus thereby avoids inciting Caesar to take Alexander as a morally pernicious role model for *imitatio* and *aemulatio*, as an *exemplum terras tot posse sub uno/esse viro* (10.26-27). In his account of Sesostris, on the other hand, Acoreus does provide some circumstantial detail to flesh out the Pharaoh's successes, namely the references to his penetration of the furthest west and to the yoking of his chariots to the necks of vassal kings. Even so, Acoreus takes steps to ensure that his recital of the deeds of Sesostris will not have the inflammatory effect on Caesar that a similar recital by another priest of Memphis did on the visiting Persian king Darius, who is said to have been not so much humbled by the record of Sesostris' victories as inspired to rival and surpass them.\(^7\) According to both Herodotus and Diodorus, Sesostris' greatest conquests were largely restricted to Asia and to the directions of east and north; Diodorus in particular represents Sesostris as anticipating and exceeding the achievements of Alexander the Great by penetrating past the Ganges to the Ocean shore of India and by subduing the Scythians.\(^8\) As for the west, Sesostris is not said by either Herodotus or Diodorus to have ventured further than Thrace into western Europe, while Diodorus provides only a brief notice of a youthful expedition into Libya (that is, west of Egypt).\(^9\) Why, then, does Acoreus emphatically limit the scope of Sesostris' victories to the nations of the west with the words *venit ad occasus*

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\(^7\) Diodorus Siculus 1.58.4  
\(^8\) Diodorus 1.53.6  
\(^9\) See Diodorus 1.55; cf. Herodotus 2.102-106.
The answer lies yet again in the example of Alexander's eastern triumphs. Among the projects cut short by Caesar's assassination was a grand invasion of the east in general and of Parthia in particular; in this respect, Caesar could easily be seen as desirous to follow in Alexander's footsteps, and the even more resplendent eastern campaign of Sesostris would only provide further spurs to such an ambition. A report of a western expedition by Sesostris, on the other hand, would be much less fraught with moral pitfalls for the listening Caesar. With the Roman conquest of Spain and then of Numidia, little scope for glory remains in that direction; Caesar himself has personally mastered Spain through his victory over the Pompeians at Ilerda in Book Four and has thus already penetrated to the *extrema...mundi* (3.454) of the west. Acoreus may therefore safely recount Sesostris' own invasion of the same *extrema* without fear of encouraging Caesar's megalomaniacal designs towards the human world; at the same time, he actively suppresses Caesar's megalomania towards the natural sphere by insisting (through an *ἀδύνατον* construction) on the absolute inevitability of Sesostris' failure to reach the Nile.

Of course, where Alexander is said to have actively sought the Nile's source and to have been conspicuously defeated in his undertaking, Acoreus merely records that it was impossible for Sesostris to reach this goal, with only an implication that he searched for it in vain, except insofar as Sesostris is generally included in the initial list of past rulers motivated by *noscendi Nilum...cupido*. Nevertheless, for all that Acoreus

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81 This contradiction between the historical tradition of Sesostris' Asian victories and Acoreus' report of a western expedition is observed (in his note on 10.276) by Berti, who cites the expedition west into Africa reported by Diodorus as a possible solution.

82 See e.g. Suetonius, *Divus Julius* 44.3, Plutarch, *Caesar* 58.4-6, Cassius Dio 43.51, and Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.110.

83 Green, however, convincingly argues (p. 15) that the historical Caesar is unlikely to have been motivated by any spirit of emulation with Alexander in his plan for a Parthian campaign.
patriotically downplays Sesostris' failure in the project of Nile exploration, the fact remains that he does report such a failure (however obliquely) and, in doing so, even departs from the biographical tradition of Sesostris, which attributes no such project to the latter; the truly patriotic (not to mention more historically accurate) course would have been for Acoreus to exclude Sesostris altogether from his list of unsuccessful Nile-explorers. Furthermore, while Herodotus and Diodorus do in fact connect Sesostris to the Nile, they represent him not as failing to master it through exploration but as succeeding in mastering it through the imposition of canals and other engineering works.\textsuperscript{84} In this context, it is perhaps significant that Acoreus halts his subsequent account of the Nile's course at Memphis, before he is obliged to mention the canals of the Delta: \textit{prima tibi campos permittit apertaque Memphis/ rura modumque vetat crescendi ponere ripas} (10.330-331). In the Nile book of the \textit{Naturales Quaestiones}, by contrast, Seneca concludes his own presentation of the river's course by emphasizing the exercise of human control over its flood in the Delta area to serve human ends: \textit{circa Memphim demum liber et per campestria vagus in plura scinditur flumina manuque canalibus factis, ut sit modus in derivantium potestate, per totam discurrit Aegyptum} (4A.2.8). Acoreus' version corresponds to Seneca's in describing the liberation of the Nile's flood upon reaching Memphis but departs from the \textit{N.Q.} in omitting the famous canals that thereafter harness the flood's power; Acoreus thus exempts the Nile from the channel-cutting indignities suffered by the Sicoris at Caesar's hands in Book Four. By omitting any reference to Sesostris' well-attested (and successful) engineering projects and replacing them with an otherwise unattested (and failed) quest for the Nile's source, Acoreus has shown the Nile triumphant against Sesostris' ambition to subject it to his

\textsuperscript{84} See Herodotus 2.108 and Diodorus 1.57.
control and at the same time shown himself rising above his own ethnic identity in order to critique his greatest national hero.\textsuperscript{85}

Even in his account of Sesostris' victories, Acoreus can be seen to register a certain pious disapproval, although again less overtly than in the case of Alexander. Only to the latter does Acoreus explicitly ascribe a tyrannical state of mind with \textit{invidit}. Nevertheless, tyrannical hubris is attributed to Sesostris' acts if not his thoughts, since, as Holmes observes (1989, p. 339), although he "is normally portrayed sympathetically or neutrally, the most unappealing aspect of his story is chosen," namely his practice of yoking his chariot to the necks of captured kings as a demonstration of his supremacy. Both men thus live up to their initial designation as \textit{tyranni} at 10.269, and both are offered as examples of tyrannical failure in the perennial quest for the Nile's source. Acoreus therefore proves himself (like a good Stoic) to be a true citizen of the universe rather than a mere spokesman for the national tradition of Egypt, since he represents two national icons in an unflattering light, first as aggressors against and then as defeated by the superior power of nature; at the same time, his choice of the Nile as the means to illustrate that power, together with the reverent awe towards it evinced by the phrase

\textsuperscript{85} As in the case of Alexander (see n. 70 above), wherever Acoreus departs in an obvious way from the historical tradition of Sesostris and Cambyses (who is discussed below), I believe that Lucan is intending to present him not as ignorant, since an old priest of Memphis would be expected to be fully conversant with the conventional biographies of all the more notable former rulers of Egypt, but as deliberately correcting (or manipulating) the tradition, on the basis of his priestly authority, in order to convey a pointed ethical lesson to Caesar. By including Sesostris on his list of unsuccessful Nile-exploring \textit{tyranni}, Acoreus achieves two important goals. First, he lends credibility to his pessimistic account of the one-sided contests between tyrants and the Nile, since, if he is willing to recount the failure of his own national hero, he will not simply be dismissed as an Egyptian priest chauvinistically belittling the efforts of foreign invaders (whether past or present) to penetrate the mystery of his national sacred river. Second, if Caesar (as would be expected of an educated Roman) is already familiar with the broad outlines of Sesostris' achievements (a well-known story in Herodotus and elsewhere), Acoreus can dissuade him from embracing Sesostris as a successful exemplar of world-conquering megalomania (in the way that Darius embraced him) by positing an alternative Sesostris, one who cuts a less impressive figure (like Acoreus' Alexander); Acoreus is concerned to present to Caesar only those aspects of his national heritage that will actually contribute towards Caesar's spiritual improvement.
quem Memphis adorat, is in perfect harmony with Acoreus' identity as an Egyptian priest. Lucan is making very subtle use indeed of his character's ethnic background.

Acoreus then completes his simultaneous affirmation and transcendence of his Egyptian identity when he concludes his list of investigators with Cambyses. As is to be expected for a member of the venerable priesthood of Memphis, against which Cambyses committed so many blasphemous outrages, Acoreus reserves his harshest language for this final tyrannus (the only member of Acoreus' catalogue, with the possible exception of Alexander, whom Lucan's readers would have expected to find associated with that epithet). Where Alexander is guilty of invidia, Cambyses is a fully fledged madman, as indicated by vaesanus. His fate is also markedly worse than that of either Alexander or Sesostris, for, in addition to failing to uncover the Nile's source, he himself barely escapes with his life, even though he successfully penetrates in ortus: vaesanus in ortus/ Cambyses longi populos pervenit ad aevi,/ defectusque epulis et pastus caede suorum/ ignoto te, Nile, re(d)it (10.279-282). Given Cambyses' numerous violations of Egyptian taboos during his stay in Memphis, it is appropriate that Acoreus should here attribute to him the ultimate abomination of cannibalism, which is associated with Cambyses himself through the participles defectus and pastus; in Herodotus' account, by contrast, it is only Cambyses' soldiers who are compelled to resort to this desperate measure during the Ethiopian expedition, whilst Cambyses is so horrified by the news of their dreadful behaviour that he abandons the march and brings his army back to Egypt. Avenging the

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86 Note that Acoreus displays a vestigial Egyptian loyalty towards Alexander by attributing instead to the anti-Egyptian Cambyses the worst of the epithets hurled by Lucan against the Egyptian-friendly Alexander (who is termed vaesanus at 10.20 and 42).
city and country of his birth, Acoreus thereby succeeds in presenting Cambyses even more unfavourably than Herodotus does.\textsuperscript{87}

Like those of Alexander and Sesostris, however, the name of Cambyses would have come as a considerable surprise to Lucan's readers. Although in his general introduction Acoreus refers to \textit{Persis...tyrannis} (10.269), Cambyses is nowhere else associated with the quest for the Nile, unlike another Persian king, Artaxerxes III (as mentioned in the previous chapter); the motivation for Cambyses' expedition into the Ethiopian desert is universally assigned to his anger against the nation of the so-called \textit{Μαξροβτοι}, which is why he can serve as an exemplum of \textit{ira} in Seneca's treatise thereon (3.20.2-4). The same Strabo passage that denies any motive of Nilotic investigation to Sesostris' southern campaign therefore also denies it to Cambyses' (17.1.5); Acoreus has distorted the historical record in order to put Caesar's curiosity about the Nile on a level with Cambyses' \textit{vaesania}.\textsuperscript{88} Moreover, even though Acoreus directs his most overt hostility against Cambyses rather than Alexander or Sesostris, the mere fact that Cambyses is included on the same list with these two is highly disconcerting, since he was the national enemy of Egypt where Alexander was its liberator, and Sesostris its champion (this extreme incongruity with the previous two examples is the reason why I describe Cambyses' name as the greatest surprise of the three). Indeed, Sesostris' imperialism is equated very explicitly to Cambyses' by a verbal parallelism, since Acoreus reports that, whereas Cambyses \textit{in ortus...pervenit} (10.279-

\textsuperscript{87} In Seneca's \textit{De Ira} (3.20.2-4), cannibalism is likewise attributed solely to Cambyses' men, while he himself is said to have enjoyed the flesh of choice birds in the midst of his soldiers' misery.

\textsuperscript{88} Diels (p. 396) proposes Strabo 17.1.5 as Lucan's source (or rather Posidonius as the common source for both Strabo and the lost portion of Seneca's Nile book, the latter being Lucan's source) for the inclusion of Sesostris and Cambyses in Acoreus' catalogue of Nile-explorers; Diels does not, however, note the paradox of Lucan's use of a source that emphatically excludes curiosity about the Nile from the motivations of Sesostris and Cambyses for the opposite effect.
As for Alexander, while Cambyses was hated by the native Egyptians (especially the priests of Memphis) as a ferocious enemy to Egypt's laws and customs, Alexander consciously set out to distance himself from such unsavoury precedents upon his own conquest of Egypt, for instance in his act of reverence to the Apis bull, the same sacred animal slaughtered by Cambyses. Acoreus, however, connects Alexander to Cambyses through the shared motif of a failed Ethiopian expedition to find the source of the Nile.

For an Egyptian priest to rank the Egyptian-friendly Alexander and the great Egyptian ruler Sesostris together with the archetypal anti-Egyptian Cambyses as *tyranni* cut from essentially the same cloth suggests that Acoreus is truly operating within a broader frame of reference than his Egyptian background would suggest; his loyalty is to the natural world that all three rulers (by his account) attempted to violate, rather than to Egypt as such, which (historically) Sesostris empowered, and Alexander respected, but Cambyses persecuted. Alexander's regard for Egyptian scruples, which ought to differentiate him very sharply from Cambyses, thus does not weigh as much with Acoreus as his tyrannical envy of Nature's superior majesty, and Acoreus does not seem to condemn Cambyses as *vaesanus* for his numerous violations of Egyptian taboos (which Herodotus closely connects to Cambyses' insanity, but of which Acoreus makes

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89 Berti notes the parallel of *in ortus* and *ad occasus* and comments (in his note on 10.276), “ai due sovrani viene simbolicamente attribuita un'espansione verso i due punti cardinali dell'oriente e dell'occidente, che non raggiunge però la fonte del Nilo.” In terms of my discussion (above) of the implications of Acoreus' allocation of the sphere of the west to Sesostris, it should be pointed out (as Berti does in his note on 10.279-282) that there is no record of Cambyses ever venturing on an eastward expedition; Cambyses is said to have pursued his wars of aggression only west from Persia into Egypt, south from Egypt into Ethiopia, and west again in failed or abortive expeditions into Libya and against Carthage (Herodotus 3.17-18 and 25-26). Acoreus thus departs from the historical tradition in order to associate with the project of eastern conquest not the glorious Alexander or Sesostris but a contemptible and despicable figure that even Caesar would be reluctant to emulate.
no mention) but rather for his attempt to know the Nile;\textsuperscript{90} he thereby extends the scope of Cambyses' sacrilege from Egypt to nature and from physical violence against Egypt's priests and sacred animals to the spiritual violence of scientific inquiry. According to Diodorus, the lesson that Darius (like Alexander) took from the example of his predecessor Cambyses was the value of pious respect for Egypt's own laws and customs (1.95.4), which certainly did not deter Darius from his project of global conquest; as noted above, Darius' imperialism actually received a powerful incitement from his Egyptian sojourn, through the example of Sesostris. Acoreus, on the other hand, exploits and transforms the example of Cambyses in order to teach Caesar a respectful deference not towards Egypt but towards the universe as a whole. It is not the people of Ethiopia but the Nile that Acoreus' Cambyses fails to conquer, for, where Herodotus reports that Cambyses was forced to turn back long before reaching his intended target, the land of the Μακρόβιοι,\textsuperscript{91} Acoreus (with pervenit) portrays Cambyses as actually attaining that objective but being thwarted by the Nile: longi populos pervenit ad aevi,/ defectusque epulis et pastus caede suorum/ ignoto te, Nile, redit (10.280-282). Consequently, by Acoreus' account, Cambyses is only driven to cannibalism after he has already succeeded in the strategic goal attributed to him by Herodotus, but before he has succeeded in the further (otherwise unattested) goal of mastering the Nile. Cambyses' hubris is therefore directed against the natural more than against the human realm, and Acoreus has increased the Nile's glory by showing Cambyses victorious over his human foes but abysmally defeated by the Nile; this constitutes a pointed warning for Caesar, who has arrived fresh from his victory over his own human adversaries at Pharsalus and has now

\textsuperscript{90} See Herodotus 3.30 and 38 for the close connection between Cambyses' madness and his sacrileges, both as cause and as effect.

\textsuperscript{91} See Herodotus 3.25, which states that Cambyses' army only made it a fifth of the way to its destination.
set his sights on the Nile. Cambyses' failure is further driven home by a play on the
meaning of *ortus* in the phrase *in ortus...pervenit*: Cambyses reaches the land of the rising
sun but not the land of the rising Nile (whose origin is described as *ortus* at 10.297 and
301).

The glorification of the Nile at the expense of a puny humankind continues in the
next section of Acoreus' exposition. It was a commonplace of popular philosophy that a
proper appreciation of the vastness of cosmic space drove home the insignificance and
futility of the pursuit of terrestrial empire, which was restricted to the narrow fraction of
the earth's surface available for human endeavour. As well as underlying Acoreus'
report of the defeat of Alexander's expedition by the barrier of the torrid zone (as
discussed above), this theme can also be perceived in his subsequent delineation of the
Nile's course. Although Acoreus follows Seneca's Nile book very closely on the more
mundane leg of the river's journey, he assigns the Nile's origins to regions far more exotic
than the marshes south of Philae with which Seneca begins his own itinerary of the
Nile. To start with, Acoreus declares that the Nile arises in the burning equatorial
region into which Alexander's scouts failed to follow it, an impressive enough feat for a
natural phenomenon that is elementally incompatible with fire: *medio consurgis ab axe;/
ausus in ardentem ripas attollere Cancrum/ in Borean is rectus aquis* (10.287-289).
Similarly, Acoreus admires the Nile's ability to retain its waters undiminished during its
brush with the burning zone: *plagas Phoebi damnum non passus aquarum/ praeveheris*
(10.307-308). This recalls Acoreus' previous statement that the Nile *exit/ sub torrente
plaga* (10.231-232). In addition, however, Acoreus makes an even bolder claim on the

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92 See e.g. Seneca, *Naturales Quaestiones* 1.Pref.8.
93 This difference between the two accounts is noted by Syndikus (p. 69).
Nile's behalf, that it actually rises in the southern hemisphere and straddles the equator: 
\textit{tibi...soli...vagari/ concessum per utrosque polos} (10.299-301). In his diatribe against Alexander, Lucan states the following as the climax of Alexander's insane ambitions, which he would have fulfilled if death had not forestalled him: \textit{isset in occasus mundi deveixa secutus/ ambissetque polos Nilumque a fonte bibisset} (10.39-40). In the end, Alexander's desire to drink the Nile at its source remains unfulfilled, while the Nile itself, by Acoreus' account, enjoys the access to both \textit{poli} that was denied to Alexander by his early death.\footnote{Schmidt cites 10.300-301 as a comparandum for 10.39-40 (in his note on the latter); he points out that "Nord- und Südpol umgehen" (the apparent sense of \textit{ambire polos} at 10.40) is equivalent to "durch beide Hemisphären ziehen". On Acoreus' account of the Nile's course, Hodges comments, "Not merely a Lucanian digression, this 125 line description of the river becomes a poetic conquering thereof. Textually Lucan affords himself and his audience intellectual control over this iconic location of power. In Lucan’s words Caesar thus accomplishes something denied Alexander although he is disallowed the occasion of acting upon the revealed mystery" (p. 73). My interpretation of the passage is exactly opposite: Acoreus is seeking to deny Caesar intellectual control over the Nile by asserting the latter's superior reach at the same time that he veils its source, the subject of Caesar's (and Alexander's) inquiry, in a pious obscurantism. In other words, the "mystery" is by no means "revealed" here, and the Nile remains unconquered, poetically or otherwise.}

Moreover, after having (in the catalogue of \textit{tyranni}) elevated the Nile above the futile ambitions of individual human imperialists, Acoreus now represents the Nile as a phenomenon that transcends all collective, national pride as well: \textit{ubicumque videris,/ quaereris, et nulli contingit gloria genti,/ ut Nilo sit laeta suo} (10.283-285). Not even the legendarily distant Seres, let alone the more tangible Ethiopians, can claim the Nile as their own: \textit{teque vident primi, quaerunt tamen hi quoque, Seres,/ Aethiopumque feris alieno gurgite campos,/ et te terrarum nescit cui debeat orbis} (10.292-294).\footnote{The extreme remoteness of the Seres, when compared with the Ethiopians, is suggested by Lucan's inclusion of the latter (at 3.253-255) and omission of the former on the list of Pompey's far-flung allies in Book Three.} The language of possession is significant here, with \textit{Nilo...suo} (10.285) and \textit{alieno gurgite} (10.293); Caesar hopes to master the river as he has mastered the year (\textit{meus...annus,}
10.187), but the Nile resists any ownership, even by peoples much closer to the Nile's source than Caesar can ever hope to reach.

Finally and more generally, as a motif interwoven both with the first half of his discourse, on the inexplicability of the Nile's flood, and with the second, on its undiscoverable source, by his repeated and emphatic assertion of impenetrable barriers to human exploration and knowledge, Acoreus seeks to undermine Caesar's belief in his own divine right to untrammeled freedom of movement through the realms of space and mind. Acoreus thus takes the traditional Egyptian lesson in epistemological humility one crucial step further: while Solon, Hecataeus, and Herodotus found their national pride challenged by the superiority of Egyptian lore, Acoreus declares that the deepest secrets of the universe have been denied to the entire human race, even to the Egyptians. In other words, the only respect in which Acoreus' Egypt may be deemed exceptionally wise is in its superior awareness of the fundamental unknowability of phenomena like the Nile rather than in its own superior knowledge of them. Acoreus asserts the supremacy not of his own ancient race but of the wider universe. When Caesar tried and failed to force his way across the Adriatic through a raging storm, it was clear that, for all his egomaniacal rantings, he was ultimately powerless against the force of the elements. Although this failure should have taught Caesar a more respectful attitude towards natural obstacles, his subsequent conduct towards both his fellow humans (e.g. in his refusal to cremate the enemy dead at Pharsalus) and the natural environment (e.g. in the erection of his massive siegeworks outside Dyrrachium) has been marked by an undiminished hubris. Acoreus

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96 Rosner-Siegel is therefore wrong to read the storm of Book Five as another example of Caesar's victory over "a watery obstacle" (p. 173) on the grounds that he survives the storm, for Caesar's goal in embarking on the expedition was not mere survival but a successful crossing to Italy in the furtherance of his military ambitions, and this goal has been entirely frustrated.
must therefore now attempt to deliver the same lesson verbally, and the lesson is this: in spite all his victories, Caesar (along with his fellow tyranni Sesostris, Cambyses, and Alexander) will have to yield to the inscrutable mystery of the Nile, for here is a Rubicon that not even Caesar will be able to cross.  

Lesson Two: A Sense of Proportion

Acoreus' lesson in humility does not end with his imposition of insuperable cosmic limits on human achievement. As was suggested above in relation to the mutiny and storm of Book Five, Lucan's Caesar posits a cosmic administration that is primarily concerned with his own aggrandizement. In response to such a grotesquely narcissistic world view, Acoreus sets out to deny Caesar a special place in the cosmos. This occurs even within Acoreus' ostensibly deferential preface, for he there asserts (in apparent agreement with Caesar) that it is the gods' will for their secrets ire per omnis and populis notescere (10.197-198). Caesar, however, made his request of Acoreus on the grounds that, as a peer to Plato and Eudoxus, he was uniquely qualified and entitled to penetrate Egypt's mysteries; Acoreus thus implicitly devalues Caesar when he suggests that he is only prepared to grant him admission as one of the common herd.

It is, however, Acoreus' emphasis on the role of divine providence in instituting and controlling the Nile's summer inundation that offers the sharpest reproof to Caesar's egocentric view of the universe. By Acoreus' explanation, providence acts for the good of the entire human race, and indeed for the good of all the constituent cosmic elements (particularly fire, earth, and water), held in harmonious balance; Caesar himself is

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97 König comments, “Caesar und seine Vorgänger begegneten im Nil einem Phänomen, das die Grenze ihrer Macht aufweist...Die bedeutung des Nilexkurses für den Zusammenhang der Handlung liegt darin, daß Caesar, nach dem Tod des Gegners scheinbar auf dem Höhepunkt seines Erfolges, die Schranken erkennen muß, die seinem Wollen gesetzt sind” (pp. 446-447).
reduced to a single insignificant individual among the many recipients of heaven’s bounty. Here is the point where the perspectives of Lucan and of his character Acoreus do in fact diverge very sharply in a way that marks Acoreus as distinctively embedded in his Egyptian context: where the pessimistic Lucan tends to imagine all of nature conspiring towards universal destruction and thus in effect conspiring with Caesar, Acoreus, as befits the priestly representative of a legendarily durable civilization, proclaims the eternal stability both of the cosmos as a whole and of the Nile within it.  

98 Loupiac notes the contrast between Lucan and Acoreus on this point, as well as the significance of Acoreus’ Egyptian identity: “Les allusions à une Nature maternelle et bienveillante sont assez rares dans La Pharsale pour que nous soulignions celle-ci, et nous en étonnions. Il est vrai que ces mots ne sont pas prononcés directement par Lucain, mais placés dans la bouche du grand prêtre Acorée. Le pontife égyptien ne peut qu’affirmer sa croyance en un ordre cosmique dont sa religion millénaire est comme le reflet, et qui fonde également l’ordre politique dont il est l’un des garants les plus éminents. C’est sans doute ce qui explique cette formulation si nette et péremptoire, et cet acte de foi en une Nature providentielle, acte de foi que le poète, jusqu’à présent, ne semblait guère prendre à son compte” (p. 149). According to Schotes, on the other hand (pp. 105-110), it is only with respect to the human race, not the natural world, that Lucan rejects the notion of a governing providence, which would imply Lucan’s agreement with Acoreus on the question of overall cosmic administration. The problem is that Schotes can offer no example of an unambiguous endorsement by Lucan of the idea of a providential nature in the passages cited on pp. 105-106. In the first of these, 6.445-448, Lucan sets up a supreme governing numen, to whom is assigned cura poli caelique volubilis, only to undercut its authority by subordinating it to the witches of Thessaly, just as he does in the case of the storm in Book Five (as I argue in Chapter Two). Schotes is clearly aware of this difficulty, because he attempts to sweep it under the carpet with the bald assertion that Lucan is engaging in mere hyperbole in order to emphasize the witches’ power, and that Lucan intends no belittlement thereby of “die Macht der Gottheit” (p. 209, n. 351); he consequently misses the significance of Lucan’s decision to posit a cosmos where Thessalian (i.e. Pharsalian) witches, the embodiment of the malign forces underlying the civil war, trump benevolent Stoic providence. It is true that Schotes can point to 5.88-93, in which universal knowledge is attributed to the god who inhabits the oracle of Delphi, but no clear statement is made in those lines of God’s power over or care of the universe, essential elements of the doctrine of providence as summarized by Schotes on p. 105. As for 2.7-11, here the orthodox Stoic doctrine is balanced and undermined by a presentation of the Epicurean view of the cosmos at 2.12-14, as Schotes himself points out on p. 109, while an initial forsan serves to weaken the reference to an immanent godhead at 5.93-96. 9.578-580, on the other hand, is put into the mouth of Cato, a character known to have been a staunch adherent of the Stoic school, instead of being expressed in Lucan’s own authorial voice. Finally, the only natural laws applicable to Lucan’s cosmos (in the passages cited by Schotes on p. 28, to which he refers on p. 106) are those tending towards death and destruction. Accordingly, I also do not accept the position of Feeney, who follows Schotes on this point: “Lucan maintains Stoicism’s belief in providential government of the natural world; the absence of divine regulation of human affairs is an exposed exception to a comprehensive system. Lucan has contrived to place himself more or less in the position of Lucilius, the addressee of Seneca’s De Providentia (1.1-5): he can accept a belief in providential nature, but not in providence towards men” (1991, p. 284). Lucan’s portrayal of natural as well as human phenomena seems to me to exclude the model of a well-governed, law-abiding, smoothly functioning cosmos that is espoused at the beginning of the De Providentia. Seneca’s first example of a providentially administered phenomenon is the orderly revolution of the stars (De Providentia 1.2), but, as explored in Chapter Two, Lucan frequently casts doubt on the Stoic assumption of stellar regularity and reliability. As for Seneca’s
Acoreus' Egyptian background thus frees him to humble Caesar not only with the inscrutability but also with the benevolence of the natural universe; the utopian viewpoint traditionally associated with Egypt becomes in effect another lesson in humility for Caesar, another means of cutting him down to size. By portraying a cosmos whose intricate workings are beyond Caesar's control and indifferent to his ambitions, Acoreus is conveying exactly the opposite message to that of Cleopatra, who implores Caesar to intervene on her behalf with the words *tu gentibus aequum/ sidus ades nostris* (10.89-90). In other words, Cleopatra glorifies Caesar as (at least in potential) a powerful cosmic force showering blessings upon Egypt; indeed, the plural *gentibus* (at least until the reader arrives at the distant modifier *nostris*) implies that these blessings extend beyond Egypt to the human race as a whole. By contrast, the only *sidus* to which Acoreus is prepared to attribute a function of such vital and universal importance is not Caesar but Mercury, the planet responsible for the miraculous rise of the Nile.

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99 Where Syndikus (p. 70) sees only a single purpose to Acoreus' emphasis on the providential dispensation of the Nile, namely to brand all attempts to explore the Nile as blasphemous hubris, I thus see an additional purpose, namely to underscore Caesar's insignificance. An egomaniac like Caesar will only be comfortable with a model of cosmic governance that ensures his own pre-eminence; this is apparent from Plutarch's account of the visit to Egypt of another conqueror, Alexander the Great. According to Plutarch (*Alexander* 27.10-11), when Alexander returned to Egypt from the oracle of Ammon, from which he had received confirmation of his own divinity, he listened to the teachings of the Egyptian philosopher Psammon, including the doctrine of god's universal kingship: ὁ στι τὸν μεινοί τὸν θεόον ἡμῖν εὐφημοντα υποθεοῦ. Alexander, however, although he approves Psammon's sentiment, feels the need to add a coda more consonant with his newly inflated sense of his own importance: ὁς πάντων μειν ὁμα μὴν κοινών ἀνθρώπων πατέρων τὸν θεοῦ, ὑδίον δὲ ποιομένον ἐστιν τός ὁμήρως. This idea that god reserves special attention for special men is, as noted above, central to Caesar's response to the mutineers in Book Five.

100 As Berti comments (in his note on 10.35-36), the term *sidus* is often applied to Caesar and Augustus (with flattering sense) by the writers of the early empire.
Moreover, if Acoreus' account of the Nile's course is designed to impress Caesar with the vastness of space, and if in his catalogue of tyranni Acoreus evokes the span of historical time through the long line of previous Nile-explorers, he stresses the even greater immensity of cosmic time in his discussion of the Nile's miraculous flood, with his account of the prima mundi lex (10.200-201) governing the function of the planets. The Nile is likewise truly ancient, since it shares its moment of creation with the cosmos itself, conpage sub ipsa/ cum toto coepisse (10.265-266). The history of the universe thus dwarfs the history of human empires, which in turn dwarfs the miniscule atom that is Caesar; the Nile makes a mockery of Caesar's pretensions to the control of time itself through his splendid new calendar, meus...annis (10.187).

If the cosmos delineated by Acoreus reserves no special place for Caesar, it also stands immune to the civil war instigated and embodied by Caesar. In his astrological preface, for instance, Acoreus emphasizes the orderly and ancient division of function between the various planets: sideribus...diversa potentia prima/ mundi lege data est (10.199-201). A sharing of potentia, however, is exactly what Lucan denied to be possible within the realm of human politics in his account of the dissolution of the first triumvirate: nulla fides regni sociis, omnisque potestas/ inpatiens consortis erit (1.92-93); on arrival in Alexandria, Caesar himself haughtily attributes his waging of civil war to his refusal to share the world's dominion: frustra civilibus armis/ miscuimus gentes, si qua est hoc orbe potestas/ altera quam Caesar, si tellus ulla duorum est (9.1076-1078). The carefully orchestrated commonwealth of the heavens, under whose administration the Nile performs its vital service, therefore offers a shining example of harmonious government in the face of the human squabbles that brought about the civil war.
Acoreus' emphasis on the continued functioning of ancient cosmic laws, with reference both to the stars (prima mundi/ lege, 10.200-201) and to the Nile (certo sub iure, 10.267), also provides a reassuring counterweight to the current breakdown of legality in the Roman state. Indeed, the lawful ordering of the wider universe is not only unshaken by Caesar's illegal civil war but also stands as a pointed rebuke to it: Caesar should consider it no indignity to submit to the rule of law when even the majestic Nile, which lies so far beyond his power, is prepared to do likewise for the good of the world, as Acoreus underscores when he repeatedly insists on the Nile's obedience to divine authority (with iussus adest at 10.217, iussus at 10.230, and iussit natura at 10.238).

The theme of cosmic immunity to civil war also emerges in Acoreus' image of the Nile as an elemental champion that appears only when the world is threatened by destruction in fire through the full blaze of summer heat (signified by the repetition of torrente, as well as the words ignis and incensa): dare iussus iniquo/ temperiem caelo mediis aestatibus exit/ sub torrente plaga, neu terras dissipet ignis,/ Nilus adest mundo contraque incensa Leonis/ ora tumet Cancroque suam torrente Syenen/ inploratus adest (10.232-233). In addition, as noted above, Acoreus stresses that, in its traverse of the southern torrid zone, the Nile suffers no loss of water (10.307-308). Where Acoreus' Nile is thus the ultimate embodiment of water triumphant over fire, Lucan's civil war is often likened to or associated with the latter element. In the naval battle of Book Three, for instance, the madness of civil war is expressed precisely through the elemental victory of fire over water (3.680-688). As discussed in Chapter Three, according to Lentulus' account, the Nile defends Egypt against the incursions of the sea, whose division of Italy from Sicily constitutes a potent image of civil war in Lucan (8.445); now, Acoreus
promises the Nile's aid in warding off an element that is even more expressive of the war's violence. This explains the surprising absence of perhaps the most widely celebrated effect of the Nile from Acoreus' otherwise comprehensive treatment, namely the Nile's gift of fertility to Egypt, which is repeatedly emphasized in Seneca's Nile book (at N.Q. 4A.2.1-2 and 9-10). In his account of the miraculous timing of the inundation, Seneca thus portrays Egypt as the Nile's sole beneficiary: *hunc nobilissimum amnium natura extulit ante humani generis oculos et ita disposuit ut eo tempore inundaret Aegyptum quo maxime usta fervoribus terra undas altius traheret, tantum usura quantum siccitati annuae sufficere posset* (4A.2.1). Where Seneca speaks only of the *terra* (singular) of Egypt, however, Acoreus asserts that, *neu terras dissipet ignis,/ Nilus adest mundo* (10.232-233), and that *sic opus est mundo* (10.239, with an emphatic repetition of *-est mundo* in the same metrical *sedes* as at 10.233). Egypt may be rendered uniquely fertile by the Nile, but the world as a whole can share in the protection offered by the Nile from a global conflagration, that is, from civil war. Similarly, in his distribution of planetary responsibilities, Acoreus assigns the Nile to Mercury, the *arbiter undae* and *dominus...aquarum* who dares to oppose the fires of summer by raising up the Nile when *rapidos...Sirius ignes/ exerit* (10.211-212). Acoreus has once again transcended the bounds of his own ethnicity, this time by holding out the Nile as a gift not just to Egypt but to the entire human race.

The utopian quality of Acoreus' science is clearly illustrated by a comparison with another extended scientific account of an aquatic (or semi-aquatic) geographical

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101 See Postl (pp. 208-210) for the literary *topos* of the association of the Nile with fertility.
102 Acoreus consequently extends to the entire world the Nile's defence against fire that, according to Plato's *Timaeus*, was accorded to Egypt alone (the *Timaeus* parallel is given by Holmes (1989) in his note on 10.232-233).
103 See Berti's note on 10.211 for the literary *topos* of the association of Sirius with fire and heat.
phenomenon, namely the infamous shallows of the Syrtes on the Libyan coast, whose cause is examined by Lucan in the previous book (9.303-318). As in Acoreus' account of the scientific theories of the Nile, Lucan offers without refutation two different possible explanations for the Syrtes, coordinated by a _vel...vel_ pairing. Both Lucan and Acoreus mention a theory of the sun's evaporation of seawater (at 9.311-318 and 10.258-261), and with similar language: compare _rapidus_ (9.313) with _rapit_ (10.260) and _pascens_ (9.313) with _pasci_ (10.258). Moreover, just as Acoreus (in his own preferred theory at 10.262-267) portrays the Nile's flood as an integral feature of the original ordering of the cosmos, Lucan (in the first of his two explanations) suggests that the baffling condition of the Syrtes may have been ordained by an all-powerful Nature at the very moment of the world's creation: Syrtes _vel primam mundo natura figuram/ cum daret, in dubio pelagi terraeque reliquit_ (9.303-304). Here all resemblances end, however. The overwhelming impression of Acoreus' account is one of cosmic stability, benignity, and reliability, of the Nile rising at precisely fixed times in accordance with fixed laws and in performance of its divinely appointed service to the human race. Even Lucan's "providential" theory of the Syrtes, by contrast, presents them as mired in confusion (_in dubio_), in an elemental struggle between land and sea that mirrors the chaos of civil war; because the only _lex_ governing the Syrtes is _ambigua_, they cannot be relied upon for human use, unlike the Nile, and are therefore uninhabitable where Egypt is thickly populated: _ambigua...lege loci iacet invia sedes_ (9.307). Acoreus' _creator/ atque opifex rerum_ continues to supervise the much-needed operation of the Nile _certo sub iure_ (10.266-267), but Nature

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104 Berti notes the correspondence between these two theories (in his note on 10.258-261).
105 Wick observes these verbal similarities (in her note on 9.313).
106 In her note on 9.19, Wick observes that Lucan frequently applies the language of confusion and uncertainty (including _dubius_) to the civil war, and that, with the Syrtes, "[d]as Motiv spiegelt sich auch in der unbelebten Natur wider."
has simply washed its hands of the Syrtes, just as the gods have deserted Lucan's Rome:

\textit{sic male deseruit nullosque exegit in usus/ hanc partem natura sui} (9.310-311).

Lucan's second theory provides an even starker contrast with Acoreus, for he proposes that the Syrtes began as deep sea, but that the heat of the sun not only has progressively evaporated this water until only shallows remain but will one day dry out the Syrtes entirely: \textit{rapidus Titan ponto sua lumina pascens/ aequora subduxit zonae vicina perustae;/ et nunc pontus adhuc Phoebo siccante repugnat,/ max, ubi damnosum radios admovet aevum,/ tellus Syrtis erit; nam iam brevis unda superne/ innatat, et late periturum deficit aequor} (9.313-319). The Syrtes accordingly embody the exact opposite outcome to the one posited by Acoreus for the great elemental conflict of fire against water, with ominous implications for the future course of the civil war. Mercury defiantly raises up the Nile in opposition to the \textit{rapidos...ignes} of Sirius (10.211), and the Nile emerges unscathed, \textit{damnum non passus aquarum}, from its passage through the burning \textit{plagas Phoebi} (10.307-308), but the Syrtes are doomed to be devoured by \textit{rapidus Titan} and are subject to the action of \textit{damnosum aevum} as it brings the sun's destructive rays ever nearer. Acoreus' theory of solar evaporation (10.258-261), which in any case he does not accept, also has a completely opposite effect to Lucan's, since the water that the sun absorbs from the Ocean during the day is returned to the Nile by night; the sun's (i.e. fire's) temporary theft of seawater therefore serves only to swell the Nile.

Although, in neighbouring books, Acoreus and Lucan are describing the aquatic

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107 See e.g. 7.445-455 for the gods' abandonment of the human race (as proven by Pharsalus), particularly 7.454-455: \textit{mortalia nulli/ sunt curata deo}. Compare Lucan's general description of the Libyan climate: \textit{temperies vitalis abest, et nulla sub illa/ cura Iovis terra est; natura deside torpet/ orbis et inmotis annum non sentit harenis} (9.435-437).

108 Schönberger therefore comments on the Syrtes, "Wie dort das Feuer siegen wird und die Kraft des Wassers verzehrt, wird Caesar siegen, Cato und das Gute untergehen" (p. 89); see also König (pp. 447-448) and especially Loupiac (pp. 154-155) for a fuller treatment of the motif of elemental conflict (both between water and earth and between water and fire) in the Syrtes digression.
phenomena of neighbouring countries, their perspectives could scarcely be further apart: Acoreus' Nile flows forever serenely immune to the travails of history, whereas Lucan's Syrtes are proof of the vast cosmic reach of the malign forces underlying the civil war, since these are shown to extend even where no human dares to travel.

What is more, the flames successfully opposed by the Nile recall not only the imagery of the civil war in general but also (and especially) that of Caesar himself, for the latter is strongly aligned with the element of fire from his very first appearance in the poem, when Lucan compares his ferocious potency to the destructive force of a lightning bolt (1.151-157); as Rosner-Siegel has demonstrated, this simile is crucial to Caesar's characterization and associated imagery throughout the poem. She observes (p. 170) that, for instance, Caesar's advance from the Rubicon is heralded at Rome by numerous portents of fire and lightning (1.522-695), including a lightning bolt that strikes Latium's capital Alba Longa from the north, the same direction from which Caesar is marching (1.533-535). Another fiery portent (not among those listed by Rosner-Siegel) is the eruption of Etna (1.545-547). It should also be noted that Caesar is often presented as menacing Rome with fire: the centurion Laelius promises to burn down the temples of Rome if Caesar commands it (1.379), Rome's inhabitants are said to dread precisely such a conflagration upon receiving the news of Caesar's advance on the city (3.99-100), and, in his address to his troops in Book Two, Pompey, comparing Caesar to the Catilinarians, refers to the latter's designs of arson upon Rome (2.540-542). Alexander, Caesar's model in seeking world domination (as well as in seeking the Nile), is likewise termed fulmen in Book Ten (10.34). Moreover, Caesar's alignment with fire is complemented by his

\[109\] König sees in Acoreus' account of the Nile an elemental victory of water over the fire embodied by both Caesar and Alexander: "Im Nil feiert das Wasser seinen größten Triumph. Es ist nicht nur Sieger
hostility towards water, particularly in the form of rivers (as explored in Chapter Five).

In the catalogue of the rivers of Italy in Book Two, for instance, the Po is said (like Acoreus' Nile) to have stood as an elemental bulwark against the scorching heat of Phaethon's sun (2.410-415): *hunc habuisse pares Phoebis ignibus undas* (2.415). Immediately after the catalogue, however, Lucan narrates Caesar's invasion of Italy, observing that Caesar prefers to conquer with sword and fire rather than accept tame surrenders (note the emphatic placement of *igni* at the end of the line and of the entire sentence): *non tam portas intrare patentes/ quam fregisse iuvat, nec tam patiente colono/ arva premi, quam si ferro populetur et *igni* (2.443-445). The Po may have resisted the sun's fires, but Italy is helpless to withstand Caesar's.

In this context, it is significant that Acoreus opposes Mercury, the lord of waters in general and especially of the Nile's flood, not just to the star Sirius but to its fellow planet Mars, which presides over lightning, *ventos incertaque fulmina* (10.206). The other domain of Mars in Acoreus' scheme, that of the winds, also points back to the lightning simile of Book One, since there Lucan (in accordance with Seneca, *N.Q.* 2.23) attributes the birth of lightning to the pressure of the winds on clouds, *expressum ventis per nubila fulmen* (1.151). Caesar in fact identifies himself with both fire and wind in his speech to his troops at Massilia in Book Three, in which he welcomes the challenge posed by the Massilian resistance on the grounds that, *ventus ut amittit vires, nisi robore densae/ occurrunt silvae, spatio diffusus inani,/ utque perit magnus nullis obstantibus*

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*gegenüber seinem natürlichen Gegenspieler, dem gefährlichen Feuer, sondern auch gegenüber dem mächtigsten Menschen, dessen Wahlverwandtschaft mit dem Feuer sich schon im Blitzvergleich...andeutet* (pp. 446-447).

110 See König (p. 447): "Lucan ist auf der Suche nach diesen lebensnotwendigen Gegenkräften im menschlichen wie im elementaren Geschehen, die den verderblichen Mächten Einhalt gebieten. So kann ihn die Kraft des Po mit einem ähnlichen nationalem Stolz und einer ähnlichen Befriedigung erfüllen wie die Haltung eines Cato."
ignis, sic hostes mihi desse nocet, dannumque putamus armorum, nisi qui vinci potuere rebellant (3.362-366). Acoreus is therefore connecting the planet of war to the elemental forces associated with Caesar, at the same time that he opposes to those forces the beneficent power responsible for the Nile.

In fact, in the contemplation both of the Nile and of the heavens that govern it, Acoreus is offering Caesar exactly the refuge from civil war that Pompey was denied in Book Eight. If only Pompey had been able to consult Acoreus instead of his gloomy helmsman on the workings of the universe, he might have emerged from his inquiry with renewed confidence in the divine rector who so far had brought him nothing but disaster. In a sense, Pompey and Caesar each find their respective cosmic models overturned in a way that would have proved extremely satisfying to the other. Where Pompey hoped to see in the stars a realm remote from Caesar's pursuit and the evils of civil war, he instead met with both Caesar and the war staring malevolently back at him from the sky, as embodied in the "Caesarian" qualities attributed to the stars in the helmsman's opening lines and in the reminders of past calamities and omens of future ones scattered throughout the helmsman's account. Caesar, on the other hand, hoping for confirmation of his centrality to the cosmos, discovers himself to be merely a small and transient part of a grand providential scheme that has persisted since the beginning of the world, that is immune to his precious civil war (as symbolized by his elemental ally of fire), and that he is powerless to disrupt, influence, or even fully comprehend.

111 See Loupiac's discussion of the elemental significance of this passage (p. 49 and 117).
112 In his note on 10.206, Berti points out that, in other accounts of astrometeorology, the main influence of Mars is said to reside specifically in heat, while its propagation of lightning and winds only occurs in cooperation with various other planets. It should also be noted that Acoreus has omitted any mention of Mercury's potential destructive effects, including the violent winds and lightning that he instead attributes solely to Mars (see Tetrabiblos 2.8.87-88 and Germanicus, Breysig fr. 4.110-163). Acoreus has thus departed from the scientific tradition in order to unite the planet of war with the elemental imagery attached to Caesar and to differentiate it as strongly as possible from the planet presiding over the salvific Nile.
It was argued above that Acoreus' insistence on limits to human expansion both derives from his Egyptian heritage and at the same time rises beyond it to an awestruck vision of nature's inviolate majesty, and the same may be said of the utopian cosmoligy he presents to Caesar. Although Diodorus attributes the doctrine of a well-governed universe to the Egyptians (e.g. at 1.11), it is Egypt's own good government that tends to be patriotically emphasized by the priests who figure in Egyptological narratives, as in another passage of Diodorus where the Egyptians are said to boast of the priority, superiority, and exemplarity of their national laws (1.69). In Plato's *Timaeus*, the priest interrogated by Solon thus provides an account of contemporary Egyptian *mores*, as well as of the ancient civilization of Athens reflected in those *mores*, but it is left to the dialogue's title character, the Pythagorean Timaeus, to expound the providential governance of the universe as a whole. The problem with appealing to a specifically Egyptian Utopia, however, lies in the clash between ethnographic ideal and contemporary reality explored in Chapter Three. All that is best in the ancient Egyptian civilization is generally located in the past (whether near or distant) by classical Egyptologists. The Egyptian narrative of the *Timaeus*, for instance, is not contemporary with the dramatic date of the dialogue (itself not contemporary with Plato's own time of writing) but pushed back into the time of Critias' grandfather,113 while Diodorus, writing three centuries later, explicitly states that the most exemplary Egyptian laws and institutions were changed for the worse with the Macedonian conquest (1.95.6). Under the later Ptolemies, and particularly with respect to the Roman civil wars, Egypt was regarded not as a model of

113 In Plato's *Laws*, on the other hand, it is Egypt's latter-day ordinances that are held up as exemplary (at 656-657 and again at 799), but the same work contains less favourable references to contemporary Egyptian society; see Froidefond (pp. 267-342) for Plato's complex view and use of Egypt. Isocrates' *Busiris*, however, offers an unequivocally utopian picture of contemporary Egypt (e.g. at 17-20, 24-25, and 28-29).
legality but as a vipers' nest of traitors and criminals: Lucan accordingly states that neither Spain, Pontus, Libya, nor Thessaly itself was as guilty of *tantum...scelerum* as decadent Egypt (10.474-478). Indeed, Acoreus himself, after his unsuccessful intervention at the council of Ptolemy in Book VIII, would be only too well aware of the current regime's contempt for justice, just as Acoreus' auditor Caesar has already received a gruesome proof of Egyptian criminality in the form of Pompey's severed head. Consequently, Acoreus premises his lesson in humility not on the now-lapsed laws of Egypt but on those of the natural universe, the *prima mundi lex* that orders the planets and the *certum ius* governing the Nile, which are presumably still in force. It would have been utterly laughable for Acoreus to portray Egypt as a Shangri-La kept safely quarantined from the spiritual pollution of Caesar's war, but the law-abiding integrity of the cosmos as a whole can be more plausibly asserted and held up as a model for Caesar's imitation.

**Acoreus and Egypt**

By surmounting a narrow national chauvinism, both in his celebration of cosmic law and in his catalogue of *tyranni*, in order to champion the entire universe against Caesar's voracious ambitions, Acoreus distinguishes himself very sharply from his old adversary Pothinus, who (immediately after the conclusion of Acoreus' account of the Nile) launches a conspiracy against Caesar in defence of Egyptian sovereignty, complaining that, through Caesar's alliance with Cleopatra, *nec prodita tantum est/ sed donata Pharos* (10.355-356); similarly, in his speech to the council of Ptolemy, Pothinus argued for Pompey's murder as a means of placating Caesar and thereby

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114 See Berti's note on 10.355-356, as well as Holmes (1993, pp. 271-272), for an explanation of these rather cryptic lines; whatever the precise interpretation, it is clear that Pothinus is assuming a stance of indignant patriotism.
preventing Egypt's absorption into Caesar's war machine: *Aegyptum certe Latiis tueamur ab armis* (8.501). Pothinus thus consistently represents himself as a patriot. In the case of late-Ptolemaic Egypt, however, which is depicted by Lucan (as by all Roman writers) as irredeemably decadent and corrupt, such patriotism is a vice: Pothinus is striving to preserve the despicable regime that has allowed his villainy to flourish. At this twilight stage in its history, Egypt is simply no longer worth the saving. Acoreus accordingly makes no attempt to do so, since the ancient and pious civilization to which he owes his true allegiance, and in which, as discussed in Chapter Four, his identity is firmly rooted, has long since vanished as a political reality; his failure in the debate of Book Eight would have driven this home to him beyond any doubt. Like Aeneas uprooted from Troy, Acoreus must decide what can (and cannot) be salvaged from the ruins of his spiritual homeland, what Egypt can (and cannot) still offer to the world. Egypt's reputation for justice is now a mockery, its traditional religion a hollow sham (as denoted by the phrase *Memphis vana sacris*, 8.478),\(^{115}\) while its rulers have completely abandoned the model of lawful self-restraint attributed to them by Diodorus (if indeed that model was ever anything more than a utopian fantasy);\(^{116}\) all the quaint ethnographic detail solicited by Caesar in his opening request to Acoreus, *Phariae primordia gentis/ terrarumque situs volgique edissere mores/ et ritus formasque deum* (10.177-179), is unlikely either to edify or to impress a listener who, as the embodiment of the lightning

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\(^{115}\) As indicated by the serving up of Egypt's sacred animals at the banquet of Cleopatra (10.158-159), even Egypt's own ruling class no longer respects its taboos. In any case, Lucan regarded the contemporary importation into Rome of the (to him) bizarre Egyptian religious beliefs and practices with deep suspicion and hostility (8.831-834); the fact that Acoreus' account has been so thoroughly purged of specifically Egyptian religious references may thus be taken as evidence that Lucan wishes to present Acoreus' project of the moral reformation of Caesar in the best possible light. Cleopatra may have contaminated Caesar (and by extension Rome) with the vice of luxury, but Acoreus refrains from contaminating him with Egypt's strange gods.

\(^{116}\) Acoreus' comparatively unfavourable portrayal of the mighty Sesostris suggests a certain disenchantment not only with the current administration but also with the whole line of the Pharaohs.
bolt against Pompey's venerable oak, despises all traditions and respects only *Fortuna*, the fact of present success. Acoreus has therefore chosen to honour his Egyptian heritage not by defending from Caesar's aggression the hollow shell of the old Pharaonic system into which Egypt has degenerated under the Ptolemies,\(^{(117)}\) nor by the parochial glorification of his native gods and heroes, but by preaching a humbling doctrine of moderation, conservatism, and self-restraint, the same basic lesson as the one imparted by Egypt's priests (in various ways) to previous pilgrims in the long-departed golden age of Egyptological discovery. Because decadent Egypt can no longer claim any kind of superiority or exemplarity, Acoreus does not look to his own culture to supply the material for this traditional lesson in humility; instead, it is the natural universe that Acoreus exalts above a puny humankind, for Nature, unlike Egypt, has survived un tarnished through all the upheavals of human history (or at least so Acoreus must hope). Acoreus conveys the spiritual essence of Egypt's wisdom, but stripped of all irrelevant cultural superficies.

From start to finish, in every respect in which he seems to diverge from his Senecan model, in his emphasis not only on the Nile's opacity to human reason but also on its appointed role within a stable, ancient, and benevolent cosmic order, Acoreus can therefore be seen as embodying but at the same time transcending Egyptian traditions in order to impress upon Caesar his true impotence and insignificance in the grand scheme of things. In offering this lesson, Acoreus has set himself against the corrupted and corrupting environment of Alexandria. So far, Egypt has exercised only a morally

\(^{(117)}\) Acoreus could have undertaken such a patriotic defence by, for instance, attributing Cambyses' sufferings to his crimes against Egypt (as Herodotus does) rather than to his designs on the Nile, or by playing up Egypt's military strength (as a deterrent to Caesar's invasion) through the example of Sesostris et al.
harmful influence on Caesar, reinforcing his already considerable contempt for limits and boundaries with the pernicious examples of Alexander and Cleopatra, who have inspired Caesar (respectively) to dominate the world through empire and to ravage it as a source of unnatural luxuries; both of these bad examples have had the effect of reducing the majestic Nile to a target of tyrannical ambition (as discussed in the previous chapter), whether Alexander's longing to master its mysterious source or Cleopatra's desire to display her wealth to Caesar by plundering the Nile of its delicacies for her banquet. Cleopatra is also likely to have inflamed Caesar's egotism with her flattering image of him as a *gentibus aequum sidus* (10.89-90); it should be noted that the Romans deemed the art of flattery to be an especially Greek domain, if Juvenal is any indication.118 As in Book Eight, then, Acoreus has assigned himself the valiant task of championing the essential values of the ancient Egyptian Utopia, of which he stands as the sole remaining representative, in the face of modern (and Greek) tyranny and depravity. His ideology distinguishes him from Cleopatra and her Alexandrian kind as sharply as his dress, which is described as the simple linen vestment of the priesthood of Isis (*linigerum*, 10.175), in contrast with Cleopatra's luxurious garments (summed up with the phrase *divitias Cleopatra gerit*, 10.140). Where, in Book Eight, Acoreus urged his conservative world view upon Alexander's political heir Ptolemy XIII, now he attempts to communicate it to Caesar, heir to the Macedonian's spiritual legacy, a legacy that each of Acoreus' speeches is designed to counteract in different ways; Acoreus, like Cato, can be said to function in the poem as a kind of anti-Alexander, but from the standpoint not of traditional Rome but of traditional Egypt.119

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118 See Juvenal 3.86-93.
Acoreus and Escapism

Although Caesar is aligned with his fellow tyrant Ptolemy as the object of Acoreus' pious instruction, he also evokes Pompey as a refugee from civil war, seeking (or rather claiming to seek) sanctuary in the combined avenues of travel to Egypt and the practice of natural science. Caesar's profession of a wish to escape the conflict that he set in motion may not have been genuine, but at the same time that he rebukes Caesar's hypocrisy with a critique of scientific megalomania, Acoreus can in fact be seen as offering just such an escape, albeit very subtly and in a manner that Caesar would not have predicted.

First of all, just as Seneca promises Lucilius in the preface to his Nile book (4A.Pref.20), Acoreus seeks to aid Caesar in the vital spiritual process of self-escape, of *a se recedere*, through the contemplation of the Nile. Because the tyrant Caesar cuts a very different figure from the Stoic *proficiens* Lucilius, however, an equally different exposition of Nile science from the one addressed to the latter in Seneca's *Naturales Quaestiones* is required if Acoreus is to be of any moral benefit to Caesar, an exposition that stresses not the power of human reason but the inscrutability of divine causation as a reproof to Caesar's hubris. In essence, Caesar is urged to forget both himself and his tyrannical ambitions in the wondering appreciation of a benevolent but fundamentally mysterious cosmos.

At the same time that he promotes Caesar's escape from himself, however, Acoreus is also holding out the prospect of escape from civil war, because (as has been repeatedly emphasized) in a very real sense Caesar *is* the civil war, the incarnation of its malign spirit. The reason why Caesar cannot leave the conflict behind (as he promises)
in his quest for the source of the Nile is that he carries both his own vices and (in consequence) the seeds of civil war within him in pursuing his inquiry. In effect, Acoreus is making the same offer to Caesar that the Massiliens did in Book Three:

\[\text{terribiles aquilas infestaque signa relinquas/ urbe procul nostrisque velis te credere muris,/ excludique sinas admisso Caesare bellum} \quad (3.330-332).\]

Acoreus is prepared to admit Caesar into the twin spiritual refuges of the traditional wisdom of Egypt and the contemplation of nature, but Caesar must enter this sanctuary alone, unaccompanied by the odious mental habits of a perpetrator of civil war; he will have to rest content with the worshipful and unquestioning appreciation of the river's gift to humankind and abandon his desire to probe its deepest secrets, because that desire cannot be disentangled from his characteristic imperialism. To prove their worthiness of Egyptian lore, Eudoxus was willing to sacrifice his beard and eyebrows and Pythagoras (at least according to one report) his foreskin, but what Caesar is called upon to surrender is far more integral to his identity: the belligerent megalomania that has consumed and impelled him from the very beginning of Lucan's poem. If he can make that sacrifice, his reward will be not the knowledge he desired but the peace that he truly needs, and he will be free to live out the rest of his days as one tiny, happy cog in the great cosmic machine depicted so glowingly by Acoreus. Although Caesar's questions lead the reader to expect a mere escapist interlude, a moment of distraction (both for Caesar and the reader) from the relentless narrative of civil war, to be achieved through a pleasant excursus on Egypt's geography and ethnography, Acoreus is therefore offering Caesar a far more profound and meaningful form of release.
Indeed, at first sight, Acoreus' discourse appears to hold out the prospect of escape from civil war to the stricken human race as a whole. In other words, Acoreus is seeking not only to rescue Caesar from himself but also to rescue the world from Caesar, for Acoreus' central message of law-abiding humility in the face of Nature's grandeur is designed to counteract the egomania, the pathological sense of entitlement, that underlies Caesar's political, military, and scientific ambitions alike. Provided that Caesar can be regarded as the sole moving force behind the civil war, the change of heart thereby accomplished will bring the entire conflict to an immediate halt. Lucan tends to show the nightmare of history intruding upon the domain of nature, but Acoreus' goal is the opposite: to use his scientific discourse to induce a radical spiritual transformation in Caesar, the chief warmonger, and thereby to reproduce within the sphere of human strife the harmonious order that he attributes to the universe at large. The waters of the Nile (as expounded to Caesar by Acoreus) will thus have quenched the fires of civil war as effectively as they now ward off the blaze of summer, and the realms of Egypt, natural science, and human history will converge in a single utopian reality of a world at peace.

The Failure of Acoreus

Lucan makes no overt comment on Caesar's response to this invitation (although, as I will argue below, there is indirect evidence for at least a temporary impact of Acoreus' words on Caesar's state of mind); the reader is left to wonder whether, if the events of Book Ten had transpired differently, the whole future course of Roman history might have been drastically altered for the better. The Nile dialogue therefore constitutes one of the poem's many potential turning points, offering a tantalizing window into an alternative history of the civil war, one in which the full catastrophe was averted, either
by Caesar's defeat or (more relevantly for the present discussion) by his timely repentance of his ambitions.\textsuperscript{120} The first such glimpse is provided by Caesar's momentary hesitation at the crossing of the Rubicon (1.192-194), but the theme is more developed in Lucan's account of the mutiny of Caesar's soldiers in Book Five, when Lucan begs Caesar to follow the mutineers' example and learn to grow weary of civil war and of his limitless criminality: \textit{lassare et disce sine armis/ posse pati; liceat scelerum tibi ponere finem} (5.313-315). Essentially, Acoreus is also endeavouring to teach Caesar to live at peace with the universe and to disavow the boundless ambitions of \textit{tyranni} like Alexander. Again, in Book Four, when the soldiers from the two opposing camps at Ilerda come together in a moment of heartfelt fraternization, Lucan more explicitly laments the path not taken, remarking (4.186-188) on how easily the civil war can be brought to an end and Caesar reduced to a \textit{privatus} and restored to amity with Pompey, if only his soldiers will refuse his wicked orders: \textit{iam iam civilis Erinys/ concidet, et Caesar generum privatus amabit}.\textsuperscript{121} Indeed, Caesar himself plays on the same theme in his speech to his troops at Pharsalus, when, with obvious insincerity, he assures them that, for his own part, he is quite prepared (and even eager) to set aside his ambitions and live as a private citizen, \textit{ipse ego privatae cupidus me reddere vitae/ plebietaque toga modicum conponere civem} (7.266-267), and that the war is being waged for their interests, not for his, \textit{non mihi res agitur} (7.264); it is Acoreus' goal to transform such a monstrous falsehood into some semblance of reality.

\textsuperscript{120} In addition to the examples given below, Lucan supplies an alternative history of events at 3.73-79, with his account of the triumph that Caesar could have enjoyed if he had only rested content with his conquest of Gaul, and at 6.301-313, when he lists all the disasters that would have been averted if Pompey had pressed home his advantage against Caesar at the battle of Dyrrachium.

\textsuperscript{121} The motif of Caesar's reduction to the status of \textit{privatus} also occurs at the end of the mutiny in Book Five, when Lucan bemoans the soldiers' unreasoning fear of a man whom they could, if they chose, reduce from warlord to private citizen in an instant by the withdrawal of their services: \textit{unum...caput tam magna iuventus/ privatum factura timet} (5.365-366).
Of course, none of these hopes for Caesar's redemption and the world's salvation is ever fated to come to pass: Caesar crosses the Rubicon and quells the mutiny, while the brief instant of fraternization at Ilerda ends in bloodshed (initiated by the Pompeians) that reconfirms Caesar in his evil designs (4.254-259). The civil war is simply too overwhelming a force in Lucan's malignant world, its momentum unstoppable. This universe, the "real" universe, is exemplified by the Syrtes, not the Nile. Even a hypothetical reader with absolutely no knowledge of the subsequent events of the war would accordingly have been led to expect a swift puncturing of the little bubble of contemplative serenity surrounding the Nile dialogue of Book Ten, especially given Acoreus' dismal failure to ward off the evil of civil war during the council of Ptolemy in Book Eight. At the end of Acoreus' speech, Lucan remarks, *sic velut in tuta securi pace trahebant/ noctis iter mediae* (10.332-333), but episodes of apparent *pax* and *securitas* in Lucan tend to be very short-lived. In fact, Acoreus himself, near the end of his otherwise utopian account of the Nile, gives a faint warning of an impending interruption of this scene of peaceful conversation by some sudden outbreak of violence, for he describes the Nile's deceptively gentle approach of the cataracts as follows (10.315-317): *quis te tam lene fluentem/ moturum totas violenti gurgitis iras,/ Nile, putet?*

It is most often Caesar who functions in the poem as a violator of tranquility. Caesar's invasion of Amyclas' rustic idyll was discussed in the introduction, and his sudden rage at the spectacle of the Pompeians taking their ease after breaking through his fortifications at Dyrrachium is also instructive: *accendit pax ipsa loci, movitque furorem/ Pompeiana quies et victo Caesare somnus./ ire vel in clades properat, dum gaudia turbet* (6.282-284). In Book Ten, by contrast, Caesar is the one enjoying a temporary respite
rather than the one disrupting it. Even if the man himself can be persuaded by Acoreus to renounce his violent ways, however, it was made apparent in Book Eight that Caesar is no longer the sole instigator of civil war, and that Egypt holds someone prepared to don his mantle of criminal audacity: Pothinus. Caesar, in short, has come to a land that is already infested with the Caesarian type.

Pothinus now proceeds to shatter the illusory peace of the Nile dialogue by hatching a murderous plot against Caesar. Just as it did in the helmsman's speech (8.185), the abrupt transition *sed* serves to drag the reader back from the lofty spaces of scientific didactic poetry to the immediate military situation: *sed non vaesana Pothini/mens inbuta semel sacra iam caede vacabat/ a scelerum motu* (10.333-334). *Vaesanus* is a revealing piece of diction here, for Lucan applies it twice to Alexander in the diatribe at the beginning of Book Ten (10.20 and 10.42), while it describes Cambyses in Acoreus' catalogue of *tyranni* (10.279). It is also (along with *furor*) a key descriptor of the madness of civil war in Lucan, used four times to refer to the waging and experience of the war by either Caesar or his soldiers.\(^{122}\) The word is thus closely bound up with the bloodthirsty megalomania that Lucan consistently attributes to Caesar, not only directly but also by association, that is, through Caesar's visit to Alexander's grave and his attempt to join the ranks of the Nile-exploring *tyranni* (including Cambyses). Furthermore, both Alexander and Cambyses can be considered hostile to the utopian tradition of Egypt; this is obviously true of the blasphemous Cambyses, while Alexander (in spite of his respect for Egyptian customs) was the one who, as Lucan repeatedly emphasizes, actually initiated the corrupt Ptolemaic regime and serves as the inspiration for Pothinus' (as well as Caesar's) ethos of unbridled violence. *Vaesana* therefore serves to colour Pothinus

\(^{122}\) See 2.543, 4.183, 7.496, and 7.764.
very strongly as an enemy to everything held dear by Acoreus, namely a pious respect for limits and boundaries and the social stability thereby safeguarded.

In consequence, although the confrontation between the two men is not so overt as it was during the council of Ptolemy in Book Eight, they continue to function in Book Ten as representatives of diametrically opposed cultures, ideologies, and methods: Memphis vs. Alexandria, peace vs. war, constitutionality vs. tyranny, Republicanism vs. Caesarism, etc. Having tried and failed to secure Egypt as a physical refuge from civil war for Pompey in Book Eight, Acoreus now holds out an offer of spiritual refuge to Caesar, on condition that the latter forsake the immoral pursuit of empire. Once again, however, Pothinus undercuts Acoreus’ piety through a brilliant but callous piece of rhetoric in which he persuades his addressee to commit a brutal act of treachery against a Roman commander and thereby to deny him refuge; in Book Ten, this rhetoric takes the form of a letter urging the general Achillas to attack Caesar while he feasts. Where Acoreus offers Caesar an alternative future to the Ides of March, a future as a private citizen living peacefully and lawfully within a peaceful, lawful cosmos, Pothinus seeks to pre-empt the worthier vengeance of Brutus with his own vile conspiracy (10.338-344).

Championing the values of the old Egypt, the Egyptian-named Acoreus finds himself hopelessly outnumbered by representatives of the new, just as he did in Book Eight. Not only does he have to contend with the influences on Caesar of the unedifying tomb of the Greek Alexander and the decadent (and sacrilegious) banquet of the Greek Cleopatra, but his valiant effort to instruct Caesar in old-fashioned self-restraint is doomed by an outbreak of unrestrained violence on the part of a succession of courtiers and soldiers with the Greek names of Pothinus, Achillas, Ganymede, and Arsinoe. Again, just as in
Book Eight, Acoreus departs silently from the stage at the moment of Pothinus' intervention, this time never to return (at least within the extant poem). There is no place for this lonely sage either in the Egypt of the Ptolemies or in the world of Lucan's civil war.

The Conspiracy of Pothinus

As was discussed in Chapter Four, Pothinus' letter is marked by decisive vigour and urgency, as well as by its frequency of "Caesarian" imperative forms, in contrast to Acoreus' extremely long and rambling discourse on the Nile, which, in a reflection of Pompey's typically ineffective manner of address, contains no imperatives whatsoever; Acoreus' emphasis on the ancient ordering of the cosmos also recalls Pompey's belief (as expressed in his two speeches to his troops, in Books Two and Seven) that he inhabits a law-abiding universe whose ruling powers will ensure the defeat of Caesar's assault on Rome's venerable constitution. The clearest opposition of Book Ten, however, is not between the "Caesarian" Pothinus and the "Pompeian" Acoreus but between Pothinus and Caesar himself. In spite of his professed desire to leave the civil war behind, Caesar finds himself embroiled in a re-enactment of the war on two distinct levels. First of all, and most obviously, his Roman legionaries are matched against the Roman mercenaries of Alexandria, a fact that prompts Lucan to bemoan the ubiquitous reach of civil war: pro fas! ubi non civilia bella/ invenit imperii fatum miserabile nostri?/ Thessaliae subducta acies in litore Nili/ more fudit patrio (10.410-413). This re-enacts not only the civil war but also a previous re-enactment of the civil war in Book Eight, when Pompey was struck down not only by a fellow Roman but by his own former soldier Septimius; as in Book Ten, Lucan there took the opportunity to stress the universality of Rome's disaster, with
an apostrophe of cruel *Fortuna* (8.600) that points forward to his blaming of *fatum* at 10.411: *disponis gladios, ne quo non fiat in orbe, heu, facinus civile tibi* (8.603-604). On a subtler level, however, Pothinus and Caesar reproduce the fundamental conflict of the civil war in exactly the same way that Pothinus and Acoreus did in Book Eight, for Pothinus once again performs the role of Caesar in Book Ten, while Caesar himself is (temporarily) reduced to the level of Pompey.

Again, this startling re-alignment takes place in both more and less overt ways. Pothinus' plan by definition entails the equation of Caesar with Pompey, for his goal is to unite them in a treacherous death, *socerum iungi tibi, Magne, iuberet* (10.348). Pothinus accordingly seeks to persuade Achillas of the plot's feasibility by asserting that Caesar is no more to be feared than his equal (*par*) Pompey: *quem metuis, par huius [i.e. Pompei] erat* (10.378-382). Pothinus also asks (10.389-391), *quid nomina tanta/ horremus viresque ducis, quibus ille relictis/ miles erit?* As Berti points out, (in his note on 10.389-390), it is not Caesar but Pompey who has been consistently depicted from the very start of the poem as a mere empty name, without strength or substance.\(^{123}\) Moreover, if Caesar is now aligned with Pompey, Pothinus can be seen as usurping Caesar's customary role by, in effect, initiating civil war (that is, the conflict between Roman soldiers and Roman mercenaries). Pothinus also claims control over the war, a control that Caesar has sought to monopolize throughout the poem, by promising to end it in a single night: *nox haec peraget civilia bella* (10.391).

When the conspirators make the (ultimately fatal) decision to postpone their attack until morning, Lucan stresses the immense debt that Caesar is thereby laid under:

\(^{123}\) Berti compares Lucan's initial description of the two leaders, which contrasts Pompey, *a magni nominis umbra* (1.135), with Caesar, who possessed more than mere *nomen* or *fama* (1.143-144); see Feeney's discussion of that passage (1986, p. 239).
donata est nox una duci, vixitque Pothini/munere Phoebeos Caesar dilatus in ortus

(10.432-433). Observing (in his note ad loc.) that this is a complete reversal of Caesar's habitual clementia, Berti compares Caesar's haughty dismissal of Domitius in Book Two, vive, licet nolis, et nostro munere...cerne diem (2.512-513), and Domitius' angry exhortation to himself, rue certus et omnes/ lucis rumpe moras et Caesaris effuge munus (2.524-525). In fact, Caesar even indulges in this (at least as Lucan represents it) tyrannical habit upon his arrival in Egypt at the end of Book Nine, when he rejects the impudent suggestion that the convenient murder of Pompey has indebted him to Ptolemy by replying that it is rather Ptolemy who is now under an obligation to himself, since Caesar has magnanimously forgiven the boy-king for the terrible crime: parcimus annis/donamusque nefas. sciat hac pro caede tyrannus/ nil venia plus posse dari (9.1087-1089). It is the ultimate indignity that, having asserted his superiority over Ptolemy by an exercise of clementia, Caesar is now found on the receiving end of such clementia, and not even from Ptolemy but from the latter's vile minion Pothinus. A reversal of roles between Caesar and Pompey is also implied, since Lucan assigns as one possible motive for Caesar's show of grief at the sight of Pompey's head the fact that Caesar has been deprived of the opportunity to subject Pompey to his mercy (9.1058-1062, and compare also Caesar's words at 9.1095-1096).

So far, Caesar's degradation has occurred in his absence and without his knowledge. When the next day dawns, however, and he is confronted by the sight of the Egyptian forces ranged against him, his humiliating descent from the lofty emulation of Alexander with which he began Book Ten becomes all too apparent. Forsaking Alexander's example, Caesar aligns himself instead with Pompey in the desperate quest
for *latebrae*, for any refuge, however small and unworthy, from the storm that has risen around him: *at Caesar moenibus urbis/ diffisus foribus clausae se protegit aulae/
degeneres passus latebras. nec tota vacabat/ regia conpresso: minima collegerat arma/
parte domus* (10.439-443). As Rosner-Siegel has shown, Caesar is depicted throughout the preceding books of the poem as swift-moving and violent, in opposition to the static and embattled Pompey; this is in harmony with the initial similes comparing the two leaders to a tottering old oak and a blazing lightning bolt. Now Caesar finds himself *conpressus*, restricted to a painfully narrow space as his enemies descend upon him. An eruption of Etna was one of the portents heralding Caesar's advance on Rome in Book One (1.545-547), but now its fires have been caged in a simile expressing Caesar's sudden confinement: *nec secus in Siculis fureret tua flamma cavernis,/ obstrueret summam si quis tibi, Mulciber, Aetnam* (10.447-448).

This dramatic shift in Caesar's external circumstances, from violent freedom to imprisonment, is both accompanied and (in part) prompted by an even more surprising internal transformation, as he experiences an unwonted *metus* in addition to his more customary *ira* (10.443-444). He has lost the ferocious self-assurance that has hitherto propelled him so successfully through his many campaigns in quest of global empire:

*audax Thessalici nuper qui rupe sub Haemi
Hesperiae cunctos proceres aciemque senatus
Pompeiumque ducem causa sperare vetante
non timuit fatumque sibi promisit iniquum,
expavit servile nefas, intraque penates
obruitur telis. quem non violasset Alanus,
non Scytha, non fixo qui ludit in hospite Maurus,
hic, cui Romani spatium non sufficit orbis,
parvaque regna putet Tyriis cum Gadibus Indos,
ceu puer inbellis, ceu captis femina muris,
quaerit tuta domus; spem vitae in limine clauso
ponit...* (10.449-460)
The abrupt collapse of Caesar's morale cries out for explanation. As Berti notes (p. 294), this episode of panic, which contradicts Lucan's otherwise unvarying characterization of Caesar as the embodiment of criminal audacity, is not found in any other ancient source for the Alexandrian campaign. Conversely, Lucan ignores or downplays several prior instances of Caesar's panic or self-doubt that actually are attested in the historical record. Plutarch, for instance, reports that, in the aftermath of the battle of Dyrrachium, which had nearly proved disastrous for Caesar, the latter spent a traumatized night (of the sort that Lucan attributes to Pompey after Pharsalus) brooding over his failures as a general and over his future course of action. In Book Six of Lucan, by contrast, Caesar is merely said to lead his tattered forces from Epirus to Thessaly without any commentary on his state of mind (6.314-315). Even within Book Ten itself, upon his arrival in Alexandria, Caesar reacts less timorously in Lucan than he does in Cassius Dio to the riot provoked among the Alexandrian mob by the sight of Caesar's lictors carrying the fasces on Egyptian soil. According to Dio (42.7), Caesar beat a hasty retreat into the safety of the palace, but Lucan shows him deliberately suppressing any sign of fear (10.14-15) and engaging in a leisurely sightseeing tour of

\[124\] Caesar's refusal to meet the superior force of the rebels in open battle was a matter of historical fact, reported by Caesar himself (Bellum Civile 3.109); in Caesar's account, however, this is a matter of sound strategic reasoning, not blind panic. The more impartial Cassius Dio (42.37) portrays Caesar as somewhat intimidated by the numbers and audacity of the Egyptian forces, but as nevertheless acting decisively and vigorously to prepare for his defence. Moreover, as Berti observes (pp. 294-295), where Lucan shows Caesar cravenly retreating within a single wing of the palace (10.441-443), Cassius Dio (42.37) records that Caesar actually held the entire section of town containing the palace and neighbouring buildings, which he fortified with a moat and wall all the way to the sea; compare Caesar's own account, where he is said to have merely kept his men at their current positions within the town rather than actively retreating (Bellum Civile 3.109) and to have fended off all attacks on eam oppidi partem, quam Caesar cum militibus tenebat (3.111).

\[125\] See Plutarch, Caesar 39.8-11.
Alexandria (10.15-19) before he eventually enters the palace (10.53-56). Why, then, does Lucan break with his usual practice in attributing panicked fear to Caesar, and why does he choose this point in his narrative to do so, in contradiction of the historical record?

Over the past few decades, various scholars have wrestled with this problem, but a satisfactory solution has yet to arise. In essence, all previous theories suffer from one of two flaws: either they are premised upon a misreading of the specific circumstances of Caesar’s panic, or they fail adequately to take into account the broader context for this episode. As an example of the first error, Berti suggests (pp. 294-295) that Caesar's uncharacteristic terror may be prompted by a kind of claustrophobia, since his habitual freedom of wide-ranging action has been curtailed by the Egyptian siege; Caesar is more at home when confining others than when enduring confinement himself. Berti observes, "Non sorprende allora che le sole occasioni in cui Cesare si trova in difficoltà è quando è lui stesso a trovarsi assediato e rinchiuso dai nemici: questo è evidente soprattutto nell'episodio del l. 6, in cui Cesare viene accerchiato dalle truppe di Pompeo a Durazzo; Lucano insiste sulla paura provata dal generale romano, che rischiò di essere annientato e perdere definitivamente la guerra." The problem is that the passage here cited by Berti in support of his assertion that Caesar habitually reacts with fear to being surrounded,

126 Lucan describes Caesar's enjoyment of sanctuary within the palace during this initial riot with the following words: *Pellae a tutus in aula/ Caesar erat* (10.55-56). In his note ad loc., Schmidt suggests that these lines foreshadow Caesar's subsequent taking of refuge inside the palace at the start of the Alexandrian campaign and glosses Lucan's words, "Caesar suchte also im ptolemäischen Palast Schutz." This reading, however, misses a crucial distinction with the verb "suchte". At 10.55-56, Caesar is not represented as having actively sought out the shelter of the palace; he is (*erat*) safe within it, but this safety is merely a consequence of his presence there rather than a deliberate goal (although such a goal can perhaps be inferred). In the subsequent passage, however, especially at 10.459, Caesar is portrayed very explicitly in the desperate pursuit of sanctuary. Consequently, his demeanour at 10.439-470 is completely unprecedented within the poem. Lucan also entirely omits the second riot that, according to Dio (42.35), erupted on the morning after Caesar's seduction by Cleopatra; Dio records that Caesar was so terrified by the mob that he was driven to the desperate extremity of promising the grant of the Roman province of Cyprus to the Egyptian royal siblings Arsinoe and Ptolemy the Younger.
6.290-299, in fact makes no reference at all to Caesar's own state of mind when he finds himself suddenly encircled by Pompey's forces outside Dyrrachium; rather, it is Caesar's soldiers, *Caesaris...miles* (6.296), who are said to feel an overwhelming dread. More importantly, in Book Ten Lucan stresses that Caesar *chooses* to retreat into the undignified hiding-place of the palace, *quaerit tuta domus; spem vitae in limine clauso/ponit* (10.459-460), and even to gather his forces within a single palace wing (10.441-443), because he lacks the confidence to fight for possession of the wider space of the city (or palace) as a whole: *at Caesar moenibus urbis/ diffisus foribus clausae se protegit aulae/ degeneres passus latebras* (10.439-441). This escapist impulse is contrasted with the eagerness for open battle displayed by the approaching Egyptian forces (10.438-439). In other words, Caesar's confinement is unambiguously represented as the effect, not the cause, of his panic.  

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127 Caesar is also at his boldest during the storm of Book Five, which he confronts from within the confined space of Amyclas' boat. 128 Berti's claustrophobia hypothesis seems more applicable to a subsequent, much briefer failure of nerve suffered by Lucan's Caesar at the very end of the poem, when he is suddenly hemmed in by the Egyptian forces during the battle of the Heptastadion, for on this occasion Caesar is confined by external forces rather than by his own unexpected timidity: *dux Latius tota subitus formidine belli/ cingitur: hinc densae praetexant litora classes,/ hinc tergo insultant pedites. via nulla salutis, non fuga, non virtus; vix spes quoque mortis honestae...captus sorte loci pendet; dubiusque timeret/ optaretne mori* (10.536-543). Berti's theory may be compared to that of Gagliardi (pp. 248-250), who argues that Caesar's panic at 10.439-460 is, in the circumstances, humanly understandable and proportionate, because he is not facing the sort of enemy that he is accustomed to dealing with: "Perché questa volta, di fronte a lui che aveva sfidato impavido a Farsàlo tutti i capi dell'Esperia e dell'esercito possestosi da combattere in campo aperto, ma solo un branco di servi infidi ed imprevedibili, contro le cui mene è arduo approntare su due piedi un disegno tattico adeguato. Qualche attimo di turbamento è ben comprensibile." In response to this analysis, two observations can be made. First, Lucan goes out of his way to emphasize that the Egyptian rebels are in fact arrayed as a coherent army ready to join battle on the open field: *cum procul a muris acies non sparsa maniplis/ nec vaga conspicitur, sed iustos qualis ad hostes recta fronte venit: passuri comminus arma/ laturique ruunt* (10.436-439). It is rather Caesar (*at Caesar*, 10.439) who dares not face them on the battlefield. Second, Lucan's point in drawing a contrast between Caesar's boldness at Pharsalus, when he confronted the combined forces of the Roman senate without flinching, and his panicked reaction to the *servile nefas* of the Egyptian rebels, is surely to suggest that, *a fortiori*, Caesar ought to have been less afraid of the contemptible Egyptians. After all, Caesar has responded quickly, decisively, and with his customary fortitude to unexpected threats before, as in his quelling of the mutiny in Book Five.
As for the second type of error, the misreading of the broader context for this episode, Ahl (pp. 225-229, followed by Narducci, pp. 246-247) attributes Caesar's lapse to the enervating and enfeebling effects of Egyptian *luxus*.\(^{129}\) The softening effects of a sybaritic environment on the martial character were indeed a standard topos for ancient moralists: Seneca, for instance, describes the sapping of Hannibal's vigour amid the luxuries of Campania at *Epistulae Morales* 51.6, and Alexandria (along with Cleopatra) was believed to have exercised precisely such a deleterious influence upon Mark Antony, to whom Lucan compares Caesar at 10.70-72.\(^{130}\) Lucan thus shows Caesar initially acting (just as Antony would later do) against his own interests as a military commander in his sexual servitude to Cleopatra, a deplorable lapse from the conduct expected of Roman manhood: *tempora Niliaco turpis dependit amori, dum donare Pharon, dum non sibi vincere mavolt* (10.80-81) Nevertheless, it is not simply the case that Caesar has been utterly emasculated by his experiences at Alexandria. Even after one night spent in Cleopatra's bed and another among the excesses of her table, Caesar is still capable of meditating war on the Egyptian kingdom of his paramour (10.169-171), who has foolishly exposed her nation's treasures to the gaze of an avaricious warlord (10.146-149). Clearly less infatuated with Cleopatra than Antony would be, Caesar remains capable of thinking beyond the pleasures of bed and table to the longer-term (if still morally reprehensible) goal of the acquisition of wealth and power; in other words, Caesar's military ambitions have been not so much abated but redirected by his decadent environs, and he is once more concerned to *sibi vincere* rather than to advance the interests of Cleopatra. Lucan then concludes his account of Caesar's newfound designs

\(^{129}\) Berti also briefly offers this explanation in the introduction to his commentary (pp. 20-21), although in his actual note on the passage in question he explains Caesar's panic in the manner outlined above.

\(^{130}\) See e.g. Plutarch, *Antony* (28-30 and 37.4).
against Egypt as follows: *causas Martis Phariis cum gentibus optat* (10.171). Given that Pothinus and Achillas have now offered Caesar as legitimate a *causa Martis* with Egypt as can be imagined by launching a pre-emptive strike against him, the reader might have expected Caesar to rejoice at the sight of the oncoming rebels, since his belligerent prayers have been fulfilled in such timely fashion, rather than to react with terror and dismay. Moreover, Caesar's last narrated action in the poem prior to his episode of panic is his questioning of Acoreus. As argued in Chapter Five, this interrogation can perhaps be regarded as a gathering of intelligence on Egypt's physical geography for the projected conquest and in any case reveals Caesar's undiminished arrogance and presumption (as Ahl himself argues, p. 228); even after all his exposure to Alexandrian *luxus*, Caesar is shown in the secure possession of an unshakable self-confidence, right up to the moment when he beholds the Egyptian forces approaching on the following morning.

Another approach to the problem is therefore required. Within Lucan's narrative, only one of Caesar's experiences bridges the gap between his prayers for war with Egypt and his megalomaniacal questioning of Acoreus, on the one hand, and, on the other, his panicked reaction to the Egyptian rebels: Acoreus' long speech on the Nile. Can it be that Caesar has actually taken to heart Acoreus' discouraging message of his own insignificance to the overall design of the cosmos, so that he now falters in his relentless pursuit of world dominion and begins to doubt the divinely guaranteed invulnerability of which he boasted during the storm of Book Five? If so, this is proof of the effectiveness of Acoreus' teachings, which have succeeded in exerting an influence on Caesar even in spite of their violent interruption by Pothinus; although he may not have rendered Caesar any better (since fear is a vice as much as ambition), Acoreus has at least suppressed the
monstrous egotism against which his speech was specifically intended. The man for whom the whole world was never enough now hopes for nothing more than a safe refuge within the confines of a single building (or rather a single wing thereof). Under Acoreus' tutelage, Caesar has in effect (at least temporarily) unlearnt the ethos of world conquest that he imbibed from Alexander's tomb at the beginning of Book Ten, and that (in imitation of Alexander) he sought to extend to the Nile in his interrogation of Acoreus.

Lucan makes Caesar's departure from the model of Alexander explicit with the phrase *cui Romani spatium non sufficit orbis* (10.456), which seems intended to evoke a rhetorical commonplace about Alexander's ambitions. It should be noted that the motif of a tyrannical ambition that encompasses furthest east and furthest west occurs three times in Book Ten: in the authorial diatribe accompanying Caesar's visit to the tomb of Alexander, who (as part of his pernicious example to future megalomaniacs) is said to have penetrated as far as the Ganges during life (10.33) and to have only been pre-empted by death from making a complementary expedition *in occasus* (10.39); during Caesar's moment of panic, when his current pusillanimity is contrasted with his former mindset of one who *parva...regna putet Tyriis cum Gadibus Indos* (10.457); and, between these two episodes, in Acoreus' catalogue of would-be explorers of the Nile, of whom Sesostris

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131 Seneca, however, concedes that the inculcation of fear may sometimes be necessary for the moral correction of those who are beyond the reach of ratio: *aliquando incutiendus est iis metus apud quos ratio non proficit* (*De Ira* 2.14.1).
132 Bonner (pp. 273-274) thus compares the sententia of Cestius Pius, recorded by Seneca the Elder in *Suasoria* 1, that (in reference to Alexander) *orbis illum suus non capit* (1.5), while Berti (in his note on 10.456) cites another sententia from the same suasoria: *Alexander orbi magnus est, Alexandro orbis angustus est* (1.3). There are many other instances of the theme of Alexander's limitless ambitions in ancient literature, of which Berti cites Valerius Maximus 8.14.ext.2 and Seneca, *Epistulae Morales* 119.7-8. Bonner points out an exact parallel to Lucan's wording in Juvenal's condemnation of Alexander: *unus Pellaeo iuveni non sufficit orbis* (10.168). Either Lucan derived the phrase *non sufficit orbis* verbatim from a rhetorical tradition about Alexander on which Juvenal is also drawing, or else Juvenal has seen in Lucan's phrase a possible application to Alexander; in either case, Alexander cannot be far from Lucan's thought here.
133 Schmidt observes (p. 64) that the Ganges is intended to mark the eastern extent of Alexander's ambitions, while the Ocean marks the western and the Nile the southern.
reached *ad occasus* (10.276) and Cambyses *in ortus* (10.279), but who were all defeated in the end by the superior power of a mysterious Nature. It therefore seems reasonable to infer that it is Acoreus' intervening lesson in the ultimate futility of world-spanning ambition that has so drastically narrowed the scope of Caesar's own aspirations, since all his previous experiences in Alexandria, including not only his pilgrimage to Alexander's tomb but also Cleopatra's banquet, with its parade of exotic luxuries seized from every corner of the globe, have been such as to inflame rather than subdue his characteristic egomania.

There may also be an allusion to Alexander in the *fatum...iniquum* (10.452), the undeserved success of his unrighteous cause, that Caesar is said to have promised himself at Pharsalus (but in which he no longer trusts). The form *iniquum* occurs only on one other occasion in the poem, during Lucan's diatribe against Alexander at the beginning of Book Ten, when he describes Alexander as *terrarum fatale malum* (10.34) and (in the following lines) *sidus iniquum/ gentibus* (10.35-36, where *iniquum* emphatically closes the line as at 10.452).\(^{134}\) Caesar is thereby shown to have lost his faith in the dark powers that he once believed would elevate him, as they had elevated Alexander, to a position of destructive eminence over the globe.

It is surely no coincidence that Caesar's sudden abandonment of the *imitatio* and *aemulatio* of Alexander follows so closely upon his lesson from Acoreus, which is designed precisely to showcase the vanity of human imperialism, as evidenced above all in Alexander's defeat by the Nile. Acoreus' speech thus shares with the helmsman's account of celestial navigation not only its discouraging content but also a manifestly

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\(^{134}\) It should further be noted that, in the astrological sense in which *sidus* is clearly employed at 10.35, it is virtually indistinguishable in its meaning from the *fatum* of 10.452.
discouraging effect on its auditor;\(^{135}\) where the helmsman's speech, however, merely confirms Pompey in a panicked escapism to which he was already prone, Acoreus has accomplished (if only temporarily) a real and total transformation of Caesar, from the mentality of Alexander to that of the timid Pompey himself. In Book Ten, Acoreus achieves, with respect to Caesar, the same pious goal that he so disastrously failed to accomplish in Book Eight, with respect to his royal master Ptolemy: like an Old Testament prophet, he has curbed a tyrant's hubris with his words.

Acoreus has perhaps made a second contribution to Caesar's panic as well, not through his teachings but through his example. When Caesar first arrives in the harbour of Alexandria, he is keenly alert to the possibility of betrayal. Reluctant to approach the shore until he has received a token of Ptolemy's goodwill in the form of Pompey's head, even then he shows himself on his guard against Egypt's notoriously treacherous more, which could just as easily have claimed his own life had he not triumphed at Pharsalus:

\[
\text{nec fallere vosmet/ credite victorem: nobis quoque tale paratum/ litoris hospitium; ne sic mea colla gerantur,/ Thessaliae fortuna facit (9.1081-1084).} \]

His correct impression of

\(^{135}\) A closer parallel from Book Eight for my reading of Acoreus' moral influence on Caesar can be found in the speech of Lentulus at the council of Syhedra, the second-longest speech of the entire poem (as Acoreus' is the longest). In the first half of Book Eight, Pompey is consistently shown in a highly unflattering light, as cowardly (in his flight from Pharsalus at the beginning), desperate (in his anguished response to the helmsman), vainglorious (in his wild project of a Parthian alliance), and even duplicitous (in his dispatch of Deiotarus on a mission to Parthia behind the senators' backs); morally speaking, this is Pompey's darkest hour, the lowest depth to which he has ever sunk in the poem. By contrast, in the Stoic fortitude with which he meets his death at the conclusion of Book Eight, Pompey has attained a nobility of spirit that represents a much higher moral state than he has so far enjoyed. What can possibly explain such an abrupt transformation? The sole experience that intervenes for Pompey between his delusional case for a Parthian alliance at the council of Syhedra and his courageous death is the speech by Lentulus, whose strategic goal is to dissuade Pompey from the Parthian option and to steer him instead towards an Egyptian alliance, but who also has the moral goal of persuading Pompey to behave in a manner consonant with the dignity of a Roman vir and general; similarly, as I have argued, the ostensible theme of Acoreus' address to Caesar (the science of the Nile) veils his actual ethical purpose of offering Caesar a lesson in humility. Lentulus even makes the specific point that death is nothing to be feared by real men: \text{mors ultima poena est/ nec metuenda viris (8.395-396).} When next encountered, as he confronts his murderers off the Egyptian shore, Pompey can accordingly be seen as having taken Lentulus' ethical lesson to heart.
Egyptian violence and untrustworthiness is then reinforced by the riot that erupts the moment he sets foot on shore (10.11-14), as well as by Cleopatra's dire warning of Pothinus' designs against him (10.99-102). After a night under Acoreus' spell, however, Caesar will perhaps have formed a very different impression of the Egyptian character, one of serene wisdom and the old-fashioned ἐνσέβεια assigned by Herodotus as the defining national trait. He will then have received a rude awakening (literally) on the following morning, when he is suddenly confronted by an army of conspirators, traitors, and mercenaries.

Whatever the cause, this is clearly the lowest psychological ebb that Caesar has reached in the poem. He is unmanned in the fullest sense of that word, since both the attributes of manhood, male sex and maturity, are stripped away from him in the simile comparing him to a puer inbellis and a femina at 10.458. The final indignity comes when

136 The complexities and subtleties of Caesar's portrayal in Book Ten cannot be fully explored within the scope of this chapter. A difficulty of analyzing Book Ten in general and the episode of Caesar's panic in particular consists of the fact that Lucan seems to be offering two separate, competing narratives of the experience of a Roman general in Egypt. On the one hand, there is a fairly conventional (and conventionally racist and sexist) account of the emasculation and softening of a Roman vir (like Aeneas in Carthage) by feminine wiles and decadent oriental luxury. Egypt is after all a land of gender inversion, where women like Cleopatra and eunuchs like Pothinus are allowed to usurp the masculine province of political leadership (as Cleopatra herself proclaims to Caesar at 10.90-92), and where men in turn presumably risk being reduced to the role of women. Lucan's denunciation of Caesar's shameful yielding to Cleopatra at 10.77-81 fits in with such an orthodox Roman narrative. On the other hand, with greater originality, Lucan portrays Egypt not merely as a teacher of effeminacy but also (and paradoxically) as a teacher of imperialist megalomania, both through Alexander's tomb and through Cleopatra's banquet, and Lucan makes it abundantly clear at the banquet's conclusion that Caesar has drawn precisely this lesson from the display of Egypt's riches; it is in opposition to the inflammatory influence of this "Alexandrian" Egypt on the visiting Caesar that (as I argue) Acoreus, as a representative of the traditional Egypt, proclaims his sermon against scientific imperialism. Now, in the account of Caesar's panic at 10.439-470, Lucan certainly presents Caesar as emasculated (in the comparison to a woman and unwarlike boy at 10.458-459), which accords with the first of the two narratives outlined above. Caesar is also likened to Medea (10.464-467), however, a woman who (like Cleopatra) possessed the conventionally masculine attribute of criminal audacity to a notorious degree; if Lucan's goal in this latter simile is merely to express Caesar's unmanning (as argued by Ahl, pp. 225-226), it is curious that he should have chosen to align Caesar with a particularly mannish woman. In any case, Lucan devotes a greater portion of this scene (10.449-457) to a dissection of the collapse of Caesar's overweening and Alexander-like ambitions, a collapse that can only be satisfactorily explained in terms of the impact of Acoreus' speech; given that the latter is the longest speech of the entire poem, it would indeed be surprising if Lucan did not intend for it to carry consequences at least for its immediate narrative context.
Caesar, the implacable practitioner of total war who scornfully dismissed the Massilians' plea for peace in Book Three, is driven to the desperate extremity of imitating the Massilians and extending an olive branch to his foes: *cogunt tamen ultima rerum/ spem pacis temptare ducem* (10.467-468). Caesar now experiences firsthand the same Egyptian disregard for venerable laws and taboos that Pompey met with in Book Eight, for the sacrosanct envoys are summarily put to death: *sed neque ius mundi valuit nec foedera sancta/ gentibus* (10.471-472). Acoreus, as befits a spokesman for the old Egyptian civilization, may have proclaimed the immutable force of the *mundi lex* governing the planets (10.201) and the *certum ius* (10.267) regulating the Nile, but the hallowed *ius mundi* meets with nothing but contempt from the new Egypt, the Egypt of Alexander and of his spiritual heir Pothinus.  

Like Lentulus at Syhedra, Caesar in his questioning of Acoreus seems to assume the continued functioning of the old Egyptian Utopia of the literary tradition, the Egypt of Plato and Eudoxus, a land of wise old priests and peaceful scholarship, even if he hopes to abuse Egypt's lore for his own ends; by Caesar's own words at 10.184-185, it was this utopian model that (at least in part) drew him to Egypt in the first place, just as it drew Pompey (on the basis of Lentulus' speech). Caesar's assumption then receives apparent confirmation from Acoreus' response, with its emphasis on cosmic harmony and stability and on the Nile's salvific role as the agent of a benevolent providence. If all latter-day}

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137 In addition to citing Caesar's haughty response to the Massilians at 3.370-372, Berti points out (in his note on 10.467-474) that Lucan has rendered Caesar's decision to send the embassy much more desperate by locating it not prior to the commencement of hostilities (as in the accounts of Cassio Dio and of Caesar himself) but during the height of the siege. As Berti comments, the effect of this distortion of history is that Caesar's "richiesta di *pax* si configura come un'ultima spiaggia, una sofferta resa cui egli si rassegna dopo aver tentato in ogni modo di evitarla, e comporta ancora una volta una forzatura della sua indole, descritta per tutto il poema come aliena dalle pace."

138 Again, Acoreus can perhaps be seen as having actually imbued Caesar with a misguided faith in the power of *ius* and *lex*. 
Egyptians resembled Acoreus, if the Nile still resisted the elemental forces of destruction, and if the universe in general were truly as utopian as Acoreus represents it, Caesar could renounce his violent path in safety and enjoy a life of perfect tranquility, at least within Egypt, just as Acoreus has implicitly urged him to do. Like Lentulus, however, Caesar is fatally (or almost fatally) wrong in the idealized view of Egypt underlying his speech to Acoreus, and (unlike Lentulus) he ought to have known better, because his own role model Alexander was the one who brought the ancient Egyptian civilization to an end, and because he himself initiated and enthusiastically prosecuted the civil war in whose global ramifications he now finds himself embroiled against his will; like the sorcerer's apprentice, Caesar has unleashed a destructive force that has since grown beyond his power. In her prophecy of the war's future course, the frenzied Roman matron of Book One complains of the repetition of Pharsalus at Philippi: \textit{nova da mihi cernere litora ponti/ telluremque novam; vidi iam, Phoebe, Philippos} (1.693-694). This theme of endless re-enactment, which is in many ways so crucial to Lucan's poem, is also operative in Book Ten, where Caesar stands in very real danger of re-enacting the fate that Pompey suffered in Book Eight as the hapless victim of Egyptian violence and treachery. Egypt offers him no more escape from the harsh realities of the Roman civil war than it offered Pompey before him, and he has a choice of only two roles to adopt in this conflict: killer or killed, victor or vanquished, in other words Caesar or Pompey. If Caesar does not reverse his "Pompeian" departure from his habitual ferocity, which began (ostensibly) with his seduction by Cleopatra, continued (also superficially) with his scientific questioning of Acoreus, and was completed (in reality) by Acoreus' humbling response, he will quite simply not survive. Pothinus therefore undermines Acoreus' pious
attempt at the moral reformation of a tyrant at two key points in the poem: in Book Eight, by directly challenging Acoreus' ethical arguments in the council of Ptolemy and thereby seducing the latter into a life of crime; and in Book Ten, by threatening Caesar with a conspiracy that he can only defeat through the renunciation of Acoreus' pacifist teachings and example.

Caesar Redux

At 10.488-529, accordingly, dismissing all self-doubt, Caesar aggressively sets out to reclaim his lapsed identity with a vigorous counterattack. This section is preceded by an explanation of the surprising failure of the first assault by the Egyptians in spite of their superior numbers: \textit{fata vetant, murique vicem Fortuna tuetur} (10.485).\footnote{As Berti points out (in his note on 10.485), \textit{fatum} and \textit{Fortuna} are virtually indistinguishable concepts in Lucan.} In other words, Caesar's loyal comrade \textit{Fortuna} is once again fighting by his side. He proceeds to take advantage of her gift with a whirlwind of activity that in effect transforms him from the besieged into his more customary role of besieger: \textit{sed adest defensor ubique/ Caesar et hos aditus gladiis, hos ignibus arcet,/ obsessusque gerit - tanta est constantia mentis -/ expugnantis opus} (10.488-491).\footnote{Gagliardi (1978) comments on these lines, "Caesar...ha ripreso subito il dominio di se stesso e della situazione" (p. 250).} This recalls Caesar's frenzied roaming over the field of Pharsalus, as recounted by Lucan at 7.557-581. The reference to the use of fire, \textit{hos ignibus arcet}, is particularly significant, for Caesar immediately goes on to set the Alexandrian fleet ablaze (10.491-497), recalling the elemental triumph of fire over water that marked the sea battle at Massilia (3.680-688), in which his fleet also triumphed; Caesar's fire is no longer caged, as in the earlier simile likening his predicament to a hypothetical blockage of Etna, but raging unrestrainedly. Caesar's association with fire in
this episode is strengthened by the fact that, in the preceding assault on the palace, the Egyptians refrain from availing themselves of this element: *nec flammis mandatur opus* (10.482). Moreover, the fire started by Caesar does not act alone but co-operates with a powerful wind (*turbo*) in order to spread to the city as a whole, resulting in the temporary paralysis of the Egyptian forces (10.497-505). Both of Caesar's chief elemental allies are consequently deployed on his behalf; this also represents a victory of Mars, planet of fire and wind in Acoreus' account, over Mercury, lord of waters (and of the Nile). Caesar does not waste the opportunity thus afforded: *nec tempora cladis/ perdidit in somnos* (10.506). Once again, Caesar is presented as an enemy to sleep, just as he appeared at the start of the storm episode in Book Five, when his restless energy both forbade his own repose and broke in upon Amyclas' peaceful slumbers. In an affirmation of his trademark *praeceps cursus*, he rushes to seize the island of Pharos, with language suggestive of forceful and rapid action (*insiluit* and *tempore rapto*): *caeca nocte carinis/ insiluit Caesar semper feliciter usus/ praecipiti cursu bellorum, et tempore rapto/ nunc claustrum pelagi cepit Pharon* (10.506-509).

Once Caesar is restored to his original dynamic self, he can dispose of the only other person in Egypt who has presumed to aspire to his identity: *non fatum meriti poenasque Pothini/ distulit ulterius* (10.515-516). Where, at the commencement of hostilities, Caesar was torn between arrogant *ira* and a wholly uncharacteristic *metus* (10.443-444), now his *ira* (10.516) has prevailed in the elimination of Pothinus. Instead of reducing Caesar to the level of Pompey by subjecting him to the same miserable fate that Pompey suffered in Book Eight, Pothinus himself now joins his former victim in a

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141 Lucan is the only writer to attribute the spread of the blaze to the force of an unusually strong wind (or to any wind at all); contrast the account in Plutarch, *Caesar* 49.6.
death by beheading, although Lucan bemoans the apparent equivalence as an indignity to Pompey: *Magni morte perit* (10.519). Whatever further perils Caesar must confront, both in the Alexandrian campaign and in Africa and elsewhere, he will do so with his own particular brand of impetuous violence. The escapist experiment of Book Ten has been decisively brought to a close, with Acoreus forgotten and the history of the civil war once more on track, just as Pompey's attempts to evade the war in Book Eight are concluded by the return of his spirit to earth in Book Nine to carry on the struggle; having succeeded in escaping neither the war nor his own warlike vices through travel to Egypt and the science of the Nile, Caesar is firmly set on the path to Thapsus and Munda, and thence to the Ides of March.
Conclusion: Cato's Libya, Nero's Rome

In Book Seven of Lucan's poem, with the climactic narrative of the battle of Pharsalus, the reader is for the first time confronted with the full horror of civil war and of Rome's downfall, as though all the dire happenings of the previous six books have been mere preliminary skirmishes. The agony of such awareness must (at least for any right-thinking Roman) carry with it a desperate escapism, a longing to turn away towards some happier vista. Because of its need to forget, Rome has refused to mark the day of Pharsalus in its calendar along with the lesser catastrophes of Cannae and the Allia: *tempora signavit leviorum Roma malorum, / hunc voluit nescire diem* (7.410-411). Lucan applies the language of escape (*fuge*) to his own mentality as explanation for his omission of a detailed account of the most impious phase of the battle, the clash of Caesar's centre with Pompey's, where Romans are matched not against barbarian auxiliaries but against fellow Romans: *hic furor, hic rabies, hic sunt tua crimina, Caesar. / hanc fuge, mens, partem belli tenebrisque relinque, / nullaque tantorum discat me vate malorum, / quam multum bellis liceat civilibus, aetas* (7.551-554). Similarly, when Pompey makes a timely withdrawal from the field, Lucan bids him, *fuge proelia dira* (7.689), remarking on the felicity with which Pompey has spared himself the sight of the final ruin of his forces (7.698-699): *nonne iuvat pulsum bellis cessisse nec istud/ perspectasse nefas?*

It is in this context that, in the ensuing books, Lucan undertakes a profound and systematic exploration of the theme of escapism in a global calamity, with particular reference to the two great antagonists of the first seven books of the poem, Pompey and Caesar. Pompey's desire for escape is no surprise; as enumerated in Chapter One, this can be considered his defining trait in Lucan's poem. Caesar's apparent weariness with
civil war in Book Ten, by contrast, appears altogether out of character. All the same, in the aftermath of Pharsalus, Caesar has been subjected (or has subjected himself) to dreadful experiences: hellish nightmares that plague his guilty conscience on the night of the battle (7.776-786) and, on the following morning, the rivers of gore and heaps of unburied corpses among which he breakfasts (7.786-798). After Lucan has just finished recounting Caesar’s glee in the spectacle of the carnage that constitutes proof of his victory, he turns to the conqueror and asks, *tu, cui dant poenas inhumato funere gentes,/ quid fugis hanc cladem? quid olentes deseris agros?/ has trahe, Caesar, aquas; hoc, si potes, utere caelo./ sed tibi tabentes populi Pharsalica rura/ eripiunt camposque tenent victore fugato* (7.820-824). In other words, even Caesar has his limits and is driven by the accumulated carrion to flee (*fugis, fugato*) the scene of his greatest triumph. Again, when Caesar is next encountered at the end of Book Nine, Lucan reports that *Emathia satiatus clade recessit* (9.950); like Pompey (and perhaps like Lucan’s readers and Lucan himself), Caesar has finally had enough (*satiatus*) of civil war. Once his main rival has been safely eliminated by the Egyptians, it is therefore understandable that he should seek some relief from the interminable conflict; Lucan thereby shows the escapist impulse to be truly universal, since it affects even the primary instigator of civil war.

The various refuges whose violation was discussed in the introductory section had no particular reputation for immunity to external disaster: the temple at Delphi, for instance, was periodically destroyed by fire or earthquake, and Delphi was at the centre of a series of often brutal Sacred Wars, the third of which was triggered when a Phocian army seized the city and looted its treasures; as for Marseilles, Lucan shows its inhabitants, in their speech to Caesar, begging off participation in the civil war on the
grounds of their abysmal military record, history of national disaster, and precarious survival: *non pondera rerum/ nec momenta sumus, numquam felicibus armis/ usa manus, patriae primis a sedibus exul./ et post translatas exustae Phocidos arces/ moenibus exiguis alieno in litore tuti* (3.337-341). In Books Eight and Ten, on the other hand, Lucan posits two refuges that were in fact frequently represented by the literary tradition as impregnable bastions in times of trouble: natural science and the ancient civilization of Egypt. In Book Eight, science takes the form of astronomical inquiry in Pompey's dialogue with the helmsman, a passage whose language strongly evokes Manilius' reassuring vision of stellar benevolence and immutability, and that hints at Seneca's recommendation in the *Ad Helviam* of the use of celestial contemplation as a consolation in exile (Pompey's current condition). In Book Ten, Seneca moves to the forefront with Caesar's inquiry into the geography of the Nile, since, both in Caesar's question and in Acoreus' response, Lucan is clearly adapting Seneca's own treatment of this topic in the (exactly) contemporary *Naturales Quaestiones*, which present natural science in general and the science of the Nile in particular as avenues of escape from human vice and the evils of history. As for escape to Egypt, Book Eight witnesses Lentulus persuading the senators assembled at Syhedra to dispatch Pompey there on the basis of a utopian view of the country as an autarkic Shangri-La, and this optimistic view then receives partial confirmation in the person of the old priest Acoreus, whose intervention at the council of Ptolemy on Pompey's behalf is premised on his pious national heritage. Acoreus then returns at greater length and with greater emphasis in Book Ten as the embodiment of the utopian tradition of Egypt: not only does his proximity at Cleopatra's banquet inspire Caesar to follow in the footsteps of such philosopher-pilgrims as Plato and Eudoxus in
seeking Egypt's ancient wisdom, but his response to Caesar, with its focus on cosmic
stability and harmony and its overall humbling message, is in perfect accord with
traditional representations of Egyptian priests and of their dealings with foreigners.
Moreover, like the sections on science, Lucan's allusions to the utopian model of Egypt
occur against a background of considerable contemporary interest in the subject.
Seneca's *De Situ et Sacris Aegyptiorum* may be lost to us, but the Egyptological writings
of the Alexandrian polymath and priest Chaeremon, who is more or less contemporary
with Lucan, and who (as Nero's tutor) must have enjoyed considerable influence in
Rome, seem to have offered a highly idealized picture of the religious and other traditions
of Egyptian antiquity.\(^1\)

Lucan has accordingly responded to his characters' escapist urges by proposing a
mental flight of scientific inquiry and a physical one through travel to Egypt.
Nevertheless, if the longing to escape from Pharsalus is universal, so are the battle's
consequences for the world. The paired attempts by Pompey and Caesar to take shelter in
the utopian sanctuaries of Egypt and natural science are each defeated by the same
fundamental reality: the ubiquity of Caesar's malign ethos and of the civil war thereby
engendered. Pompey thus finds the heavens to which he turns for solace contaminated by
the same treachery that, on the part of the gods, was manifested on the field of Pharsalus,
and that has characterized Caesar's own actions at various points in the poem; he is also
confronted with unsettling omens of his final wartime experience, his murder on Egypt's
shore. Again, when Caesar himself seeks (or claims to seek) refuge in the science of the
Nile, his spirit of inquiry is shown to be polluted by the trademark megalomania of a
wager of civil war.

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\(^1\) See Horst fr. 10-11.
Lucan has invented these episodes of frustrated scientific escapism more or less out of whole cloth. Moreover, even though the Egyptian conspiracies against Pompey and Caesar are a matter of historical record, Lucan has recast them as ideological equivalents of the Roman civil war through the opposition of Acoreus and Pothinus, since the latter undermines the traditionalist (and "Pompeian") Acoreus with his Caesarian tactics and values in order to deny refuge both to Pompey in Book Eight and to Caesar in Book Ten. Lucan also shows the old utopian Egypt undermined by the same forces that have corrupted Roman society, namely luxury and commerce, as well as the baneful influence of Alexander, who not only laid the foundations for the Ptolemaic regime but has also inspired Caesar to his campaign for world domination. Neither Egypt, nor the natural universe, nor the convergence of the two in the science of the Nile can possibly shelter Lucan's characters from a conflict whose causes and effects extend over the whole of time and space.

Although Books Eight and Ten are closely paired as testaments to the inevitable failure of refuge in Lucan's cosmos, they are separated by the longest book of the entire poem (at 1108 lines). Is the organic unity of the final three books thereby disrupted? In fact, the escapist threads of the two bracketing narratives are carefully interwoven with Cato's Libyan experiences in Book Nine. I will conclude my investigation of the poem's internal dynamics by showing how this middle book serves to anchor Lucan's treatment of both of the potential avenues of escape attempted by Pompey and Caesar in Eight and Ten, namely physical flight into a remote and sheltered otherworld and mental flight into the realm of natural science. Lucan's commentary on these themes in Book Nine is mediated by the latter's two main characters: Cato, who stands in stark contrast to
Pompey and Caesar alike, and the land of Libya itself, which (at least on the surface) functions as the antithesis of Lucan’s Egypt.

Libya

In the council of Syhedra, as discussed in Chapter Three, Pompey suggests Parthia as a refuge for the defeated Republicans on the grounds of its extreme distance and difference from the known, Roman world: *dividit Euphrates ingentem gurgite mundum,/ Caspiaque immensos seducunt claustra recessus,/ et polus Assyrias alter noctesque diesque/ vertit, et abruptum est nostro mare discolor unda/ Oceanusque suus* (8.290-294). In rebuttal, Lentulus urges recourse to Egypt instead, a land that (in Lentulus’ conception) has been protected from all the vices and upheavals of the modern world both by its forbidding coastline and by the generous Nile; this is the Egypt of which Herodotus remarks, *τὸ άμα τῷ οὐρανῷ τῷ κατά σφέας ἐνοτι ἐτεροίῳ και τῷ ποταμῷ φύσιν ἀλλοίῳ παρεχομένῳ ἢ οἱ ἄλλοι ποταμοί, τὰ πολλὰ πάντα ἐμπαλιν τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀνθρώποις ἠστήσαντο θεᾶ τε καὶ νόμους* (2.35). The latter-day Egypt actually encountered by Pompey in Book Eight and by Caesar in Book Ten, however, is shown to be inextricably entangled in the web of global commerce and politics, its fabled isolation having long since come to an end.

Libya, on the other hand, is introduced in Book Nine as a genuine archetype of geographical alterity and remoteness. At least by one theory, it constitutes an entirely separate continent from Europe and Asia, *tertia pars rerum Libye* (9.411). Like

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2 Compare Pompey’s injunction to Deiotarus: *quando...Emathiis amissus cladibus orbis,/ qua Romanus erat, superest, fidissime regum/ Eoan temptare fidem populosque bibentes/ Euphraten et adhuc securum a Caesare Tigrim,/ ne pigeat Magno quaerentem fata remotas/ Medorum penetrare domos Scythicosque recessus/ et totum mutare diem* (8.211-217).
Herodotus' Egypt, Libya is either completely lacking in the characteristic features of "our" lands or enjoys them only in inverted or twisted fashion: there are no terrestrial waters (9.421-422); rain only falls when it is driven from Europe by the north wind, in other words when "we" enjoy clear skies (9.422-423); there are no mountains (9.449-451) or woods (9.452-453 and 522-525); and, while Pompey, confusing the eastern with the southern hemisphere, states incorrectly that *polus Assyrias alter noctesque diesque/ vertit*, Lucan accurately stresses the unfamiliarity of the African sky both by night, when *nec sidera tota/ ostendit Libycae finitor circulus orae/ multaque devexo terrarum margine celat* (9.495-497), and by day, when the sun stands directly overhead (9.528-530). Two geographical features in particular serve to fence Africa off from outside incursion: the Syrtes and the desert. Moreover, thanks to the peculiarities of its physical geography, the continent's *mores* are also exceptional.\(^3\) Lentulus' attribution of old-fashioned Italian values to contemporary Egypt may be laughably anachronistic, but the Libyans do indeed bear many hallmarks of a primitive, virtuous Golden Age. The soil of Libya is free of the metals that, as sources of wealth, are denounced by most ancient moralists as the bane of modern society, and whose mining entails the earth's violation: *in nullas vitiatur* [i.e. *Libyre] opes; non aere neque auro/ excoquitur, nullo glaebarum crimine pura/ et penitus terra est* (9.424-426). The vice of extravagance is unknown there, since the only potential luxury good, the native citrus tree, is used only for shade: *tantum Maurusia gentii/ robora divitiae, quarum non noverat usum,/ sed citri contenta comis vivebat et umbra* (9.426-428). Such antique simplicity is especially exemplified in the temple of Ammon at Siwa, whose lack of adornment is favourably contrasted with modern Roman luxury: *non illic Libycae posuerunt ditia gentes/ templa, nec Eois splendent donaria*.

\(^3\) For the utopian features of Lucan's Libyan ethnography, see Thomas (1982, pp. 109-112).
Among the tourist attractions of Alexandria, by contrast, are its temples full of gold
(10.18).

At first sight, then, Libya may appear an ideal refuge from Caesar and the civil
war, on both the military and the moral planes. Nevertheless, the region's isolation from
outside forces comes at a considerable cost. The same features that shield Libya from
invaders, the desert and the Syrtes, also pose considerable obstacles for those seeking
refuge there, as Cato and his soldiers discover to their cost. In essence, Libya has only
succeeded in escaping the world's evils by simultaneously excluding everything good or
desirable, such as a temperate climate or the care of a benevolent providence. Lucan's
observation on the baneful Syrtes, that *sic male deseruit nullosque exigit in usus/ hanc
partem natura sui* (9.310-311), is thus extended to the continent as a whole a hundred
lines later: *temperies vitalis abest, et nulla sub illa/ cura Iovis terra est; natura deside
torpet/ orbis et inmotis annum non sentit harenis* (9.435-437).

What is more, Libya not merely suffers passively from an absence of the means of
life but is in fact an active breeding ground for the worst kind of plague, the venomous
snakes whose origins, classification, and terrifying effects occupy a large portion of Book
Nine (9.619-937). Surrounded by deadly serpents and achingly far from home, Cato's
men give voice to a desperate plea that is key to the evaluation of the theme of escapism
in Lucan (9.848-880). Earlier in Book Nine, Cato's troops, like Caesar's in Book Five,

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4 Hinkle points out (pp. 204-206) that Lucan's emphasis on the oracle's poverty is in stark contrast to other
literary accounts of the shrine of Ammon.
rose up in mutiny to demand an end to their participation in civil war in the wake of Pompey's death (9.230-233): *patrios permitte penates/ desertamque domum dulcesque revisere natos./ nam quis erit finis, si nec Pharsalia pugnae,/ nec Pompeius erit?*

Because of their current ordeal, however, these soldiers have been reduced to demanding not release from civil war but a return to it. Having fled from Pharsalus, they now beg to have Thessaly back again, with an emphatic anaphora of *reddite* at the start of their plaint: *reddite, di...miseris quae fugimus arma,/ reddite Thessaliam* (9.848-849). As for their deadly adversary Caesar, whom they have also been fleeing, they close their speech with a prayer for him to join them in their inhospitable environs: *solacia fati/ haec petimus: veniant hostes, Caesarque sequatur,/ qua fugimus* (9.878-880). Their previous escapism is decisively rejected through the phrase *quae fugimus* (9.848) in the first line, which is then taken up at the end with the almost identical *qua fugimus* (9.880).

According to the soldiers, the desert's isolation from civil war is merely a function of its broader, divinely appointed isolation from human civilization (in the form of agriculture) and indeed from all human contact, as the abode solely of monsters (9.855-862).

Although the men stress the remoteness of their current location (9.871-878), characterizing it as a kind of antipodes just as Pompey does Parthia in Book Eight, such distance from the *orbis Romanus* is a source of traumatized horror for them, not of reassurance as it is for Pompey.

Among Lucan's many narratives of the failure of refuge in the face of civil war, Libya is consequently the exception that proves the rule: it shows that only a land set aside by Nature as fundamentally inimical to the human race (and indeed to virtually all flora and fauna) can hope to remain untouched by the global cataclysm. Escape from
civil war is only possible for those prepared to venture into terrain so abominable that
civil war, paradoxically, will in turn become a welcome refuge to escape to.

The picture is gloomier still, however, for in fact Libya is not entirely immune to
the ripples of global events. Lucan compromises Africa's isolation at the very start of his
ethnographic account of it, when he establishes its general position in the world: tertia
pars rerum Libye, si credere famae/ cuncta velis; at, si ventos caelumque sequaris,/ pars
erit Europae (9.411-413). In other words, only unreliable fama assigns Africa the role of
a separate continent, whereas scientific consideration of its situation, as Lucan goes on to
demonstrate (9.413-420), argues instead for a close connection between Africa and
Europe, that is, between Africa and the continent of civil war. Furthermore, in the
astronomical excursus at 9.531-537, Lucan undermines his picture of the alterity of the
Libyan sky when he moves from the latitude of the oracle of Ammon, which (according
to Lucan) lies at the Tropic of Cancer, to the much more exotic perspective of those
dwelling south of the equator, who have a radically different experience of the
constellations from our own (e.g. for them the Bears set, and the Zodiac does not move
obliquely). The astronomy of this passage may be somewhat confused (see Housman,
pp. 329-333), but Lucan's basic point seems clear: that Libya is not so very far removed
from "our" world, at least by comparison with the genuinely remote region south of the
torrid zone.

Libya's lack of true isolation is apparent even from the language of the soldiers'
complaint, in spite of their emphasis on the extreme seclusion of the land through which
they travel. For one thing, they speak of bringing the war with them even into this distant
wasteland, knocking violently (ferit) on the very gates of the world just as Caesar did on
Amyclas' humble door: *per secreta tui bellum civile recessus*/* vadit, et arcani miles tibi conscius orbis*/* clastra ferit mundi* (9.863-865). The army's impact on its environment actually extends beyond the line of its march, since a violent sandstorm is described as snatching up the soldiers' weapons and armour and depositing them far away among unknown peoples who will revere them as prodigies from heaven: *illud in extrema forsan longeque remota*/* prodigium tellure fuit, delapsaque caelo*/* arma timent gentes hominumque erepta lacertis*/* a superis demissa putant* (9.474-477). It is also not simply the case that the legionaries have imported the civil war to Libya, since many of the natural features they encounter there reveal a grim affinity with the conflict. The soldiers make this point explicit with respect to the snakes, declaring that they have not so much escaped the civil war as exchanged its familiar form for another, more terrible manifestation: *pro Caesare pugnant*/* dipsades et peragunt civilia bella cerastae* (9.850-851). In this apparently hyperbolic assertion, the troops are not far wrong. The gruesome havoc wrought by the snake venom on their individual bodies is no more grotesque than the general dissolution of the Roman body politic through civil war: the image of the state as a suffering and diseased human frame is found, for instance, in the account of the Sullan terror in Book Two (2.140-143), while the unwholesome blood and hideously deformed organs revealed by the extispicy of Arruns in Book One (1.614-629) likewise point to an inescapable and pathological kinship between organism and commonwealth. The first and the last (and thus the most emphatically placed) of the soldiers listed in Lucan's catalogue of snakebite victims are particularly illuminating examples of such corporeal-political συμπάθεια. The first, Aulus, who is bitten by a *dipsas*, is so consumed with unquenchable thirst that he ends up opening his own veins to drink his
own blood (9.737-760): this recalls Lucan's analysis of the root causes of civil war in
Book One, where insatiable desire (for wealth and power) ends in the suicide of the
Republic. The motif of self-destruction then recurs in the case of Murrus, the final
soldier listed (9.828-833): after piercing a basilisk with his spear, he is horrified to
discover the venom traveling back along the spear and onto his hand, which he must
promptly cut off (along with the rest of his arm) to save himself. The above-mentioned
sandstorm is also significant in that it exactly reproduces the perils and phenomena of a
storm at sea, and the soldiers find themselves even more exposed to the wind's rage by
land than they would have been offshore: *illic secura iuventus/ ventorum nullasque
timens tellure procellas/ aequoreos est passa metus. nam litore sicco,/ quam pelago,
Syrtis violentius excipit Austrum,/ et terrae magis ille nocens* (9.445-449). It should be
recalled here that, as discussed in connection with the Amyclas episode, storms
(contrasted with safe harbour) are an image of the chaos of civil war in both Horace and
Lucan, while Caesar's violent onrush is frequently tied by Lucan to the element of the
winds; the violation of illusory *securitas* (9.445) suffered by Cato's soldiers is on a par
with the intrusion of both Caesar and the storm into Amyclas' idyllic existence in Book

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5 Lucan characterizes the civil war as a gory suicide by the Roman people in the very first lines of his
poem, *populum...potentem/ in sua victriici reversum viscera dextra* (1.2-3). On the theme of violent self-
consumption, Leigh observes that "Aulus wages civil war with himself, recalling the Bellona of Calpurnius
Siculus and the Erysichthon of Ovid" (1997, p. 269). The irrational self-destructiveness of extreme thirst is
also a motif of the Ilerda episode (4.368-372). Leigh notes the significance, for a reading of Lucan's
dipsas, of the use of insatiable thirst as an image for the vice of avarice, *cupiditas*, among both Hellenistic
philosophers and moralizing Roman authors (1997, pp. 270-271).

6 The amputation of, if not one's own arms, at least the arms of one's own fellow citizens, in order to save
oneself, is an especially grisly feature of the Massilian sea battle (3.661-669). According to Morford
(1967b, p. 128), the behaviour of Murrus in cutting off his own hand and watching it die on the ground is
meant to suggest the heroic self-sacrifice of Mucius Scaevola. It is, however, far more expressive of the
self-destructiveness of civil war to use one hand to cut off the other with one's own sword than to place
one's hand in a fire supplied by the enemy and passively to allow it to burn.

7 As Hinkle shows (p. 182), the more conventional sea-storm that precedes the march through the desert
and frustrates the attempted navigation of the Syrtes (at 9.319-344) is also fraught with civil-war imagery:
"Nature's reaction to these men involved in civil war is to create one of her own."
Five. The Syrtes too, with their ancient struggle between land, fire, and water, constitute an obvious symbol of civil strife, as examined in Chapter Six. Remotest Africa is accordingly beset by the same elemental expressions of civil war as the rest of the world.

If the physical geography of Libya is contaminated by the civil war both through Cato's incursion and (at least symbolically) through its natural phenomena, its people are also not so hermetically sealed from outside influences as they might at first appear. The soldiers characterize the divinity presiding over the snake-infested desert as *commercia nostra perosus* (9.860), but perfect freedom from *commercia* is unattainable in Lucan's disastrously interconnected cosmos; this is why Lentulus is so wrong in his attribution of Golden-Age autarky to Egypt. Consider the wording of Lucan's praise for Moorish simplicity (quoted above): *tantum Maurusia genti/ robora divitiae, quarum non noverat usum,/ sed citri contenta comis vivebat et umbra* (9.426-428). With the imperfect *vivebat* and the pluperfect *noverat*, Lucan locates this happy state of affairs very firmly in the past. As the following lines make clear, such utopian isolation has been breached by Lucan's own day (a state of present completion is indicated by the perfect verbs *venere* and *petîmus*); the trees of Africa are no less vulnerable to Roman axes in the service of voracious *luxus* than was the sacred grove at Massilia, which fell victim to Caesar's equally ravenous ambition: *in nemus ignotum nostrae venere secures,/ extremoque epulas mensasque petîmus ab orbe* (9.429-430). A similar pessimism can be detected in the final lines of Lucan's description of the temple of Ammon: *pauper adhuc deus est nullis violata per aevum/ divitiis delubra tenens, morumque priorum/ numen Romano templum defendit ab auro* (9.519-521). Although the god still (*adhuc*) maintains the old-fashioned simplicity of his shrine, the verb *defendit* suggests the need for continual struggle and
vigilance against the onslaught of Roman luxury. The oracle's precarious situation is further underscored with the phrase *nullis violata per aevum* (9.519), since it closely recalls Lucan's description of the sacred grove in Book Three, *longo numquam violatus ab aevo* (3.399); is Lucan hinting that the oracle will, in the long run, no more be able to resist external pressures than the Massilian grove or the Moorish citrus-trees? Finally, even the abjectly impoverished Nasamones, a *gens dura* who scrape a living from Libya's barren soil, maintain some kind of quasi-commercial contact with the outside world (*commercia*) and acquire wealth of sorts (*opes*), through shipwrecks on the Syrtes: *hoc tam segne solum raras tamen exerit herbas,/ quas Nasamon, gens dura, legit, qui proxima ponto/ nudus rura tenet; quem mundi barbarâ damnis/ Syrtis alit. nam litoreis populator harenis/ inminet et nulla portus tangente carina/ novit *opes*; sic cum toto *commercia* mundo/ naufragiis Nasamones habent* (9.438-444). Just as the armour of Cato's soldiers is carried off by the wind to impossibly distant regions, so the dubious fruits of economic globalization arrive even among the poorest inhabitants of the most (literally) god-forsaken land.  

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8 Thomas sees only Golden-Age idealization in Lucan's account of the Nasamones (1982, p. 112): "behind the rhetorical language, the thought is positive; this too was the way of life of Virgil's primitive Italians, before the arrival of the Trojans brought the arts of civilization: *semperque recentis comportare iuvat praedas et vivere rapto* (Aen. 9.612-613). We are in fact here dealing with a thorough *topos* concerning primitive peoples. In the ethnographical tradition there is no stigma attached to such activity; rather it is considered a sign of moral superiority, a safeguard against the threat of *luxuria*. As early as Caesar this connection was made specific: *latrocinia nullam habent infamiam quae extra fines cuiusque civitatis fiunt, atque ea iuventutis ac *desidae minuendae causa* fieri praedicant* (Caes. B.G. 6.23.6).” It is true that the passages of Caesar and Virgil cited by Thomas associate a life of raiding with primitive and to some extent virtuous simplicity, although it is presumably far less noble to prey on helpless, stranded sailors than to engage in warlike raids on neighbouring warlike tribes. Nevertheless, Lucan is not simply parroting an ethnographic *topos* here but adapting it for his own ends. His Nasamones are emphatically said to enjoy, by virtue of their plundering of shipwrecks, two key possessions that are not attributed either to Virgil's early Italians or to Caesar's Germans (at least not in the above-quoted passages): wealth, *opes*, and contact with the outside world, *commercia*. The mention of *opes* in particular should ring alarm bells for anyone attempting an ethical evaluation of the Nasamones, since wealth (particularly seaborne wealth) is always presented by ethnographers as the corruptor of primitive or virtuous peoples (as discussed in Chapter Three). Lucan thus makes frequent use of the term *opes* in a negative, moralizing sense, as in his dissection of the root causes of the civil war at the start of the poem (*opes nímiás mundo fortuna subacto/ intulit,*)
plunder the hapless victims of shipwrecks, which bodes ill for the survivors of the wreck of the Roman ship of state who now (as Aeneas did) seek refuge in Libya; Lucan indeed likens the catastrophe of civil war precisely to a *naufragium* off the Libyan coast at 1.498-504, while, in his speech at Syhedra, Pompey refers to his dire situation after Pharsalus as a *naufragium* in need of succour (8.313).

Libya therefore offers a kind of test case for the viability of escape to such ostensibly remote realms as Egypt or Parthia: after all, if isolation from the civil war is possible anywhere, it will certainly be so in this *terra incognita* at the extremity of the inhabited world. The results of the test are highly discouraging, however, in two distinct ways. First of all, Libya's remoteness and barrenness are such as to prohibit all the means of human survival, and an unusable sanctuary is no sanctuary at all. The more hospitable the country, on the other hand, like Egypt's green and pleasant land, the more exposed it will be to Rome's crisis. Secondly, even Libya bears the marks of entanglement with the broader ὀἰκουμένη through which civil strife is raging. In short, Libya can escape the war only insofar as it constitutes hell on earth, and in any case it does not fully escape the war.

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1.160-161), in his belittlement of Metellus' motives for barring Caesar from the treasury of Saturn (*pars vilissima rerum, certamen movistis, opes*, 3.120-121), in his analysis of Curio's moral downfall (*ambitus et luxus et opum metuenda facultas/ transverso mentem dubiam torrente tulerunt*, 4.817-818), and in Caesar's Mephistophelic offer of enrichment to the happy pauper Amyclas (*ne cessa praebere deo tua fata volenti/ angustos opibus subitis inpleare penates*, 5.536-537). Lucan's goal is therefore to highlight not merely the Nasamones' simplicity of lifestyle but also the universal reach of the plague of imported *opes*, which can reach the inhabitants of even the most inhospitable coast and in the total absence of conventional facilities for maritime trade, *nulla portus tangente carina* (9.442). Indeed, the Nasamones' contact with seaborne wealth can be regarded as not only an effect but also a cause of their predatory activities, since, according to Strabo, the formerly virtuous Scythians adopted such practices as a consequence of their exposure to the corruptions of marine commerce: καὶ γὰρ ἀλαττης ἀναμένωι χείρως γεγόνασι, ἱστεύοντες καὶ ξενοκτονοῦντες (7.3.7).
Cato

With its absence of rivers, its sterility, and the poverty and austerity of its inhabitants, Libya functions in Book Nine as a kind of foil to the luxurious, fertile, and Nile-watered Egypt of Books Eight and Ten, although it shares with Egypt a fundamental inability to ward off either the civil war or the latter's underlying moral causes. In a similar way, Cato provides a foil for each of the main characters of the two bracketing books, Pompey and Caesar. In regard to the theme of escapism, the aim of Lucan's description of Libya is to illustrate the effective impossibility of escape, but Cato serves a different purpose: to show not that escape is in practice unattainable, but that the virtuous will have no desire for it.

Cato begins Book Nine, just as Pompey does Book Eight, in apparently headlong flight (as denoted by fugientia) from Caesar (9.30-35): quas [sc. partes libertatis] ne per litora fusas/ colligeret rapido victoria Caesaris actu,/ Corcyrae secreta petit ac mille carinis/ abstulit Emathiae secum fragmenta ruinae./ quis ratibus tantis fugientia crederet ire/ agmina? To Corcyrae secreta petit can be compared the phrase Haemoniae deserta petens (8.2, in the same metrical sedes), which describes Pompey's panicked goal at the beginning of Book Eight. Nevertheless, Cato immediately shows a more active, resolute bent when he sacks the city of Phycus for daring to close its harbour to his ships (9.39-41). Moreover, when his fleet arrives on the shore of Libya at Cape Paliurus and is brought the news of Pompey's death, Cato takes a decisive stand against escapism in his rebuke (9.256-283) of the mutinous soldiers who believe that, with Pompey gone, there is

9 Wick (in her note on 9.32) does not cite 8.2, but she points to the even closer parallel of silvarum secreta petit at 2.602 (in the same metrical sedes), which occurs in a simile comparing Pompey's retreat from Capua to that of a bull in flight from a temporarily victorious rival. This is therefore a distinctively Pompeian line-beginning in Lucan, one that serves, temporarily, to assimilate Cato into Pompey's characteristic escapism.
no longer any reason to continue the fight, and who long to leave the civil war behind and return to their homes and families. Cato responds by sharply reminding his men of the cause of *libertas*, for which they may now strive more wholeheartedly than when they fought under the banner of Pompey, a potential *dominus*. Appealing to their masculine self-esteem, he states that this is a *causa pericli/digna viris* (9.262-263), and he concludes by associating the concept of escape, *fuga*, with both cowardice and criminality: *ignavum scelus est tantum fuga* (9.283). Just as Caesar did when faced with the mutiny of his own troops in Book Five, Cato thereby succeeds (9.283-293) in recalling his men to a sense of their mission and checking their impulse for flight, ensuring the continuation of civil war.

There is also no whiff, in Cato's resolve to lead his army into the remote wilderness of the Libyan interior, of the escapism that marred Pompey's desperate quest for *Haemoniae deserta* at the beginning of Book Eight. For one thing, as he makes clear in his announcement of this plan to his soldiers, Cato has come to his decision in full awareness of the dreadful perils and hardships that will beset the journey, and that (as discussed above) make a mockery of the idea of sanctuary: *vadimus in campos steriles exustaque mundi,/ qua nimius Titan et rarae in fontibus undae,/ siccaque letiferis squalent serpentibus arva* (9.382-385). In addition, Cato does not present the projected journey as a flight, in the way that his men will subsequently do in their complaint quoted above; for Cato, the path through the desert does not lead away from Caesar or the civil war but towards (*ad*) the fulfilment of patriotic duty, that is, towards the continued

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10 Even the soldiers, however, acknowledge that there is no escape from Caesar, and indeed their demand for escape from civil war is premised on this very fact: *fortuna cuncta tenetur/ Caesaris; Emathium sparsit victoria ferrum;/ clausa fides miseris, et toto solus in orbe est,/ qui velit ac possit victis praestare salutem* (9.244-247).
prosecution of civil war on behalf of the Republic: *durum iter ad leges patriaeque ruentis amorem* (9.385). This is in fact a march only to be attempted by those who have utterly renounced the urge to escape, *evadere: per medium Libyen veniant atque invia temptent, si quibus in nullo positum est evadere voto, si quibus ire sat est* (9.386-388).

Lastly, just as, in his exchange with Brutus in Book Two, he angrily refused to stand back in serene detachment while the universe crashed around him, Cato now shows himself free of any ignoble desire, of the sort displayed by Appius Claudius in Book Five, to exempt himself from communal privation and suffering. At the start of the march across the desert, he promises his soldiers that he will be the first to endure the hardships of fatigue, heat, and thirst and the menace of snake attacks (9.394-402). This promise is then realized when a tiny rivulet of water is found in the desert and proffered to Cato by a dutiful soldier, cupped in a helmet: Cato angrily dashes the helmet to the ground, protesting against the indignity of being singled out for special treatment (9.500-510).\(^{11}\)

If Cato is immune to any longing for escape on the physical plane, he is also untouched by the mental escapism that characterizes both Pompey and Caesar in the bracketing books Eight and Ten, showing no desire to retreat from grim present realities into the (supposedly) purer and loftier realm of intellectual inquiry. Such incuriosity is most obviously manifested in Cato’s refusal to consult the oracle of Ammon, either on the future course of the war or on any other topic (9.544-586). According to Cato, the only knowledge worth possessing is the nature of virtue, and there is no need to look to oracles for enlightenment on this point, since sufficient moral awareness is implanted in every

\(^{11}\) Lucan provides a catalogue of Cato’s self-deprivations on the march at 9.587-593; his insistence on drinking only after his men is also referred to at 9.617-618.
mind at birth. Cato thereby shows himself stronger than Appius Claudius (in Book Five) or Sextus Pompey (in Book Six), who each seek relief from the uncertainty of civil war through oracular consultation and are consequently condemned by Lucan as self-indulgent cowards (at 5.65-70 and 6.419-424); he is also contrasted with Alexander the Great, whose famous visit to Ammon provides the historical model for this scene.\textsuperscript{12}

Although this is the only explicit instance of an eschewal of the yearning for knowledge by Cato, Lucan's entire account of the latter's Libyan experiences is full of subtler hints to the same effect. Book Nine teems with didactic or quasi-didactic episodes depicting wonders of science and geography, more so than any other book of the poem.\textsuperscript{13} Two such marvels bracket the Cato narrative: the celestial realm to which Pompey's spirit ascends at the start of the book (9.1-14) and the ancient site of Troy, visited by Caesar near the end (9.961-999). In between these episodes of terrestrial and extraterrestrial tourism, the reader is treated to: a brief mythical etiology for the name of Cape Paliurus/Palinurus (9.42-44); a scientific discussion of the Syrtes (9.303-318); a mythological digression providing an etiology for the names of Lake Triton and the river Lethon and an account of the garden of the Hesperides (9.348-367); a long digression on Libya's situation, physical geography, and ethnography (9.411-444); a discussion of the causes and effects of Libyan sandstorms (9.445-493); an account of the oracle of Ammon (9.511-527); an astronomical account of the peculiarities of the sky seen from Africa, both at the latitude of the oracle and further south (9.528-543); a very long mythical

\textsuperscript{12} See Narducci (pp. 407-411) for Lucan's representation of Cato as an "anti-Alexander" in Book Nine.
\textsuperscript{13} Morford thus speaks of the book's "five major digressions" (1967b, p. 123) and of Lucan's effort "to combine the techniques of epic narrative and didactic digression" (1967b, p. 126) in the snake episode. There is, however, only one actual didactic poet who is known to have exercised a substantial influence on Book Nine, namely Nicander, a crucial source for Lucan's catalogue of snakes and snakebites, as discussed by Raschle (see especially pp. 60-64).
etiology for the snakes of Africa (9.619-699); a catalogue of snakes (9.700-733); a
detailed catalogue of the gruesome effects of the various snakebites (9.734-838); and an
ethnographic account of the mysterious tribe of Psylli, who have achieved mastery over
snake venom (9.891-937). Cato, however, betrays no curiosity at all about any of these
various points of interest, and Lucan is left to inquire into them in his own authorial
persona. Cato's indifference to the origin of the names of Cape Palinurus or Lake
Triton in particular serves to contrast him with Caesar's lieutenant Curio, for when the
latter comes to Africa in Book Four, he is prompted by touristic curiosity to ask a local
inhabitant why a complex of rocks and cliffs bears the name of Antaeus (4.589-592),
receiving a lengthy account of the area's mythical and historical associations in response
(4.592-660).

The avenues of inquiry attempted by Pompey in Book Eight and Caesar in Book
Ten likewise invite comparison with the Libyan journey of Book Nine. One of the most
notable features of the Libyan desert is its uncanny resemblance to its elemental opposite,

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14 It is true that the catalogue of snakebites is bracketed by statements of Cato's observation of the bizarre
deaths of his men, and Leigh accordingly discusses this episode in terms of Cato's role as an
tristia fata suorum/ insolitasque videns parvo cum volnere mortes* (9.734-736); and *omnibus unus adest
fatis; quocumque vocatus/ advolat atque ingens meritum maiusque salute/ contulit, in letum vires;
puduitque gementem/ illo teste mori. quod ius habuisse in ipsum/ ulla lues? casus alieno in pectore
vincit* / *spectatorque docet magnos nil posse dolores* (9.884-889). Nevertheless, there is no indication
in either of the above-quoted passages that Cato is motivated by curiosity to seek out exotic sights (nor does
Leigh suggest this). *Videns* (9.736) is passive in sense: Cato cannot help but be subjected to the perception
of the plight of his fellow marchers, and this perception is merely one more trial for him to endure. The
second passage is more suggestive of an active decision to watch (particularly with *spectator*), but Cato
takes this action not out of a morbid spirit of inquiry but as a moral leader to his troops, whom he seeks to
inspire through his witness (*illo teste*, which echoes Cato's own promise at 9.391): Cato does not watch to
learn the strange effects of venom but rather to teach (*docet*) the virtue of endurance in suffering. As Leigh
observes, it is not Cato but the narrator who finds the symptoms of snakebite "not without scientific
interest" and "breaks into the gleeful fascination of the pseudo-scientist" (1997, p. 276). Another passage
that does seem to associate Cato with snake science is 9.612-616, when he displays a measure of
ophiological lore in persuading his men to drink from a snake-infested pool on the grounds that snake
venom is dangerous only if injected by fangs into the bloodstream; this is not an instance of scientific
curiosity, however, for the possession of knowledge and the desire for knowledge are two very different
things.
the sea (as with the sandstorm), and, just as on the sea, Cato's troops are forced to rely on the stars to light their way in the absence of reliable landmarks: *iamque iter omne latet, nec sunt discrimina terrae:/ sideribus novere viam* (9.494-495). Lucan returns to this theme later in the book as he describes the soldiers' desperate plight in the land of the snakes: *nec, quae mensura viarum/ quisve modus, norunt caelo duce* (9.846-847). As Wick points out in her note ad loc., *quae mensura* in this context recalls the wording of Pompey's astronomical inquiry in Book Eight, when he asks the helmsman *quae sit mensura secandi/ aequoris in caelo* (8.168-169). Nevertheless, Cato, unlike Pompey, refrains from an investigation of the techniques of celestial navigation, even though curiosity on that point ought to have been further stimulated by the unfamiliarity of the night sky in Africa: *nec sidera tota/ ostendit Libycae finitor circulus orae/ multaque devexo terrarum margine celat* (9.495-497). As for Caesar's inquiry into the science and geography of the Nile, it was observed in the previous chapter that Acoreus' treatment of the inundation bears a certain (at least superficial) resemblance to the account of the Syrtes in Book Nine. Once again, however, Cato remains aloof from the science of aquatic (or semi-aquatic) phenomena, with the result that Lucan himself must tackle the *quaestio* without any assistance or prompting from his characters. Furthermore, in addition to their specific questions on astronomy or potamology, Pompey and Caesar seem to share a passion for exotic geography and ethnography, as manifested by Pompey's account of Parthia's alien situation and *mores* at the council of Syhedra (8.290-305) and by the opening lines of Caesar's interrogation of Acoreus: *Phariae primordia gentis/ terrarumque situs volgique edissere mores/ et ritus formasque deum; quodcumque vetustis/ insculptum est adytis profer, noscique volentes/ prode deos* (10.177-181). Here
too, although "[t]he only complete ethnographical description in the Pharsalia is that of Libya in the ninth book" (Thomas, 1982, p. 108), Cato himself shows no interest in the strange land through which he voyages, not even when, as underscored by his soldiers' complaint, he has brought the army far beyond the normal ken of humankind.¹⁵

Cato's general lack of enthusiasm for specifically scientific questions does appear to be a matter of historical fact. According to Plutarch, it was the ethical and political doctrines of Stoicism with which he primarily concerned himself (Cato Minor 4.1). Nevertheless, he is unlikely to have been completely blind to the more scientific and cosmological elements of his chosen philosophical school. In Epistulae Morales 71.12-16, Seneca can thus imagine Cato consoling himself for the fall of the Republic in exactly the same manner that he represents the departed soul of Cremutius Cordus, the ferociously partisan historian of the civil wars who suffered martyrdom for his Republican sympathies during the reign of Tiberius, doing at the end of the Consolatio ad Marciam: through the contemplation of the cyclical birth, death, and rebirth of the cosmos as a whole, as well as through the consideration of such natural phenomena as earthquakes and floods, by which a mere change in government, mutatio rei publicae (E.M. 71.12), is made to seem trivial and inconsequential.¹⁶ In Lucan's narrative, on the other hand, Cato will have none of this. As far as he is concerned, the civil war is so far

¹⁵ Cato's indifference to Libya is particularly striking in the light of its close affinity to him as a land of rugged austerity, that is, as a geographical embodiment of Cato's own brand of virtus; see Thomas (1982, pp. 108-123) for the equation in Book Nine of Cato's duritia with Libya's.

¹⁶ Compare Ad Marciam 26.5-7. Cato is also generally represented as consoling himself on the evening of his suicide through, if not physical, then at least metaphysical speculation, with a reading of Plato's Phaedo, on the immortality of the soul (Plutarch, Cato Minor 68.2-3, and see also Seneca, De Providentia 2.11 and Epistulae Morales 24.6 and 71.11). Lucan's Cato, however, seems completely indifferent to the question of the soul's posthumous survival: as is apparent both during his epitaph for Pompey and in his pronouncement of the futility of oracles, death itself, not life after death, is the only reality that matters to Cato (see 9.211 and 9.582-584). In short, this Cato is not concerned to assure himself of a posthumous refuge from his current travails.
from being dwarfed by the destined collapse of the universe that it in fact constitutes a fully cosmic catastrophe in its own right. This is clear from his passionate speech to Brutus in Book Two urging participation in Rome's crisis (2.289-292): *sidera quis mundumque velit spectare cadentem/ expers ipse metus? quis, cum ruat arduus aether,/ terra labet mixto coeuntis pondere mundi,/ compressas tenuisse manus?* Cato can find no consolation in the natural universe for the death of his beloved Republic because the Republic is his entire universe, and he remains throughout the poem monomaniacally intent on defending its last remnants to the bitter end. It is in order to showcase such unswerving devotion that Lucan has, in Book Nine, planted Cato in the midst of a whole array of natural phenomena that cry out for scientific contemplation and investigation, but that are powerless to distract Cato even for an instant from the single-minded performance of his duties, in contrast with the behaviour of the other two protagonists of the poem, Pompey and Caesar, in the bracketing books Eight and Ten.  

As was explored in Chapter Five, Seneca argues often and forcefully for the spiritual value of natural science; for Seneca, cosmic contemplation is inseparable from virtue. A very different picture emerges from Lucan, however. When Lucan's characters engage in scientific inquiry, it is not virtue but vice that lurks in the background. In Pompey's case, his astronomical questioning of his helmsman betrays his cowardly anxieties and fears for the future; this is the same solicitude that was revealed by the oracular inquiries of Appius Claudius and Sextus Pompey. With respect to Caesar, conversely, scientific enthusiasm masks not cowardice but tyrannical hubris, the appetite

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17 Of course, as argued above, the contemplation of at least some of Libya's natural phenomena, namely the Syrtæs, the sandstorm, and the snakes, would offer no real respite from the civil war, since they are contaminated by the war's elemental and biological imagery. The point is, however, that Cato does not even attempt such a mental escape.
to devour nature. Both Pompey and Caesar, in other words, are motivated in their inquiries by the same characteristic vices that have dominated them throughout the poem. In fact, the only major character of the poem who is undeniably virtuous, namely Cato, is also the only major character who abstains altogether from any form of inquiry, whether oracular, ethnographic, or scientific. In Lucan's narrative, Cato is not shown receiving any spiritual support from the awareness of the natural universe attributed to him by Seneca in *Epistula* 71; as he insists in response to the followers urging him to consult the oracle, the basic imperatives of virtuous conduct (listed at 9.566-571), which are enjoined upon us at birth (9.575-576), are the only knowledge that anyone requires, the ethics rather than the physics of the Stoic system.\(^{18}\) The parade of natural marvels that progresses before Cato's eyes in Book Nine therefore functions just like the many luxuries on display for Caesar at Cleopatra's banquet in Book Ten, as a temptation to stray from the path of self-sufficient virtus in pursuit of exotica. Caesar fails abysmally to withstand this temptation, not only participating with gusto in the banquet itself, where he consumes (among other delicacies) the fauna of the Nile, but also capping his corporeal indulgence in food and drink with an attempt to stake an intellectual claim on the secret of the Nile's miraculous flood and hidden source. In the process, he (at least

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\(^{18}\) A degree of cosmic consciousness can perhaps be inferred when, among his reasons for refusing the oracular consultation, Cato cites the Stoic doctrine of the universal, indwelling presence of God, who is not limited to remote shrines in the desert (9.578-579): *est...dei sedes, nisi terra et pontus et aer/ et caelum et virtus?* This is, however, the only occasion when Cato acknowledges the earth, sea, atmosphere, or heavens, except for the apocalyptic vision in his speech to Brutus in Book Two, by which he does not reverence the cosmic elements but rather assimilates them into the sphere of human tribulations. Otherwise, Cato's focus is exclusively on virtus, the emphatic final member of his list of dei sedes. When he employs scientific learning at 9.612-616 to reassure his soldiers about drinking from a pool filled with snakes (see n. 14 above), he is not engaged in philosophically valuable science of the sort praised by Seneca: in *Epistulæ Morales* 90, the latter very sharply distinguishes sapientia, which promotes the understanding of self, cosmos, and God, *totius naturae notitiam* (*E.M.* 90.28), and by which *mundus ipse reseratur* (*E.M.* 90.28), from the utilitarian, everyday science and technology concerned with supplying the bodily need for food, shelter, etc. Cato's exploitation of his knowledge of snake venom to provide a drinking supply for his men would certainly fall within the latter category; he is thereby revealed as a good general, not as someone whose own virtus is informed by his study of nature.
temporarily) forgets all about Cato and the gathering storm in Africa, *partes...fugatas/passus in extremis Libyae coalescere regnis* (10.78-79). Cato, however, has by no means forgotten Caesar. He no more yields to the intellectual appetite for knowledge among Libya's wonders than he does to the physical appetite of thirst under the scorching Libyan sun, and the demonstration of his virtue is indeed exactly complementary to that of Caesar's vice: where Caesar makes his scientific consultation of Acoreus immediately after eating and drinking his fill, Cato's refusal to consult the oracle of Ammon follows immediately upon his refusal of the offer of water in the desert.\(^{19}\) Instead of asking *why* the Syrtes are the way they are, or *why* Libya so abounds in snakes, Cato simply does his level best to force his way through all the obstacles, including Syrtes and snakes, that stand in the way of his final, doomed battle for Rome.

**The Reason Why**

Although Cato, like Tennyson's Light Brigade, displays a resolute indifference to the question, it remains for me to pose it (if only briefly): having investigated how Lucan develops his critique of escapism so artfully over the final three books of the poem, I must now consider why he has elected to do so. For an answer, it is necessary to pass beyond the claustrophobic confines of Lucan's poem to the broader world within and for which it was composed.

Under the impetus of such events as the conquest of Britain and the expansion of trade with India,\(^ {20}\) the mid-first-century AD witnessed a tremendous broadening of intellectual horizons among Roman writers, particularly those of the equestrian class.

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\(^{19}\) See Leigh (2000) for Cato's journey through the desert as a victory over actual and allegorical temptation (although Leigh does not consider the temptation of curiosity).

\(^{20}\) Pomponius Mela celebrates the expansion of geographical knowledge that will shortly result from Claudius' conquest of Britain at 3.41, while Pliny the Elder describes the improvements in navigation by which *lucro...India admota est* at 6.101.
from which Lucan's family of the Annaei derived. Geographers like Pomponius Mela
and naturalists like Pliny the Elder sought to provide a comprehensive account of the
universe (both natural and human) in Latin prose. In the same period, Lucan's uncle
Seneca proclaimed the interconnectedness of a cosmos bound together by a single divine
intelligence and of a globe whose various human races were now enjoying an
unprecedented degree of mutual communication; both Seneca and Pliny celebrated the
new economic and cultural globalization as a largely positive phenomenon (although they
condemned the trade in luxuries). 21 Most of the known world was also united politically
under Nero, as Seneca stresses in his essay De Clementia, once again on a positive note:
Nero bears responsibility for the entire genus humanum (1.1.2-4); when he speaks, all
gentes listen, just as they would all tremble if he were to give way to anger (1.8.4); the
laudable example of his mansuetudo is sure to spread per omne imperii corpus, from
Romans (cives) through allies (socii) and finally on to the world as a whole, totus orbis
(2.2.1). There was no nation untouched by Nero's rule, including and especially Egypt,
which Nero was planning to visit at the time of Lucan's writing of the later books of his
poem; 22 the natural world too was the object of Nero's ambitions in the form of such
grandiose engineering projects as a planned canal across the Isthmus of Corinth, while
one of the surviving fragments of Nero's poetry concerns the phenomenon of an exotic

21 See Beagon for the views of maritime communication espoused by Pliny the Elder and other more or less
contemporary sources, including Seneca (pp. 180-194). Seneca's praise for the intercourse of nations can be found at e.g. De Tranquillitate Animi 4.4 and Naturales Quaestiones 5.18.14; although the chorus of his
Medea is less optimistic about the morality of seafaring, at 301-379 and 595-669, at least the first of these
passages "ends on an optimistic note, the linking of nations and the future discovery of new lands" (Beagon, p. 185).
Seneca proclaims the organic unity of the cosmos at e.g. N.Q. 2.3.1-6.1.
22 See Suetonius, Nero 19 and Tacitus, Annales 15.36 for the proposed visit to Alexandria. For the
significance of this project, see Voisin (p. 522 and n. 45).
river, the Tigris. In fact, Nero's enthusiasms for Egypt and for natural (and river) science converged in the dispatch of an expedition to find the source of the Nile, an expedition to which Lucan alludes in Book Ten, and for which Seneca commends Nero at *Naturales Quaestiones* 6.8.3.

At the same time as the totalizing grasp both of Rome and of its Caesar was stretching out ever further, the lure of individualistic escapism began to be felt more strongly than ever before. Under the benevolent Augustus, Romans of all classes were increasingly free to pursue *otium*, thanks to the peace and prosperity that he safeguarded and to his effective monopolization of the burden of government. In the reign of a despot like Nero, on the other hand, a retiring life could be regarded not merely as feasible or desirable but as essential for survival, since all political involvement was fraught with peril. Suetonius thus says of Galba's governorship of Hispania Tarraconensis that *paullatim in desidiam segniitemque conversus est, ne quid materiae praebet Neroni, et ut dicere solet, quod nemo rationem otii sui reddere cogeretur* (*Galba* 9.3). Another avenue of escape lay in irresponsible hedonism, as exemplified by the career of Petronius, who, according to Tacitus, *proconsul...Bithyniae et mox consul vigentem se ac parem negotiis ostendit*, but who subsequently surrendered to *ignavia* and devoted himself to sensual pleasure as Nero's *arbiter elegantiae* (*Annales* 16.18), just as Lucan's Caesar seems to do at the start of Book Ten. Where Galba's quest for *otium* was motivated by cowardice (or prudence), and that of Petronius by voluptuousness, the

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23 For the canal, see Suetonius, *Nero* 19.2 and Cassius Dio 63.16; although Nero embarked on this project two years after Lucan's death, Lucan may well have been aware of Nero's general intentions. Nero's lines on the Tigris can be found in Courtney (fr. 1).
24 See André (1966, pp. 531-534) for the growing popularity of an *otium* divorced from political and social responsibilities in post-Augustan Rome.
25 See André (1966, pp. 383-527) for the development of the theory and practice of *otium* under Augustus.
26 This example is given by André (1966, p. 536).
satirist Persius, whom Lucan admired, arrived at the same fundamentally isolationist stance from a more ethical direction, preaching a life of detachment from the conventions and expectations of his corrupt society: the individual conscience is for Persius the only yardstick, *nec te quaesiveris extra* (1.7).27

The motif of escapism is also illustrated within Lucan's own family history: Lucan's father Annaeus Mela, at least in his early life, *se ad tranquillam quietamque vitam recepit*, in contrast to his uncle Gallio, who *honestus industria consecutus est* (Seneca, *Ad Helviam* 18.2).28 As for Lucan's other, more famous uncle, Seneca approached the problem on the basis of Stoic philosophy, according to which, if corruption and tyranny have made it impossible for the *sapiens* to be of any further use to the *res publica*, the only honourable response is a withdrawal from public life.29 As Tacitus relates (at *Annales* 14.52-56 and again at 15.45), this strategy was actually implemented by Seneca from AD 62 onwards, after the death of his ally Burrus and the ascendancy of Tigellinus prevented him from exerting any positive influence over Nero. Instead of fruitlessly striving for Nero's betterment, Seneca thereafter applied himself to the study of the two philosophical domains of ethics and physics, in the *Epistulae Morales* and *Naturales Quaestiones* respectively. This was not Seneca's first period of philosophically oriented retirement, for in his *Consolatio ad Helviam*, he welcomes the earlier, enforced *otium* of his banishment to Corsica by Claudius as an opportunity to

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27 For Lucan's admiration of Persius, see Suetonius' *Vita* of the latter. With regard to Persius 1.7, Harvey comments that an interpretation is contingent on the reading of *extra*: depending upon whether it is taken as a preposition or an adverb, the sense of the clause will be either "do not ask the opinion of anyone except yourself" or "do not seek self-knowledge from the outside world" (Harvey's translations). In both cases, we are dealing with an exhortation to secede from the wider community.

28 See also Seneca the Elder, *Controversiae* 2.pref.3.

29 See Griffin's chapter on "The Philosopher on Political Participation" (1976, pp. 315-366) for Seneca's various and nuanced treatments of this difficult question over the course of his career, as well as André (1962, pp. 27-81).
pursue the study of nature, especially the stars, and of the divine; in his paradoxical
felicity, he likens himself to a previous victim of a Caesar, the Republican Marcellus,
exiled to Lesbos after Pharsalus and delighting in the bonae artes now available to him.\textsuperscript{30}

It is therefore not without reason that the author of the Octavia tragedy portrays an older,
sadder, and wiser Seneca who, trapped at the court of a criminal lunatic, looks fondly
back upon the astronomical escapism of his Corsican exile (Octavia 377-390).

This fundamental polarity of imperial Rome, between an all-encompassing new
world order, on the one hand, and, on the other, a desperate longing to carve out some
secure, private niche for personal happiness, is what underlies Lucan's relentlessly
pessimistic treatment of the theme of escape. It is no coincidence that he depicts the
Roman civil war, the war that culminated in the global reign of Caesar's descendant Nero,
as a fully global phenomenon. In contrast to the relative optimism of Seneca or Pliny,
Lucan sees in the world's unification only the prospect for the wider spread of war, vice,
and, above all, tyranny: every corner of the earth and all the elements of the cosmos are
shown to be embroiled in the downfall of the Roman Republic, whether as cause or as
effect, just as they fall alike beneath Nero's shadow. I am reminded of Edward Gibbon's
statement of the oppressive consequences of Rome's universal dominion for its citizens
under the Principate (at the end of Chapter Three):

But the empire of the Romans filled the world, and when that empire fell into the hands
of a single person, the world became a safe and dreary prison for his enemies. The slave
of Imperial despotism, whether he was condemned to drag his gilded chain in Rome and
the senate, or to wear out a life of exile on the barren rock of Seriphus, or the frozen
banks of the Danube, expected his fate in silent despair. To resist was fatal, and it was
impossible to fly. On every side he was encompassed with a vast extent of sea and land,
which he could never hope to traverse without being discovered, seized, and restored to
his irritated master. Beyond the frontiers, his anxious view could discover nothing,
except the ocean, inhospitable deserts, hostile tribes of barbarians, of fierce manners and

\textsuperscript{30} See Ad Helviam 9.4-8 (on Marcellus) and 20 (Seneca's triumphant conclusion).
unknown language, or dependent kings, who would gladly purchase the emperor's protection by the sacrifice of an obnoxious fugitive. 'Wherever you are,' said Cicero to the exiled Marcellus, 'remember that you are equally within the power of the conqueror.'

In a straightforward, spatial sense, escape was obviously impossible under the conditions of the totalitarian world-state sketched so eloquently by Gibbon, just as it is for the denizens of Lucan's collapsing cosmos, such as the hapless Appius Claudius. Indeed, for all that Galba sought safety in a prudent *otium*, withdrawal from public life could bring dangers of its own, attracting the emperor's suspicion through its display of a potentially subversive independence and its hinted disapproval of imperial policy.\textsuperscript{31} Similarly, Lucan's Massilians incur the wrath of Caesar when they attempt a scrupulous abstention from the *scelera* (3.322 and 328) of his beloved war. Moreover, Lucan is concerned to puncture the dream of escape on an intellectual as well as a physical level, demolishing all those utopian refuges of the mind to which Rome's beleaguered elite were in the habit of turning for confirmation and consolation. While Chaeremon (perhaps along with Seneca) idealized the ancient Egyptian priesthood and learning, the latter-day Egypt was in practice an essential prop of Nero's regime, whether materially, through the grain supply, which Nero took steps to secure by reorganizing the transport fleet,\textsuperscript{32} aesthetically, through the design of his palaces,\textsuperscript{33} or ideologically, through the conception of absolute monarchy that he may have derived in part from Egypt, especially

\textsuperscript{31} See Griffin (1976, pp. 360-366) for the perils of *otium*. Thrasea Paetus, for instance, first embarked on the path to martyrdom when he conspicuously withdrew himself from the senate in AD 59 in protest at the murder of Agrippina (Tacitus, *Annales* 14.12).

\textsuperscript{32} See Griffin (1985, p. 108), who states, on the basis of a reference to an Alexandrian fleet by Seneca (*Epistulae Morales* 77.1), that Nero may "be responsible for a more formal organisation of grain imports from Egypt."

\textsuperscript{33} See Bastet (p. 80 and 86) for Alexandrian influences on the *Domus Transitoria* and Voisin (pp. 537-540) for such influences on the *Domus Aurea*. 
the Egypt of the Ptolemies. Accordingly, Lucan represents the Ptolemaic regime as an integral factor in Rome's downfall, responsible not only for Pompey's murder but also for the education of Caesar (and, by extension, Caesar's successor Nero) in the twin lessons of luxury, impressed upon Caesar by Cleopatra's extravagant palace and banquet, and tyranny, with his inspirational visit to Alexander's tomb; the venerable traditions extolled by Chaeremon, which Lucan embodies in the character of Acoreus, are revealed as an anachronistic irrelevance in the new, Ptolemaic-Neronian Egypt. As for astronomy, how could the stars be considered free of Nero in the face of his affinity for astrology, and when he was constantly invested with celestial attributes by imperial propaganda, both literary and visual, including the prediction of catasterism in the laudes Neronis at the start of Lucan's own poem? Comets in particular were a political minefield: Tacitus reports that every instance of the phenomenon during Nero's reign was sanguine industri...expiatum (Annales 15.46), and Seneca feels obliged to proffer two separate pledges of loyalty in the course of his scientific treatment of the comet of AD 60. It is little wonder that, in his dialogue with the helmsman, Pompey can take no solace in the

34 Grimal (1971) argues that Seneca may have drawn upon Pharaonic tradition for his conception of Nero as sun-king in the De Clementia. As Voisin shows, however, Alexander, Alexandria, and the Ptolemies exercised a much more profound influence on Nero's self-image. Voisin (p. 521) thus discusses the variety of grand and unprecedented honours accorded to Nero by the Alexandrians, including the title of ἀγαθὸς δῆμων τῆς Αλεξανδρείας. See Voisin (pp. 530-533) on Nero's admiration for and emulation of Alexander (whose glory was most celebrated in the city of his entombment) and (pp. 533-535) for Nero's embrace of the example of the Ptolemies (e.g. in his coinage).

35 As Voisin points out (p. 540), the palace of Cleopatra depicted by Lucan seems intended to evoke Nero's previously constructed Domus Transitoria and planned Domus Aurea.

36 Nero's interest in astrology is attested by e.g. Suetonius, Nero 36.1, in reference to the astrologer Balbillus; Nero's tutor Chaeremon was (among his many other accomplishments) an expert practitioner of the art. See Martin on Nero and astrology. See Bergmann's thorough examination of the stellar and solar iconography of Nero's coins, statues, and other images (pp. 150-200); Lucan makes contemptuous reference to such imperial iconography at 7.458. Calpurnius Siculus (if he is in fact of Neronian date) refers to Nero's potential catasterism in his fourth Eclogue (at 141 and 145-146), and Seneca compares Nero to the rising sun at De Clementia 1.8.4.

37 See Naturales Quaestiones 7.17.2 and 7.21.3, as well as the proclamation by Calpurnius Siculus of an auspicious comet inaugurating Nero's golden reign at Eclogue 1.77-88; see also the discussion by Martin (p. 68).
contemplation of a heavily politicized realm that is destined to be inhabited by his adversary Caesar and all the latter's descendants, culminating in the Nero of Lucan's proem. Finally, Seneca turned to the Nile, along with the other phenomena explored in the Naturales Quaestiones, as one of his routes of escape from Nero's court into a philosophical-scientific otium. Nevertheless, because Nero took a special interest in the science of rivers, particularly the Nile, no distance from the rotten heart of imperial power could be achieved in that direction. Seneca may even have hoped to exploit such curiosity in order to guide Nero towards the spiritual improvement that he believed to result from the practice of scientific inquiry, that is, in order to help Nero to escape his own tyrannical self in the manner promised to Lucilius at N.Q. 4A.Pref.20. In response to this project of redemption, however, Lucan simultaneously equates Nero with Caesar as an investigator of the Nile, through his allusion to N.Q. 6.8.3 in the phrase amor veri at 10.189, and (in all the ways outlined in Chapter Five) shows Caesar's scientific enthusiasm to be thoroughly vitiated by his megalomania. Lucan thereby intends a similar inference to be drawn about Nero's intellectual pretensions: instead of purifying Nero of his vices, the study of the natural universe suffers pollution from them in its turn, with the result that science can offer an escape neither from nor for the dilettante princeps.

38 Pompey does succeed in drawing inspiration from the stars during his apotheosis at the start of Book Nine (see Chapter Two, n. 70). On this occasion, however, Lucan has effectively excluded the line of Caesars from residence of the celestial plane with his statement that *non illic auro positi nec ture sepulti/ perveniant* (9.10-11), which, as observed by Narducci (p. 339), is generally interpreted as a reference to the lavish tombs of the deified emperors; in other words, Pompey can only ascend to the heavens once they have been cleansed of his catasterized enemies.

39 I therefore read Seneca's praise for Nero at N.Q. 6.8.3 as sincere and as designed to steer Nero away from his vices and towards the spiritual benefits of natural science (see Chapter Five, n. 17).

40 Schmidt comments that "Der *amor veri* beiden Cäsaren [i.e. Caesar and Nero] ist nicht anderes als das nur schlecht kaschierte Verlangen, es Despoten wie Alexander, Sesostris oder Cambyses gleich zu tun" (p. 252).
In sum, Lucan's goal is to debar all hope of sanctuary, whether bodily or mental, whether within or outside his poem, to his readers as well as to his characters. Unlike (probably) his lost juvenilia, this text is not escapist entertainment but a call to arms. Since flight is both unattainable and unconscionable, the only remaining option is to stand and fight. Here is the converse of that urge to shy away from the contemplation of civil war which, as discussed above, Lucan identified as a properly Roman reaction to Pharsalus. Lucan seeks to check the horrified retreat of his audience from his subject matter by counterbalancing their patriotic agony with a fervent partisanship, as he insists immediately prior to his account of the battle:

haec et apud seras gentes populosque nepotum,
sive sua tantum venient in saecula fama,
sive aliquid magnis nostri quoque cura laboris
nominibus prodesse potest, cum bella legentur,
spesque metusque simul perituraque vota movebunt,
attonitique omnes veluti venientia fata,
non transmissa, legent et adhuc tibi, Magne, favebunt. (7.207-213)

Although his readers' prayers for Pompey's victory are inevitably peritura, Lucan is nonetheless striving to induce in them the same passionately Republican state of mind that animated Pompey's forces on the fatal day. He then returns to the theme of partisan engagement with even more vehemence at the battle's close, bemoaning the fact that subsequent generations (including his own) were not given the opportunity to fight for the freedom of which they were all robbed on the field of Pharsalus: proxima quid
suboles aut quid meruere nepotes/ in regnum nasci? pavide num gessimus arma/ teximus
aut iugulos? alieni poena timoris/ in nostra cervice sedet. post proelia natis/ si
dominum, Fortuna, dabas, et bella dedisses (7.641-646). As much as this passage is

41 Listed by Lucan's biographer Vacca, these early poems treat such comfortable, hackneyed themes as Orpheus and the Trojan War.
steeped in Lucan's habitual pessimism, it also carries a clear message for his readers: be ready to act, to bear arms and bare throats unflinchingly, if, by some miracle, another window of opportunity for the reclamation of liberty should present itself.

By the last year of his life, as far as Lucan was concerned, such a window had in fact been opened, in the form of the Pisonian conspiracy, which he embraced as his chance to join the ranks of Brutus and the other Republican heroes glorified in his epic. Lucan's disillusionment with Nero may have occurred at more or less the same time as Seneca's, but his response was altogether and consciously opposite: not a retreat into science and philosophy but, first of all, a poem demanding action against tyranny and, finally, a quixotic effort to take such action. While an evaluation of the relative merits of the courses adopted by uncle and nephew lies beyond the province of my thesis, it is clear from his treatment of the theme in the De Bello Civili that Lucan did not arrive lightly or impulsively at his decision to reject the path of tranquil seclusion. Seeing around him a world of which no part was immune to the contagion of Caesarism, Lucan set out to construct a poetic reality commensurate with the grandeur and scope of his apocalyptic vision. Within that reality, the escape attempts of his contemporaries, from cowards like Galba to virtuous sages like Seneca, are played out again and again, and always to the same conclusion: nothing, nowhere, and no one is safe. Only the example of Cato offers

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42 See Suetonius' Vita of Lucan: ad extremum paene signifer Pisonianae coniurationis extitit, multus in gloria tyrannicidarum palam praedicanda ac plenus minarum, usque eo intemperans ut Caesaris caput proximo cuique iactaret. I do not propose to enter into the question of when, precisely, if at all, Lucan's awareness of this conspiracy can first be detected in the poem (assuming that the books were composed sequentially), although it may be significant that Lucan's rejection of the morality of escapism is most fully apparent in Book Nine; moreover, Ahl points out, with reference to 9.601-604 and 980-986, that "[i]t is not until 9 that Lucan emerges from his pessimism about the future of Rome" (p. 325). It may also be no coincidence that Lucan's final book concerns itself solely with Ptolemaic Alexandria and represents the latter in terms closely evoking Nero and Nero's Rome, signaling a transition from Lucan's role as a poetic narrator of past events to his new role as an active participant in current ones, i.e. from the world of his poem to the world of the Pisonian conspiracy.

43 One of Lucan's final compositions, the lost poem De Incendio Urbis, is also likely to have constituted an inflammatory polemic against Nero (see Ahl, pp. 333-353).
any way out of the nightmare, by his defiant struggle during life and, once the cause is
finally lost, by his equally defiant suicide. In the absence of refuge, the Caesars must
simply be fought, then as now, at Pharsalus or in Rome. This is the spirit in which Lucan
joined the Pisonian conspiracy, and which dragged down not only Lucan himself but also
the otium-seeking Seneca, guilty by association, to share Cato's grave.
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