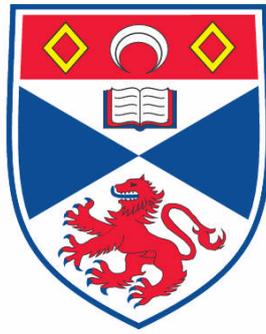


**WRITTEN INTO THE LANDSCAPE : LATIN EPIC AND THE
LANDMARKS OF LITERARY RECEPTION**

James Stuart McIntyre

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St. Andrews**



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**Written Into the Landscape:
Latin Epic and the Landmarks of Literary Reception**

James Stuart McIntyre

Ph.D.

30th April 2008

Abstract

Landscape in Roman literature is manifest with symbolic potential: in particular, Vergil and Ovid respond to ideologically loaded representations of abundance in nature that signal the dawn of the Augustan golden age. Vergil's *Eclogues* foreground a *locus amoenus* landscape which articulates both the hopes of the new age as well as the political upheaval that accompanied the new political regime; Ovid uses the same topography in order to suggest the arbitrary and capricious use of power within a deceptively idyllic landscape. Moreover, for Latin poets, depictions of landscape are themselves sites for poetic reflection as evidenced by the discussion of landscape ecphrases in Horace's *Ars Poetica*.

My thesis focuses upon the depiction and refiguration of the *locus amoenus* landscape in the post-Augustan epics of the first century AD: Lucan's *Bellum Civile*, Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica*, Statius' *Thebaid* and Silius Italicus' *Punica*. Landscape in these poems retains the moral, political and metapoetic force evident in the Augustan archetypes. However, I suggest that Lucan's Neronian *Bellum Civile* fundamentally refigures the landscapes of Latin epic poetry, inscribing the *locus amoenus* with the *nefas* of civil war in such a manner that it redefines the perception of landscape in the succeeding Flavian poets. Lucan perverts the landscape, making the *locus horridus*, a landscape of horror, fear and disgust, the predominant landscape of Latin epic; consequently, the poems of Valerius, Statius and Silius engage with Lucan's refiguration of landscape as a means of expressing the horror of civil war. In the first part of my thesis I examine archetypal landscapes, including those of the Augustan poets and Lucan's *Bellum Civile*. Taking an approach which engages with literary reception theory and the concept of the "horizon of expectation" as a framework within which literary topographies can be understood as articulating a response to the thematics of civil war, in the second part of my thesis I demonstrate the manner in which landscapes represent a coherent and paradigmatic response to Lucan's imposition of his civil war narrative within the literary landscape of Roman literature.

Declarations

I, James Stuart McIntyre, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 80,000 words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

date signature of candidate

I was admitted as a research student in September 2004 and as a candidate for the degree of Ph.D. in September 2005; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St Andrews between 2004 and 2008.

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I hereby certify that the candidate has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution and regulations appropriate for the degree of Ph.D. in the University of St Andrews and that the candidate is qualified to submit this thesis in application for that degree.

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Abbreviations

Names of ancient authors and works are abbreviated following the usage of the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* and Liddle & Scott's *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Exceptions to this convention and abbreviations of modern works are listed below.

OCD3	Hornblower, S. and Spawforth, A. <i>Oxford Classical Dictionary</i> , 3 rd edition (revised). Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2003.
OLD	Glare, P. G. W. <i>Oxford Latin Dictionary</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1982.
TLL	<i>Thesaurus Linguae Latinae</i> . Leipzig: Teubner. 1900-

Introduction: Framing the landscape

i) Space and landscape

Landscape is a definition of space;¹ and space is a condition of human existence.² At all times, humans are situated in space; these spaces are contextualised as “place” by surrounding objects (including other people).³ Anthropology and cultural geography suggest that these spaces are perceived, interacted with and shaped;⁴ in turn spaces shape those who reside within them.⁵ Human experience is conditional upon the occupation of space; yet conceptualisations of space are also historically contingent and culturally situated,⁶ as well as being subject to discourses of knowledge and power.⁷ Modern scientific descriptions of space produce topography and cartography; despite assumptions of objectivity, such descriptions seek order, boundaries, fixity.⁸ This impulse to record and emplace objects in space is known within the knowledge structures of Classical antiquity. It has been argued that the increased focus on landscape and topography in the *Odyssey* represented the opening of the Mediterranean to trade and travel;⁹ and landscape painting, ancient maps, itineraries, *periploi* and periegetic texts, as well as geographical/ethnographical digressions within historical writings testify not only to a sense of place in antiquity but also to the scientific attempt to classify and record the forms that spaces take. As with any scientific attempt at ordering knowledge, geography and topography are invested with meanings beyond the

¹ Hirsch (1995) 4.

² Cf. Heidegger (1993) 362: “Dwelling...is the *basic character* of Being”; Feld and Basso (1996) 3.

³ Cf. Casey (1996) 13-52, who argues for a universalising aspect to “place”; 25: “being in a place is being in a configurative complex of things”.

⁴ Tuan (1979) 89, 100; Meinig (1979b) 34; Schama (1995) 6; Lees and Overing (2006) 1.

⁵ Duncan and Ley (1993) 12; Casey (1996) 18-22; Hirsch (1995) 4-5; Feld and Basso (1996) 5.

⁶ Casey (1996) 18.

⁷ Foucault (1980) 68-9; Feld and Basso (1996) 4. Cf. Fitter (1995) 14-24, who proposes four “matrices of [spatial] perception”: ecological, cosmographic, analogical and technoptic.

⁸ Duncan and Ley (1993) 1.

⁹ Dougherty (2001) 3-5; cf. Fitter (1995) 32-4.

purely diagnostic, reflecting cultural assumptions and selectivity in the attempt to categorise space(s).

As a term denoting definition and depiction of space, landscape is similarly invested with an accumulation of meaning;¹⁰ in contrast with ostensibly objective, scientific conceptualisations of space, landscape is a more overtly subjective experience of environment:¹¹ “A person is *in* the landscape...not...an abstract point in space”.¹² Landscape accumulates aesthetic and moral potential;¹³ moreover, the term “landscape” is fraught with ambiguity and competition.¹⁴ Landscape is a term employed by geographers and anthropologists to define spaces both urban and rural, and that has accrued natural and ecological connotations as nature and artefact; moreover, there is an aesthetic of landscape even as landscape is recognised as a system which can be described in scientific discourse. Originating as a technical term in painting, landscape has a formal sense as a mimetic depiction of space (usually *natural* and *naturalistic*) as ordered by human viewers.¹⁵ Despite the naturalism of landscape, it is manipulated space: for instance, the wall-painting of the Garden Room in the villa at Prima Porta foregrounds a vibrant and naturalistic representation of identifiable flora and fauna, even though the plant species depicted could not have all been in flower at the same time:¹⁶ the landscape thus reveals some of the cultural conceptions that lie behind the representation of space in early imperial Rome.¹⁷ Landscapes are spaces shaped by the imposition of boundaries and frames.¹⁸ Gardens encapsulate the paradoxical

¹⁰ Hirsch (1995) 1-5; Meinig (1979a) 6; cf. Alcock (2002) 30-1.

¹¹ Cf. Hirsch (1995) 11; although cf. Meinig (1979a) 3.

¹² Tuan (1979) 90; although Tuan notes that landscape is a combination of “objective” and “subjective” understandings of space; cf. Hirsch (1995) 13; Schama (1995) 6-7.

¹³ Bate (2000) 69; Tuan (1979) 89-92; cf. Keith (2000) 36ff.

¹⁴ Meinig (1979a) 1-5; Meinig (1979b) 34-46.

¹⁵ Bate (2000) 132-3; Fitter (1995) 25-52 (“landskip”); Hirsch (1995) 2; cf. Leach (1988) 79.

¹⁶ Cf. Beard and Henderson (2001) 55; Kellum (1994) 218-21; cf. the imagery of abundance on the *Ara Pacis*: Zanker (1988) 172-83.

¹⁷ Cf. Newlands (1984) 109-22.

¹⁸ Bate (2000) 132; cf. Hirsch (1995) 11.

combination of artifice and nature: “landscape” gardening elides the distinction between art and nature by shaping nature into art under human dominion whilst maintaining a boundary between wilderness and cultivated nature.¹⁹ In poetry and art landscapes are bounded by frames reminiscent of the manner in which a garden is enclosed by its walls.²⁰ Yet artistic and literary depictions of landscape offer a means of understanding the cultural conceptualisations of the spaces in which humans live.²¹

ii) Landscape and poetry

In poetry landscapes are depicted in a multiplicity of forms that underscore the ambiguity of the concept; generally they are not simple depictions of “nature”, although they are frequently brief; landscape depictions resist superficial engagement with their constitutive elements: variously described elements of landscape generate aesthetic and thematic potential as well as participating in a dynamic poetics of representation and reappropriation. Landscapes suggest perceptual depth and are rarely passive backgrounds, but are frequently figured as participants in the action of the text. Depictions of landscape are phenomenological in that they are predicated upon objects as they exist in space and their relation to the viewer;²² further, they frequently idealise and privilege the natural world and human interaction with nature, in preference to representing the urban; this attenuated sense of the natural environment gives rise to “ecopoetics” and the symbolism of nature in its relationship to humanity.²³

If, as Edward Casey has suggested, places are “events” in time and space,²⁴ then representations of landscapes are a capturing of an event as a complex gathering of

¹⁹ Cf. Bate (2000) 11, 69.

²⁰ *Ibid.* 136; Cf. Pagán (2006) 6; Henderson (2004) 6.

²¹ Cf. Heidegger (1971) 213-8; Bate (2000) 253ff; Leach (1988) 4.

²² Bate (2000) 75; Fitter (1995) 103.

²³ Bate (2000) 42, 75-6; Fitter (1995) 17; cf. Leach (1974) 10-24.

²⁴ Casey (1996) 27, 37.

objects within space, fixing a moment within a spatial and chronological framework (effectively constructing an ecosystem of meaning).²⁵ Yet landscape in the geographical sense (i.e. a space inhabited and viewed by an individual from a vantage point within the landscape) has by necessity moveable frames (i.e. by shifting position, the viewer changes the composition of the landscape), while poetic landscapes appear to be perceptual fields with assigned boundaries within the text and where the external viewer has a fixed vantage point from outside, dictated by the author.²⁶ A consequence of fixity and “boundedness” is a sense of definition and prospect; however, with perspective and depth comes a horizon which delimits the landscape even as it suggests ongoing space:

the very nature of ... a horizon is to *open out* even as it encloses ... To be in a perceptual field is to be encompassed by edges that are neither strictly spatial – we cannot map a horizon ... - nor strictly temporal: just when does a horizon happen? A given horizon is at once spatial and temporal, and it belongs to a field that is ... the perceptual scene of the place whose horizon it is.²⁷

Horizons are permeable boundaries that delimit the perceptual field; they define the environment, but they are not static; horizons extend and retreat with the movement of the viewer as well as being affected by atmospheric conditions such as the weather and quality of light. Moreover, as an “event”, landscape is chronologically situated: yet poetic representations of landscapes do not necessarily depict a static moment in time; landscapes are both spatially and chronologically dynamic, reflecting the passage of narrative time, but also appealing to narrative past and future, as well as to the contemporary situation of author (and reader). Things happen in (and to) landscapes.

As phenomena bounded by horizons, landscapes display an affinity with the mode of hermeneutics defined as the “aesthetic of reception” (*Rezeptions-ästhetik*). According to literary reception theory, textual meaning is realised at the point of

²⁵ Cf. Bate (2000) 106-9.

²⁶ Cf. Fitter (1995) 10.

²⁷ Casey (1996) 43; cf. Hirsch (1995) 23.

reception (the vantage point for the perceptual field),²⁸ but is predicated upon “the preceding experience of the literary work by its readers”,²⁹ reading is therefore culturally and historically contingent upon the reader’s “horizon of expectation”. In formulating the aesthetic of reception, H. R. Jauss adapted the work of H.-G. Gadamer; Jauss focused “on a horizon of experience of life and thus rooted the receiver’s mind-set in his or her social and cultural context”.³⁰ Meaning is thus the result of a dialogue between the production of the author (text) and the recipient (reader).³¹ However, a reader (or a multiplicity of readers situated diachronically across cultures) who is culturally and historically contingent is subject to a change in his horizon in the same way that an individual observing landscape will find the horizon moving: a change in horizon affects the perceptual fields of both physical and literary landscapes.³² Jauss’ theory has posited that a text’s historical reception can be analysed by alighting at a particular point on the continuum of subsequent readings it generates (a “literary series”, produced by the text’s readers and composed of further texts, artworks, scholarship, etc.);³³ in turn each of these subsequent texts gains its own afterlife);³⁴ every reading and re-reading of a text is, like perception of landscape, an “event”.³⁵

However, acknowledging that the reading of a text is historically contingent does not determine that reception is a series of linear developments which follow a positivist path which, if it can be reversed will return us to the author’s intention,³⁶ nor does it require that the “author is dead” and that textual interpretations must swarm

²⁸ Martindale (1993) 2-3; Batstone (2006) 14.

²⁹ Jauss (1982) 20; cf. Gadamer (1979) 267-74, 333-57.

³⁰ Hardwick (2003) 7-8; cf. Iser (1978) 9, 36; Martindale (1993) 7.

³¹ Iser (1978) 13; Batstone (2006) 17.

³² Kennedy (2006) 293.

³³ Jauss (1982) 32.

³⁴ Cf. Hexter (2006) 26; Hardwick (2003) 10-11.

³⁵ Martindale (2006) 5; Fish (1980) 28.

³⁶ Cf. Hardwick (2003) 2; Heath (2002) 59-97; Martindale (2007) 302.

around in a haze of meanings dependent solely on an individuated reader.³⁷ This is a particularly thorny issue when dealing with some of the philological tools used in analyses of literary receptions. For instance, the interpretation of allusion and intertext in literary texts must appeal in some form to the intention of the author of the allusive text as a strong recipient of the original work.³⁸ Hinds uses fuzzy logic in order to demonstrate the “exact inexactitude” involved in the reconstruction of authentic, authorial “meaning”:³⁹

The axiom that meaning is constructed at the point of reception becomes a better tool ... if it embraces the fact (i.e. rather than occluding it) that one of the most persistent ways in which both Roman and modern readers construct the meaning of a poetic text is by attempting to construct from (and for) it an intention-bearing authorial voice, a construction which they generally hope or believe (in a belief which must always be partly misguided) to be a reconstruction; and the author thus (re)constructed is one who writes toward an implied reader who will attempt such a (re)construction.⁴⁰

Authors may have an implied reader,⁴¹ but readers and texts collaborate to construct “implied authors”.⁴²

Moreover, just as landscapes are inhabited by communities whose combined perceptions of space and its heritage make sense of “place”, interpretive communities provide frameworks within which meanings are derived in accordance with cultural assumptions and ideologies.⁴³ While the twenty-first century reader of early imperial Roman literature has a two-thousand year disjunction between the context of production and the generation of meaning, Latinists benefit (and oftentimes suffer) from the Classical tradition that provides a degree of continuity between antiquity and the present. This is not to assume a triumphalist attitude or to claim that interpretive accretions that have accumulated to the “tradition” have always been positive or

³⁷ Cf. Rowe (2005).

³⁸ Cf. Conte (1986) 27-8.

³⁹ Hinds (1998) 50; cf. Thomas (2001) 55.

⁴⁰ Hinds (1998) 49; cf. Kallendorf (2006) 67-70; Van Tress (2004) 7-21.

⁴¹ Cf. Iser (1978) 36; Hardwick (2003) 8.

⁴² Cf. Edmunds (2001) 63-82.

⁴³ Fish (1980) 317-21; cf. Edmunds (2001) 62, 168-9; Laird (1999) 34-40.

accurate; it is, however, to argue that Classicists are in the position of being both displaced and emplaced with regard to the texts they choose to study; we are divorced from the communities that produced the texts, yet belong to another, diachronic community which provides continuity, informs our readings and defines our own “horizon of reception”.⁴⁴ However even within communities, different meanings co-exist,⁴⁵ non-linearly subject to individual contingency and circumstance. Thus, it is appropriate to say that both horizons of landscape and text are historically and culturally situated.⁴⁶

iii) Written into the landscape

Given the similarity between the described conceptual frameworks governing spatial and textual horizons it is worth investigating the potential offered by depictions of landscape as a means of examining the perceptual fields explored by authors who demonstrate an engaged landscape sensibility. My hypothesis is that an examination of the landscapes of post-Augustan 1st century epic can be used to map in a paradigmatic manner the reception of the “monumental” Augustan texts in their successors. I engage with the hermeneutics of reception in order to suggest three interrelated positions:

- i) Lucan’s epic *Bellum Civile* is a poem that affected the manner in which Valerius Flaccus, Statius and Silius Italicus responded to Augustan poetics: it relocated these poets’ “horizons of expectation”, making them not only “post-Augustan”, but also “post-Lucanian”;
- ii) this “relocation” can be demonstrated in the refiguration of landscapes, including those of the *Bellum Civile*;

⁴⁴ Cf. Budelmann and Haubold (2008) 16-25; Jauss (1982) 146-7; Fish (1980) 309.

⁴⁵ Galinsky (2003) 153.

⁴⁶ Cf. Bate (2000) 249; Fitter (1995) 15; Leach (1988) 48.

iii) that representations of certain landscape *topoi* in Latin epic function as metapoetic sites in which poets respond to the aesthetic and thematic models supplied by their predecessors.

Augustan poetry became the Latin canon, dominating Roman culture; every Roman epicist following the Augustan era had to respond to Vergil's paradigmatic Roman epic; the *Aeneid* and Ovid's more subversive *Metamorphoses* became poetic monuments whose pre-eminence altered the Roman cultural horizon. In order to make an impression among these texts, subsequent poets had to frame a response that built upon or subverted the foundations of the canon;⁴⁷ one of the means by which this challenge is articulated is the representation of landscape, a reflexive literary category since at least Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo*.⁴⁸ Space and landscape are implicated in a variety of intertextual and metapoetic discourses, as evidenced by the development of literary motifs and reoccurring *topoi*, as well as the use of space in ancient literary and rhetorical theory.⁴⁹

Roman conceptualisations of pictorial landscape engaged with the subjectivity of space;⁵⁰ and similarly, Latin epicists demonstrate an understanding that poetic representations of landscape offer opportunities for a multiplicity of interpretive vistas.⁵¹ This interpretive potentiality is signalled by the highly allusive and intertextual nature of landscapes in Roman epic: landscapes are sites upon which Lucan, Valerius Flaccus, Statius and Silius Italicus can engage with their Augustan archetypes, exploiting their textual predecessors in order to construct new meanings or redeploy old ones. Significantly, Lucan's *Bellum Civile* disrupts the potential relationship between

⁴⁷ Cf. Hardie (1993) 1-18.

⁴⁸ Call. *Ap.* 105-113; cf. Hor. *Ars* 14-23; 60-2.

⁴⁹ Cf. Cic. *Orat.* 2.86-351-4; Quint. *Inst.* 11.2.17-22.

⁵⁰ Cf. Vitruvius 7.5.4; Leach (1988) 57, 72, 140.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* 312-24.

the Flavian epicists and the established monuments of the Roman poetic landscape, explicitly foregrounding the civil war subtext that runs throughout the *Aeneid*.

For the purpose of this thesis it is impossible to survey every landscape in the four post-Augustan epics. Therefore I have chosen to focus on a single significant mode of landscape representation and the changes that occur within it. These, I suggest, are precipitated by Lucan's civil war poetics. The following chapters will describe the development of the Latin epic *locus amoenus* and its transformation into a *locus horridus* landscape as a consequence of Lucan's imposition of overt civil war into Roman epic. Chapter one will describe antecedents of the Augustan period and earlier, situating the wider argument of the thesis within the context of depictions of the *locus amoenus*; chapter two will demonstrate the effect of civil war on the *topos* in Lucan's *Bellum Civile*. Consequently, chapters three, four and five will investigate the reception of Lucan and the Augustan epic precedents in the epics of Valerius Flaccus, Statius and Silius Italicus, showing Lucan's pervasive influence over the thematics, aesthetics and poetics of landscape in the Flavian era. The development of the *locus amoenus* and *locus horridus* as literary motifs demonstrates a change in Roman landscape sensibilities; as such, this group of poems express the contingency of spatial perceptions and literary receptions; and they articulate a reaction to the social and poetic concerns of the turbulent first century AD at Rome which is demonstrative of the changing limits of spatial and literary perceptual horizons.

1: Putting down roots: *loca amoena* and *horrida* in Augustan epic

Of all landscapes in Latin poetry, the *locus amoenus* has been one of the most appealing for ancient poets and their audiences: defining the pleasance as a literary *topos*, E.R.

Curtius describes the *locus amoenus* as “a beautiful, shaded natural site. Its minimum ingredients comprise a tree (or several trees), a meadow, and a spring or brook.

Birdsong and flowers may be added. The most elaborate examples also add a breeze”.¹

Although the *locus amoenus* has a wide range of topographical combinations, this is the basic “grammar” of the landscape.² It is an attractive space, conforming “to classical

ideals ... not wild, hostile, or remote from human civilization but ... nearly always

inhabited”.³ Inhabitants can be divine or human, gods or monsters, all found both in

“virgin” and metamorphosed states; it is sometimes a refuge from the world outside,⁴ or

equally it can be a place of entrapment despite promises of respite. Often the ideal

landscape has an ethical engagement as its idyllic aesthetics offer a contrast to events

that occur within the space;⁵ on other occasions *loca amoena* are homes to gods, or are

otherwise elements of the religious landscape.⁶ At times the landscape is implicated in

evocations of an idealised golden age which can be quasi-utopian, deployed as a critique

of contemporary society,⁷ or can be co-opted as a political symbol of a renewed *aureum*

¹ Curtius (1953) 195; Schönbeck (1962) 8-60; cf. Witke (1966) and West (1966) who criticise Schönbeck’s typology; cf. Haß (1998) 1-97 on the development of the *locus amoenus*; Miller (2000) 312-3; Kledt (2000) 1001-2. See table 1.

² Hinds (2002) 124.

³ Newlands (1984) 2.

⁴ Cf. Bate (2000) 156.

⁵ Segal (1969) 8-19; Parry (1964) 282; Newlands (2004) 136.

⁶ I.e. Prop. 4.9.23-36. Cf. Thesleff (1981) 31-2.

⁷ I.e. Vergil’s first eclogue or the early books of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*; cf. Evans (2008) 1-5; Finley (1975) 179.

saeculum;⁸ such landscapes can be utopian in that they frequently exist on margins and suggest an aspirational ideal for man's place in the world.⁹

There is some ambiguity towards the *locus amoenus*: Lucretius adduces the mental freedom offered by the landscape,¹⁰ but Quintilian refers disparagingly to it as a topography of sensual distraction, preventing him from getting down to the business of writing: *silvarum amoenitas et praeterlabentia flumina et inspirantes ramis arborum aerae volucrumque cantus et ipsa late circumspiciendi libertas* (“delightful in woodlands and flowing rivers and breezes blowing into the branches of the trees and birdsong and the very freedom to look widely around”).¹¹ Horace refers to excessive depictions of attractive landscape as *purpureus pannus*, formulaic additions to a text that contribute little.¹² Yet Quintilian's reference to the freedom to look around the *locus amoenus* is not only relevant to the writer struggling to concentrate on his text, but is suggestive of the potential for spatial perception and visualisation. There is frequently an ephrastic element to many depictions of landscape,¹³ and despite its natural prospect the *locus amoenus* often features a heightened degree of artifice;¹⁴ sometimes it is even marked out in Latin poetry from the main narrative by an *est locus* formula which suggests a specific delimitation of the perceptual field.¹⁵ *Locus amoenus* landscapes frequently invite the reader to “view” in the same way that the visual impetus of

⁸ Cf. Zanker (1988) 172-83; Martindale (1997b) 117-8; Evans (2008) 19-21.

⁹ I.e. utopia as generalised “social dreaming”, rather than a specific Utopia; Giesecke (2007) 1 fn. 2; Finley (1975) 178-9; Evans (2003) 285-7.

¹⁰ Lucr. 2.29-33; cf. Giesecke (2007) 133 on this as a utopian “good place (*eu-topos*)” and as a marginal place (*ou-topos*).

¹¹ Quint. *Inst.* 10.3.24. Cf. Cic. *Fin.* 2.107: *locus amoenus*.

¹² Hor. *Ars* 14-19; cf. Pers. 1.70-1; yet Horace refers to his own Sabine villa as *amoenus*: *Carm.* 1.17.1; Newlands (1984) 53-75.

¹³ Leach (1988) 3-24; cf. Williams (1968) 640-3, 652.

¹⁴ Cf. Diana's grove at Ov. *Met.* 3.155-54; Schlam (1984) 9; the eroticised nature of Ovid's depiction of Diana's grotto emulates Actaeon's inability to tear his gaze from the goddess.

¹⁵ Hinds (2002) 126-7; Hinds (1987) 36-8; Austin (1955) 142-3; Feeney (1982) 62. Other landscape ephrases are also introduced with the construction (e.g. Verg. *A.* 1.157-73; 5.124-31; Prop. 4.4.3-16).

ecphrases invokes a visual response.¹⁶ As with other ecphrases, textual representations of landscapes are liminal, existing between reality and imagination:¹⁷ dependent on mediation through character, narrator, and text,¹⁸ they appeal to sensory perception yet are internalised in the mind.¹⁹ Moreover, they rely on an extent of topographical knowledge within a reader's horizon of expectation; frequently, specific geography is ascribed fantastic characteristics, shifting it onto the symbolic level of representation. This is particularly the case for Latin poetry, where landscape situates mankind within the natural world,²⁰ and where aetiological narratives of myth and metamorphosis are mapped onto a landscape which articulates the relationship between Roman power and the universe.²¹ Yet even when a space is divorced from reality (such as the landscape of Elysium) it is nonetheless predetermined by human experience: the trees that grow will be laurels, elms, oaks, cypresses.²² In Classical literature aspecific landscapes are still determined by localised Mediterranean geography. Within the *locus amoenus* the topography of the imagination is mapped onto the "real" landscape, bounded by the experience of the reader, evoking the specificities of place, yet reorganising space as a means of suggesting sensation via the text. Furthermore, these are landscapes that can be refigured as different writers engage with them; as such, they emulate and invoke the ability of man to redefine his environment.²³

The self-consciously artistic nature of ecphrases prompts analysis in terms of artistic and literary reflexivity,²⁴ and landscapes often function as symbolic patterns

¹⁶ Cf. Fowler (1991) 25-6.

¹⁷ Barchiesi (1997) 271; cf. Fowler (1991) 29-31.

¹⁸ Fowler (1991) 31.

¹⁹ Snell (1953) 282, 308-9; Martindale (1997b) 111. Cf. Schama (1995) 6-7; Lees and Overing (2006) 6.

²⁰ Cf. Newlands (1984) 40-8 on Vergil's introduction of human labour into a georgic *locus amoenus*, the Corycian's garden.

²¹ Cf. Hardie (1986) 3; Hardie (2003) 1.

²² Cf. Hor. *Ars.* 19-20.

²³ Newlands (1984) 8.

²⁴ Cf. Barchiesi (1997) 272-281; Leach (1988) 10-11; Segal (1969) 6-7.

replete with a range of meaning and metaphorical potential.²⁵ Following the models offered by the Augustan poets, Lucan, Valerius Flaccus, Statius and Silius Italicus each exploit the possibilities for metapoetic reflexivity offered by the rich poetic tradition of a landscape which has by the Roman imperial period become a literary motif; the *locus amoenus* for the Neronian and Flavian epicists functions as a site for enumerating the relationships between poets and their influences, mediating their reception of the landmark texts in the ancient canon. Moreover, the post-Augustan poets develop a thematic and aesthetic interest in a variant of the idealised landscape, the *locus horridus*, which exists in a seminal form in the Augustan poets but becomes a primary means of articulating a response to the social, political and poetic concerns of the first century AD. Understanding the development of the *locus amoenus* in the Flavian poets requires a brief examination of the models offered by the Greek and Latin antecedents.

1.1: Topography into *topos*: epic, pastoral and the *locus amoenus*

The idealised landscape appears in Greek and Hellenistic representations of topography: Calypso's cave is the earliest extended representation of the *locus amoenus*,²⁶ setting her songs in the context of the pleasance: however, this is a landscape of alienation in which Odysseus longs to return home.²⁷ Other depictions in the *Odyssey* are shorter, but feature elements which contribute towards the development of the landscape into a *topos*; this includes Odysseus' landing in Phaeacia and his search for shelter in a semi-idealised landscape.²⁸ Yet Odysseus is set apart, fearful of wild animals and reliant on the protection of Athena. Odysseus' alienation from this *locus amoenus* is representative

²⁵ Cf. Leach (1974) 23-4; Parry (1957) 3, 14, 20.

²⁶ Hom. *Od.* 5.63-74; Schönbeck (1962) 61-70. Cf. Parry (1957) 3-7; Giesecke (2007) 66.

²⁷ Newlands (1984) 3; Thesleff (1981) 36-7; Giesecke (2007) 16-9. Cf. Jenkyns (1998) 537 on similar effects at Vergil's Tiber.

²⁸ Hom. *Od.* 5.441-93; cf. 9.116-51; Schönbeck (1962) 70-7.

of a wider alienation from Phaeacia, which is an otherworldly, utopian kingdom unrepresentative of Ithaca.²⁹ In Homeric epic the *locus amoenus* is not yet a landscape inhabited by man but exists on the margins of human society as a counterpoint to Odysseus' Ithacan home;³⁰ although human activity may take place within this space, this is frequently religious activity in an ethereal landscape.³¹ The "humanising" of the *locus amoenus* comes with Hellenistic poetry, particularly the landscape of Theocritus' *Idylls*,³² in which man is as comfortable in the *locus amoenus* as he is in the urban cityscapes of the other poems in the corpus.³³ Landscape in the works of the Hellenistic period gains a further expressive and even metapoetic force: Callimachus famously links the production of good and bad poetry to rivers that are trickles or are in spate;³⁴ and Apollonius Rhodius deploys the *locus amoenus* in his *Argonautica* as a means of reflecting and abruptly shattering emotive states.³⁵

In the *Idylls* Theocritus uses *locus amoenus* landscapes to reflect the themes and tones of individual poems;³⁶ but Theocritus' groves possess an idealised quality which marks them as distinct from the hustle of urban life.³⁷ Although they have human concerns, Theocritus' herdsmen appear isolated from the mundane struggles of life and, protected by their environment,³⁸ they are free to compose and to participate in song-contests. Theocritus' bucolic landscapes are humanised spaces, although the humanity expressed within them is frequently base and is consonant with that expressed in the

²⁹ Silk (2004) 35, 40; Giesecke (2007) 28-9; Goldhill (1991) 2.

³⁰ Cf. Evans (2008) 6-17; Giesecke (2007) 11-34; Hom. *Od.* 10.415-7, 462-3; 15.509-11: "rugged Ithaca".

³¹ Newlands (1984) 3-4; Thesleff (1981) 44. Cf. Sapph. Fr. 2; S. *OC.* 17-21; Pl. *Phdr.* 230b2-c5; this is a retreat from urban activity, but is also consecrated to divine beings; Giesecke (2007) 86-9.

³² Newlands (1984) 4-5.

³³ Cf. Hutchinson (1988) 144-5.

³⁴ Call. *Ap.* 105-113.

³⁵ I.e. A. R. 1.1139-48; 1.1207ff.; Williams (1991) 175; Giesecke (2007) 96-7.

³⁶ Segal (1974) 21; Goldhill (1991) 227-8.

³⁷ Cf. Rosenmeyer (1969) 186-9; Leach (1974) 31-2.

³⁸ Rosenmeyer (1969) 57.

urban *Idylls*,³⁹ juxtaposed against the beauty of the topography.⁴⁰ However, freed from urban concerns, Theocritus' shepherds are free to devote themselves to their songs, offering a context for reflection on the power of poetry and the nature of poetic succession;⁴¹ moreover, the nature of competition in a variety of the poems invites an aesthetic response and demonstrates a metapoetic impulse in the *Idylls*. Yet song is not an innate feature of the landscape: it exists apart from the *locus amoenus*, a consequence of the herders' freedom.⁴²

It is Roman literature which sees the pleasance become "the principal motif of all nature description",⁴³ and in the Augustan poetry of Horace, Vergil and Ovid depictions of the pleasance refine the metapoetic force of the *locus amoenus*, relating it to the political and social concerns of the day⁴⁴ and establishing landscape as a means of thematically exploring the poetics of empire (perhaps reflected by Quintilian's reference to *libertas*).⁴⁵ Vergil's incorporation of political themes in the first eclogue is relevant here, positioning the image of the herdsman reclining in the *locus amoenus* in reference to the land seizures of the early Augustan regime;⁴⁶ the pleasance of Vergil's *Eclogues* functions as "the *loci* of social and political concerns".⁴⁷ The initial lines of the first eclogue demonstrate the connection established between the landscape and the contemporary political situation. Meliboeus, departing from the *locus amoenus* of the

³⁹ Giesecke (2007) 94-5.

⁴⁰ Hutchinson (1988) 146-9; cf. Parry (1957) 14.

⁴¹ Hubbard (1998) 20-8 and ff., on esp. Theoc. 7; Berger (1984) 2; Schönbeck (1962) 112-28; Hutchinson (1988) 205-12. Cf. Theoc. 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11; cf. Parry (1957) 6, 10-15; Goldhill (1991) 238-49.

⁴² Rosenmeyer (1969) 183-9; Hutchinson (1988) 145-6; Curtius (1953) 195.

⁴³ Curtius (1953) 195.

⁴⁴ Newlands (1984) 7-8; cf. Leach (1974) 49, 98; Jenkyns (1998) 362, 371. Cf. Keith (2000) 42-6 on the possible role of the *locus amoenus* in Ennius' *Annales*.

⁴⁵ Cf. Newlands (2002a) 2-8 on Statius' *Silvae* and the 'Poetics of Empire'; Quint. *Inst.* 10.3.24; cf. Smith (1965) 299.

⁴⁶ Cf. Boyle (1975) 105-7.

⁴⁷ Martindale (1997b) 116-8.

first eclogue, intimates his bitterness at his expulsion from this Roman paradise,⁴⁸

evoking both the suggestive language of the *patria* as well as that of poetic production:

M.: *Tityre, tu patulae recubans sub tegmine fagi
silvestrem tenui Musam meditaris avena;
nos patriae finis et dulcia linquimus arva.
nos patriam fugimus; tu, Tityre, lentus in umbra
formosam resonare doces Amaryllida silvas.*

(Verg. *Ecl.* 1.1-5)

M.: You, Tityrus, reclining under the cover of the spreading beech, are meditating on the woodland Muse with a slender reed: we are leaving the boundaries of our home-country and its sweet fields. We flee our country: you, Tityrus, lingering in the shade teach the woods to echo “beautiful Amaryllis.”

The first eclogue represents the controversial reallocation of Italian property following Augustus’ land confiscations of 42BC;⁴⁹ Augustus’ reforms benefitted some who were allotted land by their *deus* (*Ecl.* 1.6);⁵⁰ others were not so fortunate. Meliboeus’ complaint iterates the centrality of song and poetic performance to the *locus amoenus* of the *Eclogues*,⁵¹ and the poem is replete with markers signifying poetic production, such as the song of the bees⁵² and the running water (51-8),⁵³ both Callimachean symbols for poetic inspiration.⁵⁴ Despite seemingly disparaging Tityrus’ abandoned pastureland (46-50), Meliboeus voices his envy at Tityrus: Meliboeus will be silent, separated from the landscape he has called his own (77). Significantly, Tityrus has had to leave his *locus amoenus* to gain a reprieve, although his absence was temporary;⁵⁵ even this separation between rustic and landscape engendered a markedly discordant response from nature (1.36-9).

⁴⁸ Cf. Newlands (1984) 28-32.

⁴⁹ Leach (1974) 130ff.

⁵⁰ Martindale (1997b) 117.

⁵¹ Cf. Leach (1974) 34; Hubbard (1998) 17; Hinds (2002) 124.

⁵² Cf. Hor. *Carm.* 4.2.27-32; cf. Call. *Ap.* 110; Williams (1978) 92-4.

⁵³ Cf. Leach (1974) 180; cf. Call. *Ap.* 105-113.

⁵⁴ Newlands (1984) 31-2.

⁵⁵ Verg. *Ecl.* 1.19-25; 40-45.

The character of the *Eclogues* encourages a metapoetic reading, particularly in its continued Theocritean emphasis on song⁵⁶ and song-contests;⁵⁷ moreover, the collection appears to pass judgement on the generic efficacy of pastoral in articulating the social and political themes dominant in the early empire. Martindale notes that the tenth eclogue stages “a debate about literary modes, the deficiencies and limitations of pastoral leading in the end to its abandonment by Virgil”;⁵⁸ Vergil’s *Extremum...laborem* (*Ecl.* 10.1) functions as a reflexive meditation on the value of pastoral as its inhabitants are displaced from the ideal rustic landscape of the *locus amoenus* and emplaced in the reality of the early Principate. The poem opens with a seemingly optimistic assessment of the relationship between poet and landscape: *non canimus surdis, respondent omnia silvae*, 10.8 (“We do not sing to deaf ears: the woods echo every sound”). Yet the remainder of the eclogue points to the alienation of the poet from the *locus amoenus*:

“*hic gelidi fontes, hic mollia prata, Lycori,
hic nemus; hic ipso tecum consumerer aevo.
nunc insanus amor duri me Martis in armis
tela inter media atque adversos detinet hostis.
tu procul a patria...
Alpinas a! dura nives et frigora Rheni
me sine sola vides*”

(10.42-8)

“Here are cold springs, here are soft meadows, here a grove, Lycoris; here, with you, I would be consumed by time. Now a mad passion for harsh Mars holds me in arms in the middle of weapons and opposing enemies: you, far from home... you, ah! hard one, you look on Alpine snow and the frozen Rhine without me, alone”.

Again invoking the relationship of poetry to the *patria*, the poem is an articulation of pastoral’s inability to fully express the new Roman reality;⁵⁹ exhausted as a poetic mode, its song no longer offers any consolation to the inhabitants of the *locus amoenus*:

iam neque Hamadryades rursus neque carmina nobis / ipsa placent; ipsae rursus

⁵⁶ *Ecl.* 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 10.

⁵⁷ *Ecl.* 3, 5, 7, 8.

⁵⁸ Martindale (1997b) 113; cf. Conte (1986) 100-29. Cf. Newlands (1984) 34-40 on dissolution and the ninth eclogue; Leach (1975) 122-3.

⁵⁹ Cf. Boyle (1975) 112-7; Leach (1974) 144.

concedite silvae, *Ecl.* 10.62-3 (“now, on the contrary, neither Hamadryads nor even songs please me; again, even the woods, give way!”). Moreover, the repetition of the heavily loaded term *patria* from the first eclogue is suggestive of the deep convulsions represented by the dissolution of Vergil’s pastoral idyll, while at the same time it looks forward to the *Aeneid* as the great epic of the Roman *patria*. Indeed, the term *patria* occurs only five times in the *Eclogues*; outside of the first and the tenth, *patria* is used in the fourth eclogue, a poem which connects the *silvae*⁶⁰ to the return of *Saturnia regna*⁶¹ and Augustus’ *gens aurea*.⁶² While the optimism of this poem is undercut by the pessimism of the later *Eclogues*,⁶³ it presages Anchises’ optimistic prophecy as it is presented in the epic *locus amoenus* of *Aeneid* six.

1.2: Elysian fields forever: poet, *patria* and the *locus amoenus*

Vergil explicitly states that the landscape of Elysium presented in book 6 of his *Aeneid* is one of the *amoena* (sweet places),⁶⁴ and Servius comments that: ‘*amoena*’ *sunt loca solius voluptatis plena...unde nullus fructus exsolvitur* (“‘*amoena* [pleasances]’ are places full of only pleasure...from which comes nothing profitable”).⁶⁵ As the final resting place of the just (*piorum...concilia*, 5.734-5) Elysium is the archetypal *locus amoenus*:⁶⁶

...devenere locos laetos et amoena virecta
 fortunatorum nemorum sedesque beatas.
 largior hic campos aether et lumine vestit
 purpureo, solemque suum, sua sidera norunt.
 pars in gramineis exercent membra palaestris,
 contendunt ludo et fulva luctantur harena;

⁶⁰ *si canimus silvas, silvae sint consule dignae*, 4.3.

⁶¹ Verg. *Ecl.* 4.6; cf. 18-45.

⁶² Verg. *Ecl.* 4.9.

⁶³ Cf. Leach (1974) 222-9.

⁶⁴ Verg. *A.* 5.734; also cf. 6.638. Cf. Curtius (1953) 192; Austin (1977) 203; Williams (1960) 182. Cf. Cicero *De. Nat. Deor.* 2.100.

⁶⁵ Serv. *A.* 5.734; cf. Serv. *A.* 6.638. Cf. Edmonds (2004) 1-28 on the Underworld as a marginal space reflective of conceptualisations of the world.

⁶⁶ Austin (1977) 202; cf. Thesleff (1981) 34; Jenkyns (1998) 462.

*pars pedibus plaudunt choreas et carmina dicunt.
nec non Threicius longa cum veste sacerdos
obloquitur numeris septem discrimina vocum,
iamque eadem digitis, iam pectine pulsat eburno.*

...
*conspicit, ecce, alios dextra laevaue per herbam
vescentis laetumque choro paeana canentis
inter odoratum lauris nemus, unde superne
plurimus Eridani per silvam volvitur amnis.*

(Verg. A. 6.638-47; 656-9)

...they reached the places of joy and grassy pleasantries of the happy groves and the joyful seats. Here a greater heaven clothes the fields with a brilliant light, and they know their own sun and their own stars. Some of them engage their limbs on the grassy wrestling ground, strive in sport and wrestle on the golden sand; some stamp their feet in dance and chant songs. There too is the Thracian priest with long robe, he accompanies their rhythm with seven clear notes of the lyre, and now strikes them with his fingers, now with his ivory plectrum...Lo, he sees others to the right and to the left feasting on the crop and singing in chorus a happy hymn within a laurel scented grove, from whence, above, the full flood of Eridanus rolls through the forest.

Quintilian's reference to the visual nature of the landscape is reflected in Vergil's Elysium: Aeneas and the Sybil scan the landscape and the reader of the text is encouraged to "look around" (Quintilian's *circumspiciendi*), visualising the vibrant light and colours. Vergil's depiction of Elysium integrates a variety of sensory experiences into the *locus amoenus* including olfactory and auditory stimulation in addition to an accentuation of the visual;⁶⁷ crucially, the auditory sensation comes from human activity. Central to the pleasure of the inhabitants are competitive sport and song;⁶⁸ particularly, song is integrated with the grove (6.656-7). Vergil emphasises the hymnic nature of the second song with its allusion to Apollo (*paeana*,⁶⁹ 6.656) as well as intensifying the effect by referring to Orpheus, who is not only a poet but is emphatically *sacerdos* (6.645);⁷⁰ similarly, *vates* (6.662) is capable of signifying both poets and prophets, as well as having cosmological connotations.⁷¹ The Sibyl is

⁶⁷ Cf. Newlands (1984) 5.

⁶⁸ Cf. Toynbee (1971) 12-7; cf. Lovatt (2005a) 1-22.

⁶⁹ Cf. TLL 10.1.28.34-45.

⁷⁰ Cf. Dodds (1951) 147-56; Austin (1977) 205-9. Orpheus is linked with poetic control of the *locus amoenus* at Ov. *Met.* 10.86ff.; Hinds (2002) 127.

⁷¹ Cf. Hardie (1986) 7, 17-22; O'Hara (1990) 176.

consistently referred to by both terms.⁷² Moreover, while Orpheus is named first as an inhabitant of the grove, a crowd surrounds Musaeus, whose very name recalls the source of inspiration Vergil claims for his poem.⁷³ Poetic performance and prophecy are closely intertwined in this vision of the *locus amoenus*, even in the grove of laurels that fragrances the land of the blessed; the laurel, as the plant associated Apollo,⁷⁴ operates within a network of allusions to the god and to his functions as a god of poetics and prophecy, embedding song within the topographical symbolism of the Elysian *locus amoenus*.⁷⁵

As Vergil makes the *locus amoenus* part of his exploration of the role of pastoral poetry and the new imperial politics of the Augustan period, so Elysium is made integral to Aeneas' vision of Roman renewal and the Augustan *aurea saecula* (6.792-3).⁷⁶ While Vergil's utopian Elysium exists on the margins of human existence,⁷⁷ it is the centrepiece of the Underworld, just as book six is made the centre of the *Aeneid* as a whole,⁷⁸ and the vision of future Roman leaders places imperial expansion at the heart of Vergil's depiction of the Trojans' settlement in Italy. Anchises, Aeneas' guide to the future history of Rome, is himself set up as a philosophical *sacerdos* and *vates*, taking over from the Sybil once he is located in Elysium;⁷⁹ considering the fate of the unborn and telling the story of the Romans, he too is figured as an inhabitant of the *locus amoenus*.⁸⁰ After a philosophical disquisition on the fate of the soul, Anchises presents to Aeneas the great Romans of the future and the manner by which his descendents will

⁷² *vates*: 6.125, 161, 189, 211, 259, 372, 398, 415, 419, 561; *sacerdos*: 6.244, 321, 544, 628.

⁷³ 6.667-8; cf. 1.8: *Musa, mihi causas memora*; 7.37-41: *Nunc age... Erato... tu vatem, tu, diva, mone*; Winkler (1987) 656-8; Austin (1977) 210.

⁷⁴ OLD s.v. *laurus* (2(d)); *laurea* (2(c)).

⁷⁵ Cf. Verg. *E.* 4.10: *tuus iam regnat Apollo*.

⁷⁶ Cf. Verg. *E.* 4.9. Jenkyns (1998) 125, 493; although cf. Thomas (1982) 100.

⁷⁷ Cf. Evans (2008) 6-15.

⁷⁸ Williams (1990) 191; cf. Hardie (1986) 326.

⁷⁹ Winkler (1987) 658-9; cf. 6.759: "*tua fata docebo*".

⁸⁰ 6.679-83.

come to greatness:⁸¹ ‘*tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento / (hae tibi erunt artes)*’, 6.851-2 (“‘you, Roman, remember to rule the nations by your *imperium* (these arts shall be yours)’”).⁸² Anchises’ enunciation of the national purpose of the Roman *patria* places this exhortation into the mouth of the *vates*, who, in a landscape filled with poetic production, refrains from explicitly telling the “Roman” that others will produce poetry more effectively; poets and prophets retain primacy,⁸³ and Vergil asserts for himself the optimum position as the Roman *vates*,⁸⁴ performing and elucidating Roman history within the idealised landscape. Poetic, philosophical and political discourses are yoked together in the Elysian landscape, and this, with other Vergilian landscapes, becomes a literary model against which Latin poets of succeeding generations would measure themselves.

1.3: Artful violations in the Ovidian *locus amoenus*

While Vergil’s significance for the development of the *locus amoenus* in imperial Latin epic cannot be understated, his contemporaries and immediate successors also had a fundamental influence over the manner in which the later epicists engage with the *topos*. Particularly, Ovid’s use of the *locus amoenus* as the setting for a number of episodes in his *Metamorphoses* has manifest implications for the poets of the first century AD. Ovid’s landscapes are symbolic landscapes⁸⁵ that exploit the sensual nature of the landscape, with a particular preference for eroticism.⁸⁶ Seemingly inviting, these are landscapes of ambiguity, mystery and alienation that embed a moral sense within the

⁸¹ 6.756-885.

⁸² Cf. Boyle (1993b) 83.

⁸³ Anchises refers to: bronze and marble works; rhetoric; and astronomy. Astronomy, while associated with astrological prophecy, is only an aspect of that practice; 6.847-50.

⁸⁴ Cf. Winkler (1987) 659.

⁸⁵ Segal (1969) 1-19.

⁸⁶ Parry (1964) 269; Segal (1969) 12-3; Hinds (2002) 131.

topography. These strange and otherworldly groves, set aside from the world of human existence and made home to gods and other outlandish beings, are frequently inhospitable to human interlopers,⁸⁷ demonstrating the “moral and emotional ambiguity of the text”;⁸⁸ their isolation, shade, vagueness and erotic colouring distance the *locus amoenus* from the human world.⁸⁹ Moreover, metamorphosis in Ovid’s poem frequently has a strongly aetiological flavour: as the poem points teleologically *ab origine mundi / ad mea... tempora*,⁹⁰ Ovid’s *locus amoenus* is often the setting for chaotic, violent metamorphoses that explore the genesis of the natural world and the reification of certain qualities within the natural landscape and the living bodies that inhabit it;⁹¹ unnatural *causae* engender the natural world as victims are inscribed into the landscape.⁹² Once part of the environment, victims become a permanent part of the topography, taking the form of a river, tree or other topographical feature.⁹³

The disjunction between the welcoming environment and the frequent acts of excessive violence that take place within the grove creates a tension that places the pleasance beyond the boundaries of desired human experience.⁹⁴ Ovid’s groves partially derive their otherworldliness not only from their predominantly divine inhabitants and the strange events that occur within the space, but also from the palpable sense of artistic order that saturates these ostensibly wild and untamed landscapes.⁹⁵ As such, the *locus amoenus* in the *Metamorphoses* demonstrates the power of the artist over

⁸⁷ Segal (1969) 18-9.

⁸⁸ Newlands (2004) 137.

⁸⁹ Cf. Prop. 1.20.39-40.

⁹⁰ Ov. *Met.* 1.3-4.

⁹¹ Solodow (1988) 207; cf. Graf (2002) 115-9; Feldherr (2002) 168.

⁹² Hinds (2002) 127-30; cf. Verg. *A.* 6.234-5, 7.1-4.

⁹³ Tissol (1997) 195.

⁹⁴ Newlands (1984) 77-8; Hinds (2002) 131.

⁹⁵ Cf. Newlands (1984) 78ff; Hinds (2002) 137-8; cf. Solodow (1988) 203-27.

“nature”, although Ovid also frequently uses the *topos* to undermine the concept of human control over nature and passion.⁹⁶

It is Ovid’s version of the myth of Diana and Actaeon that most fully demonstrates the nature of his engagement with the *locus amoenus*:⁹⁷

*Vallis erat piceis et acuta densa cupressu,
nomine Gargaphie, succintae sacra Dianae,
cuius in extremo est antrum nemorale recessu
arte laboratum nulla: simulaverat artem
ingenio natura suo; nam pumice vivo
et levibus tofis nativum duxerat arcum.
fons sonat a dextra tenui perlucidus unda,
margine gramineo patulos succintus hiatus:
hic dea silvarum venatu fessa solebat
virgineos artus liquido perfundere rore.*

(3.155-64)

There was a valley, thick with pines and cypress with sharp needles, named Gargaphie, sacred to belted Diana, where, in the deepest recess, there was a woody cave shaped with no art: nature by her own genius had simulated art; for she had shaped a natural arch from the living stone and the light rock. A clear spring with its slender water babbles on the right side and widened, girdled with grassy banks, into an open pool: here the goddess of the woods, tired from hunting, was accustomed to bathe her virgin limbs in the clear water.

Immediately the landscape is marked as an ephrasis distinct from the main body of the narrative with the *est locus* formula, and an ominously suggestive tone is set by the thick, impenetrable trees of the grove;⁹⁸ yet the supposedly “natural” landscape is marked by the language of artifice (*laboratum; simulaverat; ingenio; duxerat*).⁹⁹ Moreover, the grotto issues an “invitation to view”,¹⁰⁰ as Diana’s cave forms a “natural” frame for the action bounded by the *arcus*, a malleable term which allows slippage between nature and artifice.¹⁰¹ *Silva*, too, although common enough in descriptions of landscape and *loca amoena* also carries with it the idea of “material”,¹⁰² particularly

⁹⁶ Newlands (1984) 80-1; cf. Pyramus and Thisbe: Ov. *Met.* 4.51-166.

⁹⁷ Cf.: Echo and Narcissus (3.441ff); Apollo and Daphne (1.452-566); Dryope (9.326-91); Salmacis and Hermaphroditus (4.285ff.); Callisto (2.417ff.); Cadmus (3.28ff.); Erysichthon (8.749ff); etc.

⁹⁸ Newlands (1984) 87; Segal (1969) 16.

⁹⁹ Cf. 15.218; Solodow (1988) 210-4.

¹⁰⁰ Hinds (2002) 136-7.

¹⁰¹ OLD s.v. *arcus* (3), (4).

¹⁰² OLD s.v. *silva* (4).

with regard to poetic material.¹⁰³ Diana is here therefore not only the goddess of the woods, but the goddess of a grove which displays a high degree of artifice, and which is demonstrative of the poet's control over his literary material. Yet the idea of control suggested by the grove's artifice is deceptive:¹⁰⁴ Diana is unable to prevent accidental penetration of the grove, and Actaeon is subjected to a metamorphosis into a stag in which defining characteristics of his humanity (such as the ability to speak¹⁰⁵) are taken away; he can no longer control his faithful dogs, by which he is pursued as quarry.

Violence, particularly of a sexual nature,¹⁰⁶ is implicit in the Ovidian *locus amoenus*; it is frequently divinely precipitated and apparently arbitrary:¹⁰⁷ Diana's response to Actaeon's transgression appears excessive and capricious, given that Ovid makes it clear that Actaeon's transgression is accidental rather than deliberate.¹⁰⁸ The goddess' response seems disproportionate: power is ambiguous and capable of being misapplied, hinting at a subversive political and moral message.¹⁰⁹ Ovid plays on Diana's role as a virgin huntress: victims of rape in the *Metamorphoses* are often "virgin devotee[s] of Diana, whose embrace of the hunt constitutes a rejection of sexuality".¹¹⁰ Ovid's presentation of the hunt frequently has erotic connotations,¹¹¹ yet the perceived sexual violation of the goddess is equated with Actaeon's penetration of the "virgin", impenetrable grove; Actaeon is himself a hunter, and his entrance into the grove is

¹⁰³ OLD s.v. *silva* (5); cf. Statius' *Silvae*: Newlands (2002a) 36; Jenkyns (1998) 503; Hinds (1998) 12.

¹⁰⁴ Newlands (1984) 83, 96-100; Hinds (2002) 136-40.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Hecuba 13.568-75.

¹⁰⁶ Parry (1964) 272, 289; Segal (1969) 8; Hinds (2002) 130-6.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Bacchus and Pentheus, 3.513-733; Daphne and Apollo (1.452-566); Dryope and Apollo (9.326-91).

¹⁰⁸ 3.141-2: *at bene si quaeras, fortunae crimen in illo, / non scelus invenies; quod enim scelus error habebat?*

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Newlands (2004) 136; Newlands (1984) 95-104.

¹¹⁰ Hinds (2002) 131; Heath (1991) 233. Cf. Daphne, Syrinx, Callisto and Arethusa. Cf. Parry (1964) 272-5, and the rape of Io (Ov. *Met.* 1.588ff.).

¹¹¹ Parry (1964) 269.

suggestive of Ovid's thematic interest in the violation of "nature and sanctity".¹¹² Ovid's contribution to the *locus amoenus* thematics of the post-Augustan epicists manifests itself in the ecphrastic potential and reflexive interrogation of epic as a means of articulating the artist's control over his material, while at the same time demonstrating the ambiguity and potential for transformation and subversion that lies at the heart of the text.¹¹³

1.4: *Inamoenitas*: what is the *locus horridus*?

In contrast, the unpleasant and hellish counterpart of the *locus amoenus* has received little attention; however, in the work of Lucan the perverse *locus horridus* becomes a primary means of articulating a response to a dystopic political landscape. Consequently, the Flavian epicists use *loca horrida* to articulate their reaction to the changed political and poetic circumstances of the first century AD, suggesting an ambivalence towards Vergilian optimism whilst establishing a dynamic poetics that can evaluate the Roman world of empire. These are not simply reflections of the depraved tastes of a decadent culture, although Seneca complains about the fascination with landscapes of spectacle and horror prevalent in Neronian Rome (Sen. *Tranq.* 2.13-4).¹¹⁴ Seneca's own tragedies have been heavily criticised for their perceived rhetorical excesses,¹¹⁵ even to the point where they are deemed to be incompatible with the Stoic doctrines of restraint espoused in his prose and philosophical works,¹¹⁶ and Senecan drama demonstrates an increasing engagement with the opposite of the pleasant

¹¹² Segal (1969) 44-9: This "is represented as a symbolical attempt on the goddess' chastity... To see the goddess nude is itself a kind of sexual violence".

¹¹³ Cf. Heath (1991) 242-3.

¹¹⁴ Santini (1999) 207; cf. Vit. 7.5.3.

¹¹⁵ Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.129; Costa (1974) 96-9; Herington (1982) 15-6, 25-6; cf. Boyle (2006) 193-7.

¹¹⁶ Rosenmeyer (1989) 9-11, 15-28. Cf. Pratt (1983) 73-81; Boyle (2006) 197-201; Littlewood (2004) 15-102; cf., in contrast, Segal (1983) 179.

grove.¹¹⁷ Rather than a pleasance featuring pleasing shade, a gentle stream and breeze, landscapes become darker and more forbidding. These *loca horrida* frequently retain the framework and vocabulary of the pleasance; yet shades are here cold and frightening, trees are rotting, and rivers flood, or even run with blood rather than water.¹¹⁸

*Est procul ab urbe lucus ilicibus niger
Dircaea circa vallis inriguae loca.
cupressus altis exerens silvis caput
virente semper alligat trunco nemus,
curvosque tendit quercus et putres situ
annosa ramos: huius abruptit latus
edax vetustas; illa, iam fessa cadens
radice, fulta pendet aliena trabe.
amara bacas laurus et tiliae leves
et Paphia myrtus et per immensum mare
motura remos alnus, et Phoebo obvia,
enode Zephyris pinus opponens latus.
medio stat ingens arbor atque umbra gravi
silvas minores urguet et magno ambitu
diffusa ramos una defendit nemus.
tristis sub illa, lucis et Phoebi inscius,
restagnat umor frigore aeterno rigens;
limosa pigrum circumit fontem palus.*

(Sen. *Oed.* 530-47)

Away from the city, there is a grove dark with oak trees, near the well watered Vale of Dirce. A cypress, lifting its head above the high woods, holds the grove in its evergreen embrace, and an aged oak spreads its crooked and rotting branches over the site. Rapacious age has worn away the side of this one; the other, now falling with split roots, hangs, propped up by a neighbouring trunk. Laurel, with bitter berries, and slender lime-trees, and Paphian myrtle and the alder, destined to move its oars over the sea; and meeting the sun, a pine tree lifts its unknotted side to the winds. In the middle stands a huge tree, and with its heavy shade it overshadows the smaller trees; and spreading its branches with a great reach it defends the grove alone. Under that tree, a gloomy spring overflows, ignorant of light and sun, numb with eternal cold; a muddy swamp surrounds the benumbed pool.

As described by Creon the grove, an access point to the Underworld, demonstrates features familiar from more pleasant landscapes:¹¹⁹ the trees are *silvae*, and a stream and breeze are present; there are laurel and oak trees, each common to archetypal *locus amoenus* descriptions. Yet the shade is unpleasant, and the water is freezing to touch;

¹¹⁷ Töchterle (1994) 438.

¹¹⁸ Cf. Mugellesi (1973) 37; Schiesaro (1985) 220. See table 1.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Sen. *Oed.* 868-70.

the grove is derelict and rotting.¹²⁰ Seneca does not adopt these unpleasant landscapes from Greek tragedy;¹²¹ but rather takes fundamental elements from the *locus amoenus* and adapts them into an ominous space designed to articulate dramatic tension, reflecting the psychological horror and anxiety experienced by the tragic protagonist.¹²² Comparably, some Senecan *loca horrida* do not depict a landscape of unremitting horror, but instead emphasise the absence of elements that make the *locus amoenus* pleasant: *Non silva sua decorata coma / fundit opacis montibus umbras*, Sen. *Oed.* 154-5 (“No woods adorned with their own foliage shed shadows on the dark mountains”).¹²³ Rather than acting as a setting which appears safe and alluring yet becomes the site of violence and destruction, death and decay are built into the fabric of the *locus horridus*.

Scholarship concerning the *locus horridus* has tended to view it as a development of the Neronian period and later; as such, research has focussed on authors such as Seneca,¹²⁴ Apuleius,¹²⁵ and Lucan.¹²⁶ Trinquier, focussing on the *locus horridus* of Apuleius, has proposed four types of unpleasant landscapes:¹²⁷ the infernal landscape of the Underworld; the surface landscape which opens to the Underworld; that which harbours monsters; and the landscape which is suitable for entrapment. However, while each of these models can be assimilated to the *locus horridus*, a rigidly systematic typology of landscapes that make up a canonical *locus horridus* is not entirely satisfactory. The *locus horridus* is not explicitly named as a *topos* in antiquity, and the terminology is modern;¹²⁸ indeed, the modern nomenclature is unstable, and the non-

¹²⁰ Cf. Sen. *Thy.* 650-82 and *Her. O.* 1618-41. Cf. (in contrast) S. *OC* 17-21.

¹²¹ Cf. Töchterle (1994) 430, on the “epischen Tendenz” revealed by the passage.

¹²² Mugellesi (1973) 47; Segal (1983) 173-81; cf. Littlewood (2004) 17.

¹²³ Trinquier (1999) 257-8; cf. Hunink (1992) 168.

¹²⁴ Mugellesi (1973) 29ff.; Segal (1983) 180.

¹²⁵ Schiesaro (1985) 211ff.; Trinquier (1999) 257ff.

¹²⁶ Phillips (1968) 296ff.; Garrison (1992) 98ff.; Leigh (1999) 167ff.; Santini (1999) 207ff.; cf. Pollini (1986) 21ff. on Valerius Flaccus; Malaspina (1994) *passim*, on the *topos* more generally.

¹²⁷ Trinquier (1999) 260-1.

¹²⁸ Although a fragment of Pacuvius’ tragedy *Antiope* includes the phrase *loca horrida initas*. However, no further description of the landscape follows; Ribbeck (1897) 86.3.1b; Leigh (1999) 172-3.

idyllic landscape is also referred to as a *locus inamoenus*¹²⁹ or *locus foedus*.¹³⁰

Malaspina has called for clarity and attempted to systematically subdivide examples of the “inameno” landscape,¹³¹ following a scheme similar to that of Schönbeck regarding the *locus amoenus*.¹³² However, while the distinction of the *locus horridus* from other *inamoenus* landscapes (such as unpleasant variants of the “paesaggio eroico” and the “paesaggio dionisiaco”) is well-founded, and Malaspina himself notes the need to avoid excessive simplification through definition,¹³³ it nevertheless remains that landscape types are not so clearly delineated in ancient literature; there is a danger that such subtle distinctions are not always valid when considering the blurred borders between landscape types. Further, continuing to emphasise these subdivisions fails to give satisfactory regard to the relationships between depictions of the *locus amoenus* and the *locus horridus*. It is difficult to know by what point the *locus horridus* had become distinguishable from the *locus amoenus*,¹³⁴ as both are familiar in Augustan works. The first attestation of Garrison’s *inamoenus* is at Ov. *Met.* 10.15, embedded in an Orphic narrative of descent into the Underworld;¹³⁵ and while the emergence of the *locus horridus* tends to be regarded as principally a Neronian development, there exist numerous points of contact between the Augustan idealised and un-idyllic landscapes.¹³⁶

When Horace delivers his condemnation of descriptive *purpureus pannus* (Hor. *Ars* 15-6), he not only cites an attractive grove and a stream running *per amoenos* ...

¹²⁹ Garrison (1992) 100.

¹³⁰ Masters (1992) 25. Malaspina (1994) 11-2 notes a 17th century *locus terribilis* motif.

¹³¹ Malaspina (1994) 13-22.

¹³² Schönbeck (1962) 8-14.

¹³³ Malaspina (1994) 9.

¹³⁴ Garrison (1992) 104. Garrison suggests that the origin of the *topos* can be tracked back to Roman expansion into the forests of northern Europe, detecting proto-*locus horridus* landscapes in Caes. *Gal.* and *Cat.* 63, 104-12. Cf. Leigh (1999) 172-3, who notes that although there may not be an acknowledged *topos* (or trope), there is certainly an “idea” of the “archetypal place of terror”, at least by Lucan’s period (cf. *Luc.* 3.399ff.).

¹³⁵ Garrison (1992) 113 n. 7; TLL 7.1.818.12-20. Cf. Ov. *Tr.* 1.3.84: Tomis is *horridior locus*.

¹³⁶ Cf. Malaspina (1994) 12-3.

agros (16-7), but also makes reference to the Rhine landscape which due to its size and location might not be so pleasing to Roman tastes,¹³⁷ and which might be intended to contrast with the “idyllic small stream”.¹³⁸ If this is the case, then Horace is not only criticising idyllic landscapes as distracting “purple patches” of rhetoric,¹³⁹ but also chastising excessive depiction of non-idyllic landscapes. It might be contended that by citing the Rhine landscape, Horace is referring to a real space rather than a *locus horridus*; however, even forgetting the possibility of indistinct boundaries that allow a *locus horridus* to be “real”,¹⁴⁰ the Rhine offers a convenient shorthand for a landscape that is outwith the bounds of the pleasance. The key point is that Horace feels it necessary to refer to landscapes that are both pleasant and unpleasant.

Therefore both the *locus amoenus* and the *locus horridus* (or *inamoenus*, or *foedus*) should be considered variants of the same topographical system of representation: the *locus horridus* is initially an extension of the pleasance, which then goes on to be fully realised in the work of the post-Augustan poets. Particularly, Lucan should be recognised for his adaptation of Augustan epic topography which remodels Seneca’s tragic *locus horridus* as the essential topography of his poem of imperial disillusionment. Lucan’s *loca horrida* represent a reception and refiguration for the post-civil war Roman world of the previously dominant *locus amoenus*. This is not to suggest that the two landscapes are precisely synonymous with one another or that they can be conflated, nor is it to suggest that variant *loca horrida* (or other forms of *inamoenus* landscapes) or *loca amoena* cannot be deployed with different functions. Rather, it is to suggest that maintaining awareness of the relationship between ideal and non-ideal landscapes allows a more nuanced analysis of the unpleasant landscape. The

¹³⁷ Indeed, aesthetic (and spiritual) appreciation of the wild, untamed landscape is generally assumed to be a development of the Romantic period; cf. Newlands (1984) 1-3.

¹³⁸ Brink (1971) 97. Garrison (1992) 105-8; cf. Caes. *Gal.* 1.39, 3.28, 4.10.

¹³⁹ Curtius (1953) 193ff.

¹⁴⁰ Also cf. Horace’s Sabine farm as a *locus amoenus*, *Carm.* 1.17.1; Newlands (1984) 53-4.

locus horridus is not just “another part of the forest”;¹⁴¹ it is a neighbour or closer relation to the *locus amoenus*; but it is darker, more overtly threatening, and subject to rot and decay.

As Malaspina notes, the *locus horridus* does not include all unpleasant landscapes,¹⁴² just as every pleasant landscape is not necessarily a *locus amoenus*. However, while Malaspina’s systematisation of *inamoena* is perhaps overly explicit, Trinquier’s distinctions are problematic because although they remain reasonably open to variety of description and function they are also so broad that they encompass many types of landscapes that are not necessarily *loca horrida*. For instance, the category of “les lieux pleins d’embûches, propices aux embuscades” is open enough to encompass any landscape within which an ambush might be able to take place. Yet while a *locus horridus* might easily function as a place of entrapment,¹⁴³ the same might also be said for a particular variety of *locus amoenus* into which victims are lured through its beauty and apparent offer of refuge.¹⁴⁴ Mugellesi has suggested that there is a distinction between the “Paesaggio ameno-statico” and the “paesaggio tragico-dinamico” (by which she means the *locus horridus*, or “paesaggio orrido”), and sets the two up as halves of an antithetical relationship.¹⁴⁵ While this may indeed be the case with pre-Augustan representations of the pleasance, recent examinations of the Augustan and post-Augustan *locus amoenus* have stressed its function as more than just a static setting against which events take place. Further, in a variety of cases, *locus amoenus* landscapes are effectively destroyed and turned into *loca horrida*, often reflecting social and political concerns. In many cases, the two landscapes, pleasant and unpleasant, are closely intertwined.

¹⁴¹ Garrison (1992) 98.

¹⁴² Malaspina (1994) 7-13.

¹⁴³ Cf. Stat. *Theb.* 2.496-525.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. Ov. *Met.* 3.26ff.

¹⁴⁵ Mugellesi (1973) 29.

As with the archetypal *locus horridus* of Elysium, it is book 6 of Vergil's *Aeneid* that supplies examples for the *locus horridus* landscape in epic.¹⁴⁶ In book 6 *loca horrida* correspond to two of Trinquier's categories: the mouth of the Underworld is located at lake Avernus, and parts of the Underworld are represented as *loca horrida*:¹⁴⁷

*spelunca alta fuit vastoque immanis hiatu,
 scrupea, tuta lacu nigro nemorumque tenebris,
 quam super haud ullae poterant impune volantes
 tendere iter pennis: talis sese halitus atris
 faucibus effundens supera ad convexa ferebat.*

(Verg. A. 6.237-41)

There was a deep cave, with a huge and vast mouth, stony, sheltered by a black lake and the shadows of a grove, above which no flying things could safely keep their course by wings: such an exhalation was pouring out from those black jaws, carried into the sky above.

Marked as a distinctly ephrastic passage by the *est locus* formula (*spelunca alta fuit*, 237), water is clearly present in the Avernine landscape (*lacus*, 238). A grove provides shade, but the numinous *nemus* is gloomy rather than shady. The lake emits unpleasant exhalations rather than a pleasant breeze and the cavern is described as having jaggy, sharp rocks.¹⁴⁸ The opening to the Underworld heightens the tension of the moment, providing a suitable location for the sacrifice to the gods of the Underworld. The Underworld itself continues to reflect the *locus amoenus*: travelling *per umbram* (268),¹⁴⁹ the world is compared to a forest (*silva*, 271). The topographical similarities continue into the Underworld itself: an elm spreads shadow just within the entrance (282), and Acheron features as a significant body of water (295ff.); the river fits the gloomy surroundings: *turbidus hic caeno vastaque voragine gurges / aestuat, atque omnem Cocyto eructat harenam*, 296-7 ("Here, thick with mud and with a vast flood, a whirlpool rages and vomits into Cocytus all of its sand"). Vergil's depiction suggests

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Cat. 63 which combines darker landscapes with frenzied emotional states. Garrison (1992) 108-10, Malaspina (1994) 20.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Lucr. 6.740ff.

¹⁴⁸ Austin (1977) 109. Cf. Jenkyns (1998) 450.

¹⁴⁹ *Umbra* also refers here to the ghosts inhabiting the Underworld; Austin (1977) 117.

the physicality of the landscape; moreover the pollution of water by mud and other foreign bodies will become a staple of the *locus horridus*.

Before reaching Elysium Aeneas passes Tartarus, which does not follow the conventions of the *locus amoenus*, although Vergil does describe the passage of the river of fire, Phlegethon (548ff.). However, contextualised within the *loca horrida* of the Underworld, the Tartarean landscape contributes to the overarching sense of gloom and horror. Tartarus leads into Elysium (6.637), placed into direct juxtaposition with the most pleasant of all environments.

Vergil uses the *locus horridus* to establish an atmosphere of danger when Evander describes the cave of Cacus.¹⁵⁰ This savage landscape reflects the savagery of the monster who inhabits it and acts as the setting for the longest aetiological narrative in the *Aeneid*, setting Aeneas' journey within the context of Hercules' labours; the confrontation between Hercules and Cacus serves as a mythic parallel for the encounter between Aeneas and Turnus in the latter half of the poem.¹⁵¹ As such, the aetiological content of the Cacus narrative as related by Evander functions as a reminder of the aetiological potential of the *Aeneid* as a whole. Again, the landscape is unwelcoming and severe, and Cacus' activities in the cave have left its floor and walls covered in blood (8.193-97); further, the earth above the cave will be split by Hercules as he seeks the monster (8.241ff.). Prefiguring the conflict between Aeneas and Turnus, the narrative inscribes violence into the Roman landscape even before the beginnings of Roman history; this of course carries with it implications for the *Aeneid* as itself an aetiological exploration of the origins of Rome.

Vergil's Avernine and Tartarean landscapes function as the focal point for contact with the dead; unlike Seneca's *locus horridus*, Vergil's depiction is less dense

¹⁵⁰ 8.193: *hic spelunca fuit*; Schiesaro (1985) 218; Galinsky (1990) 288.

¹⁵¹ Gransden (1976) 106-8; Galinsky (1990) 290.

and the sense of unease does not permeate the whole work. Seneca's tragic *locus horridus* draws upon a correspondence between the *locus amoenus* and *locus horridus* that has already been established by Vergil, magnifying the sense of unease by inverting the ideal landscape into something much more extreme and disturbing. This is increased further by Seneca's omission of Elysium; without the balance offered by the *locus amoenus*, the gloom of Seneca's non-idyllic landscape becomes even more relentless.

Although Garrison notes that the first instance of the term *inamoenus* is at Ov. *Met.* 10. 15,¹⁵² he does not elaborate on Ovidian non-idyllic landscapes, other than to comment on the later "silver" Latin pedigree of the adjective; rather, in dealing with Ovid, Garrison draws attention to the manipulation of the *locus amoenus* into a location for "violence, cruelty, and arbitrary suffering", and the subsequent influence of this version of the pleasance on poets such as Lucan and Statius.¹⁵³ Ovid's preferred landscape type in the *Metamorphoses* is the untrustworthy *locus amoenus* which also contributes to a tradition in which danger is made manifest within the environment; Ovid provides isolated examples of dangerous, non-ideal landscapes, although these are often the result of an outside body laying waste to a previously pleasant landscape, or are brief references to locations such as the Underworld, such as that at 10.15.¹⁵⁴ An instance of the former comes at 12.528ff., where plague is described as ravishing the land and its people, bringing hot and pestilential winds, infected pools and woods defiled by carcasses and corruption; each element of the *locus amoenus* is distorted. Similarly, some Ovidian landscapes refrain from evoking the full *locus horridus*, instead following the topographical and structural model of the *locus amoenus* while emphasising the absence of any pleasant qualities; this approach will be picked up by

¹⁵² TLL 7.1.818.12-30; Garrison (1992) 113 n. 7.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.* 100.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. 5.541: *silvis...sub antris*.

authors such as Seneca and Lucan.¹⁵⁵ One such example is the cave of Somnus at *Met.* 11.592ff., which has also been cited as a model for *loca horrida* landscapes such as Lucan's grove at *Luc.* 3.399ff.¹⁵⁶ Although danger and horror are not inherent to this landscape, standard elements of the *locus amoenus* are missing,¹⁵⁷ and Ovid exploits the ambivalence of Somnus whose status as a brother of death contrasts with his positive characteristics.¹⁵⁸ Similarly, it should be noted that Ovid depicts a number of landscapes that, while they are not themselves *loca horrida*, provide inspiration for unpleasant groves in Lucan and Seneca. At *Fasti* 2.153ff. Ovid describes the grove in which Diana discovers that Callisto is no longer a virgin: *densa niger ilice lucus, / in medio gelidae fons erat altus aquae*, 2.165-166 ("a dark grove with thick oaks; in the middle was a deep pool of cold water").¹⁵⁹ Although not explicitly a non-idyllic landscape, it is nevertheless constituted of elements (such as the gloom and the cold pool) that will accentuate the danger of the grove in Lucan and Seneca.¹⁶⁰

Augustan landscapes form a strong corpus of archetypal examples of the *locus horridus* landscape which consistently display an affinity to the *locus amoenus*. *Loca horrida* in first century AD epic are influenced by the Augustan *exempla*, adapting textual and topographical structures in order to articulate common concerns with politics, cosmology, morality and poetics. From Lucan's pivotal deployment of the landscape in order to address the supremacy of the poetics of *nefas*, the *locus horridus* becomes foregrounded as the dominant epic topography, and it is in this context that the following exploration of post-Augustan landscapes will proceed.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. *Sen. Oed.* 154-5; cf. Martindale (1976) 49; Bramble (1982) 47-52; Esposito (2004) 64-5.

¹⁵⁶ See for instance Hunink (1992) 169; cf. *Stat. Theb.* 10.87-117; Williams (1972) 44-9.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. *Met.* 11.600-7.

¹⁵⁸ Cf. *Stat. Theb.* 10.105.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. *Sen. Oed.* 530: *lucus ilicibus niger*.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. *Fast.* 3.295-6; see Cogy and Cogy (1981) 273-6. Cf. Segal (1969) 79-80.

	locus amoenus: Ovid Met. 3.155-64	locus horridus: Sen. Oed. 530-47
Location:	<i>Vallis erat ... nomine Gargaphie, succintae sacra Dianae</i> (3.155-6) There was a valley ... named Gargaphie, sacred to Belted Diana	<i>Est procul ab urbe lucus ... Dircaea circa vallis inriguae loca</i> (530-1) Away from the city there is a grove ... near the well-watered vale of Dirce
Trees and shade:	... <i>piccis et acuta densa cupressu ... in extremo est antrum nemorale recessu ...</i> (3.155-6) ... thick with pines and cypresses with sharp needles ... in the deepest recess, there was a woody cave ...	<i>Lucus ilicibus niger cupressus altis exerens silvis caput virente semper alligat trunco nemus, curvosque tendit quercus et putres situ annosa ramos. ... amara bacas laurus et tiliae leves et Paphia myrtus et per immensum mare motura remos alnus, et Phoebus obvia, enode Zephyris pinus opponens latus. medio stat ingens arbor atque umbra gravi silvas minores urguet et magno ambitu diffusa ramos una defendit nemus.</i> (530-5, 538-44) A grove dark with trees ... A cypress, lifting its head above the high woods, holds the grove in its evergreen embrace, and an aged oak spreads its crooked and rotting branches over the site ... Laurel, with bitter berries, and slender lime-trees, and Paphian myrtle and the alder, soon moving its oars over the wide sea; and meeting the sun, a pine tree lifts its unknotted side to the winds. In the middle stands a huge tree, and with its heavy shade it overshadows the smaller trees; and spreading its branches with great reach it defends the grove alone.
Pools and water:	<i>fons sonat a dextra tenui perlucidus unda, margine gramineo patulos succintus hiatus</i> (3.161-2) A clear spring with its slender water babbles on the right side and widened, girdled with grassy banks, into an open pool	<i>tristis sub illa, lucis et Phoebi inscius, restagnat umor frigore aeterno rigens; limosa pigrum circumit fontem palus.</i> (545-7) Under that tree, a gloomy spring overflows, ignorant of light and sun, numb with eternal cold; a muddy swamp surrounds the benumbed pool.
Character:	... <i>cuius ... arte laboratum nulla: simulaverat artem ingenio natura suo; nam pumice vivo et levibus tofis nativum duxerat arcum ... hic dea silvarum venatu fessa solebat virgineos artus liquido perfundere rore.</i> (3.157, 158-60, 163-4) ... where ... [the cave] was shaped with no art: nature by her own genius had simulated art: for she had shaped a natural arch from the living stone and the light rock ... here the goddess of the woods, tired from hunting, was accustomed to bathe her virgin limbs in the clear water.	<i>huius abruptit latus edax vetustas; illa, iam fessa cadens radice, fulta pendet aliena trabe.</i> (535-7) Rapacious age has worn away the side of this one; the other, now falling with split roots, hangs, propped up by a neighbouring trunk.

Table 1: Topographical features of the *locus amoenus* and *locus horridus*

2: Fractured landscapes in the *Bellum Civile*

Lucan's *Bellum Civile* is a poem of paradoxes, hyperbole, contradictions, violent excesses and excessive violence:¹ it is not only a poem of the contest between Caesar, Pompey, Cato and the Senate; it is a poem which *is* a contest; it has been suggested that it is a poem that the poet does not want to produce,² a viewpoint at odds with the narrator's delight in the grotesque and the poetic impetus to remake the *nefas* of civil war in verse form.³ It is a poem of contested meanings: it is a poem of the Republicans; yet the poet has been claimed for Caesar, both parties, or no-one at all.⁴ It is a poem in which the Stoic worldview finds expression; yet it is set within a nihilistic universe of chaos, dissolution and destruction;⁵ paradoxically, martial *virtus*, traditionally aimed outwards, is directed inwards against the state to become *crimen*;⁶ it is a poem that is unfinished,⁷ the product of a decadent age, friendship and enmity with Nero, conspiracy, and a turbulent life cut short; its programme was altered by a ban on Lucan's poetry after the publication of three books,⁸ and yet a provocative argument claims the poem is

¹ Bartsch (1997) 2; cf. Martindale (1976) 45; Barton (1984) 5-7, 48-72; O'Hara (2007) 131-42; Nussbaum (1993) 98-104.

² Masters (1992) 9, 213-5; cf. Luc. 6.430: *tacitum sed fas*; Henderson (1998) 183-4; Feeney (1991) 276-8; cf. D'Allessandro Behr (2007) 7.

³ Cf. Morford (1967a) 67; Johnson (1987) 4. Civil war as *nefas*: 1.6, 21, 37; 1.325: *bella nefanda* (planned by Pompey); *ius* is contrasted with *scelus* at 1.2 and with *scelus nefandum* at 1.667; to know why the war began would also be *nefas* (1.127: *scire nefas*). *Nefas* is, of course, "unmentionable" and "unlawful" (i.e. not *fas*): OLD s.v. *nefas*; O'Higgins (1988) 217 n. 28, citing Var. *L.* 6.29-30. Cf. Masters (1992) 205-15.

⁴ Bartsch (1997) 97; Leigh (1997) 157; Fantham (1999) 110-5; Masters (1994) 151-3, 168; Masters (1992) 7; Cf. Martindale (1984) 70-1: "He might have hoped for at least a measure of Republican liberty".

⁵ Marti (1945) 352; Colish (1985) 253; D'Allessandro Behr (2007) 76-161, 171-8; cf. Long (2007) 184; Martindale (1984) 71; Feeney (1991) 279; Tarrant (2002) 358; Sklenář (1999) 281-2; Sklenář (2003) 2-3; Johnson (1987) 18; LaPidge (1979) 361.

⁶ 6.147-8: *pronus ad omne nefas et qui nesciret, in armis / quam magnum virtus crimen civilibus esset*. Cf. 6.301-3; Fantham (1995).

⁷ Prompting Thomas May's *Supplementum Lucani* of 1640. Cf. Ahl (1976) 306-32; Radicke (2004) 55-65.

⁸ Suet. *Poet. Vita Lucani*; Tac. *Ann.* 15.49, 56, 70; Vacca 336.1. Cf. Morford (1967a) 87; Ahl (1971) 16-27; Mayer (1981) 7; Martindale (1984) 69; Masters (1992) 216-24; Martindale (2005) 218-9.

as complete as the poet intended it to be.⁹ Moreover, it is a poem which challenges its readers to formulate a critical response to the values of empire instead of the dualistic choice between enjoying the spectacle of civil war or retiring from its violence.¹⁰ Like the war that it re-presents, it is a poem which prompts partisan and varied responses.¹¹

Lucan occupies a special place in the post-Augustan landscape of Latin poets: his poem is a watershed which redefines Latin epic, refashioning *Arma virumque* (“Arms and the man”) and the nationalistic impulse of the *Aeneid* into *Bella...plus quam civilia* (“Wars worse than civil”),¹² reshaping the poetic world in its own image. The incursion of *Civil War* into all areas of post-Augustan poetics includes landscape as well as the metaphorical conceptualisation of landscape as poetics. The *Bellum Civile* is ground-zero: it is a violent invasion of the Latin literary landscape which redefines everything around it. Regardless of whether subsequent poets share the same views or ideas, what is important is that later Latin poets *must* respond, just as they cannot avoid negotiating the landmarks of the *Aeneid* or the *Metamorphoses*; Lucanian concepts are thus found embedded within the landscapes of Statius, Valerius Flaccus, and Silius Italicus. Landscapes within the poems are altered, reoriented towards landscapes of horror: Lucan deploys the *locus amoenus*, but adopts and promulgates Seneca’s tragic *locus horridus* as a primary means of epic representation.¹³ Concomitantly, this redirects the metapoetic force of landscape; the refiguration of the grove into the *locus horridus* articulates Lucan’s reuse of his poetic *exempla* as well as the refiguration of Augustan epic into an exuberantly nihilistic depiction of civil war.

⁹ Masters (1992) 216-59; Henderson (1998) 170-1; cf. Leigh (1993) 220: “This is simply self-indulgent and silly”.

¹⁰ Leigh (1997) 305-6.

¹¹ For instance: Narducci (1999) 39-83; cf. Hunink (2002) 68-70. D’Alessandro Behr (2007) 10-11, 113-6, 181 n. 26; O’Hara (1999) 202-3; Nisbet (1999).

¹² Verg. A. 1.1; Luc. 1.1. Cf. Boyle (1993a) 6-8; I follow Boyle, Braund and Duff by choosing “wars worse than civil”; cf. Henderson (1998) 172: “wars *more* than civil”. Cf. Getty (1992) 25.

¹³ See above, p. 26; Esposito (2004) 61-5.

This does not necessitate a claim that Lucan is a card-carrying Caesarian; rather, Lucan is a poet “at war with himself”,¹⁴ akin to Caesar and Erictho the witch despite disavowing both.¹⁵ Republican sympathies in the poem clash with a compositional style that has compellingly been defined as “Caesarian”,¹⁶ and, rather than marking a failure in the poem, this tension is where the poem derives its intense poetic energy.¹⁷ Lucan may ultimately have become a committed anti-Neronian but regardless, his technique as a poet resonates with Caesar’s technique as a general, tearing down the old and replacing it with his new paradigm.¹⁸ Lucan’s poem marks a poetic success in a similar re-definitional manner to Julius Caesar’s redefinition of Roman politics; and his poetics are bound up with the ethical and moral positions promoted by the antagonists of his text, refracted through the morally charged poetic landscape.¹⁹ Roman politicians had to respond to Caesar and Roman poets have to respond to Lucan. In apostrophe (and other interventions) Lucan can decry Caesar and enunciate pro-Republican, Stoic sentiments,²⁰ and he can believe in them even if they are contradictorily juxtaposed against narrative techniques which reveal an affinity with Caesarian iconoclasm.²¹ Again, this is not just a matter of self-deception: it is a matter of humanity’s psychological capability to simultaneously hold (and enact) contradictory beliefs:²² Lucan is quite capable of holding irreconcilable thoughts and perpetuating aesthetic and moral inconsistencies within his epic,²³ generating tension which drives the poem and reveals both the horror and appeal of the martial endeavours that derive from

¹⁴ Masters (1992) 215.

¹⁵ Johnson (1987) 19-21; Masters (1992) 205-15; cf. Gordon (1987) 232; Henderson (1998) 184.

¹⁶ Masters (1992) 10; cf. D’Alessandro Behr (2007) 73.

¹⁷ Cf. Leigh (1997) 40.

¹⁸ Masters (1992) 213-5.

¹⁹ Cf. Malamud (2003) 41.

²⁰ D’Alessandro Behr (2007) 4; Bartsch (1997) 99-100, 110-3; Narducci (2002) 88-92; Leigh (1997) 39.

²¹ Cf. Dewar (1994) 199; Masters (1992) 8-10.

²² Cf. Feeney (1998) 14-21; Bartsch (1997) 7; Leigh (1997) 39-40.

²³ Hinds (1998) 87.

internecine strife.²⁴ Lucan's fascination with Caesarian dissolution reflects a complicated psychological response to violence, revealing a form of amoral morality which can condemn bloodshed whilst appearing to exult in it.²⁵ Moreover, just as Caesar's conflict with Pompey is a matching of Roman equals,²⁶ Lucan's challenge is not to the Greek or Hellenistic models for Vergilian epic but to the *Aeneid* itself, poetically replicating the civil strife between Caesar and Pompey. Internal conflict on the political and poetic level is inevitable if any general or poet wishes to assume supremacy; yet Lucan's poem is alive to the possibility of glory that can derive from a successful inward challenge, even while it decries the impiety of the assault.

Lucan draws upon a presumption of positivist movement in the *Aeneid*, disrupting the teleological vision of progress towards the Augustan settlement; inversions of Vergilian sentiment abound²⁷ as the movement from chaos to order is reversed; even Aeneas' geographical movement from east (Troy) to west (Italy) is reversed as the movement of Lucan's poem runs from Italy in the West to Greece for Pharsalus, on to Egypt and finally to Caesar's visit to the ruins of Troy.²⁸ This geographical inversion is replicated in topography with Lucan's prioritisation of the *locus horridus* over the *locus amoenus*, shifting the grounds of representation onto a violent, unstable topography.²⁹ Lucan's *loca horrida*, developed from the landscapes of Senecan tragedy, negates the *locus amoenus* and marks the distinction between Lucan's spatial perception and that of Vergil. Both *locus amoenus* and *horridus* figure the dissolution of the universe and Lucan deploys his landscapes for a multiplicity of

²⁴ Barton (1984) 1-17; 120; O'Hara (2007) 131-42.

²⁵ I borrow the concept of "amoral morality" from scholarship on the English novelist J.G. Ballard; cf. Butterfield (1999) *passim*; cf. Leigh (1997) 290-1.

²⁶ Caesar scorns to attack Greek cities, preferring to pursue Pompey, 6.3-5.

²⁷ Cf. Martindale (1976) 52.

²⁸ Rossi (2000) 571-3; Ahl (1976) 183; cf. Masters (1994) 155; Müller (1995) 377-8; Thompson and Bruère (1968) 17.

²⁹ O'Gorman (1995) 126.

purposes which undermine Vergilian teleology: the *locus amoenus* foregrounds the dissolution of cosmic coherence as well as problematising aetiology and allegory as a means of exploring universal and political truths, while the *locus horridus* graphically inscribes the landscape with the violence of civil war, perverting the landscape in a manner that reflects the perversion of internal discord; moreover, this is also a challenge to the poetical teleology that sees the *Aeneid* as the apex of literary creation. Lucan dismembers and refigures his predecessor in order to displace the Vergilian paradigm and sing the alternative narrative of civil war.³⁰

While some recent studies have attempted to demonstrate that Lucan's poetics are unqualifiedly Republican by means of sophisticated and compelling reversals of the deconstructionist approach, these analyses sometimes appear to undermine their arguments through their own deconstruction of the Lucanian material.³¹ This chapter will posit an analysis of Lucan's landscapes, with particular regard to his emphasis on the *locus horridus*; the following chapters will suggest that this can be traced in the reception of the *Bellum Civile* as Lucanian landscapes are combined with those of the landmark Augustan texts in the poems of the Flavian era; consequently, Lucan's poetics of civil war are adapted by Valerius Flaccus, Statius and Silius Italicus in order to articulate their own responses to the Roman imperial project. That there is a distorting and alienating effect in Lucan's poem is unquestionable; as a result, the *Bellum Civile* more accurately depicts the psychology and internal anguish of Civil War, the dissent and discord that rips apart the Roman polity: the internal conflict that for Lucan is *Bella plus quam civilia*.³² Psychological discord is graphically figured in topography and the "symbolic spaces" of the poem;³³ consequently, the anguish of *discordia* is not only

³⁰ Cf. Masters (1992) 213-5.

³¹ Cf. O'Hara (1999) 201.

³² Luc. 1.1; D'Allessandro Behr (2007) 6, 73.

³³ Leigh (2000) 95; Hardie (2003) 2; cf. Masters (1992) 25-9, 45-58; Müller (1995) 373, 375-8.

internal to the Roman state or the level of the individual Roman citizen but extends into physical space, replicating dissolution and violence across the cosmos,³⁴ reversing the progression to Roman order promised by Jupiter in the *Aeneid*,³⁵ and refiguring the poetic tradition. As with so much else of Lucan's poetic technique, Lucan's deconstruction of Augustan epic is figured within the literal deconstruction of the epic landscape: fractured landscapes become a means of expressing Lucan's "fractured voice".³⁶

2.1: Cosmic catastrophe: civil war at the river Po

Rome's precedence as *caput mundi* provokes an interpretation of the city's pre-eminence as the *telos* of historical progress, particularly in the manifestation of the renewed Augustan *aurea saecula*;³⁷ consequently, Vergil's *Aeneid* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* co-opt or subvert the cosmological discourse of Augustan public works in order to figure the processes of the cosmos within their narratives as they engage with the Augustan cosmological project;³⁸ frequently, landscapes act as vehicles for metaphor and allegory, often embedded within mythological narratives.³⁹ Philip Hardie has suggested that "myth is the natural mediator between the cosmos and history";⁴⁰ subsequently, epic poets have a number of strategies at their disposal: myths provide aetiologies for the current configuration of the world,⁴¹ or are deployed with the

³⁴ Cf. Narducci (2002) 42-8.

³⁵ Verg. A. 1.279.

³⁶ Masters (1992) 87-90. Cf. Henderson (1998) 185-6; Bartsch (1997) 56; Feeney (1991) 282; cf. Hershkowitz (1998b) 197.

³⁷ Cf. the manipulation of paradoxical renewal and stability in Augustan literature and art; Evans (2008) 21.

³⁸ I.e.: the Ara Pacis; cuirass of the Prima Porta Augustus; also, Horace's *Carmen Saeculare*. On Augustan cosmological ideology in art: Zanker (1988) 167ff. Cf. Edwards and Woolf (2003) 5-8.

³⁹ On allegory and epic, Laird (2003) 151-75.

⁴⁰ Hardie (1986) 3; cf. Feeney (1991) 256.

⁴¹ Habinek (2002) 57.

intention of pointing towards a specific *telos*;⁴² and myth is interpreted as metaphor and allegory, allowing cosmological analyses and explanation.⁴³ In the Augustan period, these explanations are often deployed in conjunction with a Stoicising philosophical outlook in order to explore the rise of Rome and celebrate the Augustan triumph; the *Aeneid*, while open to subversive readings,⁴⁴ ultimately narrates the beginnings of Rome's rise towards *imperium sine fine*,⁴⁵ and while Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is more openly ambiguous regarding the Principate than Vergil's *Aeneid*, Ovid's claim that he will have a *nomen indelebile* is inextricably linked to the perpetuation of Roman power and linguistic dominance within the cosmological framework of both the *Metamorphoses* and the Augustan regime;⁴⁶ Ovid's *perpetuum carmen* is also the story of Rome's perpetual ascent and domination (notwithstanding the poem's subversive elements).⁴⁷ Both the *Aeneid* and the *Metamorphoses* offer a poetic aetiology of Rome,⁴⁸ in which the *locus amoenus* is deployed in order to "mediate" between cosmos and history: Vergil's description of Elysium in book 6, an archetypal *locus amoenus* landscape,⁴⁹ is associated with cosmology,⁵⁰ and the Roman future is explicitly addressed with reference to Augustus. In the *Metamorphoses*, transformations in the *locus amoenus* are exploited for their aetiological potential.⁵¹

Analyses of Lucan's interpretation of the cosmos have been as contentious as every other element of the poem,⁵² with Lucan claimed to hold varying degrees of Stoic

⁴² Kennedy (1997) 147-9.

⁴³ Hays (1983) 1-5; on Stoic allegorisation of myth, 5-20. Cf. Hardie (1986) 29-32; Boys-Stones (2003) 190-3; Laird (2003) 153-5, 174-5. Cf. Corn. *ND* 17.1-53.

⁴⁴ Thomas (2001) 1-24; cf. O'Hara (1990) 150.

⁴⁵ Verg. *A.* 1.279; Bowie (1990) 478.

⁴⁶ Ov. *Met.* 15.876; Evans (2008) 70-1.

⁴⁷ Cf. Ov. *Met.* 1.4.

⁴⁸ Boyle (1993b) 82; Habinek (2002) 54-8. Cf. Myers (1994) 19-25; Tissol (1997) 195.

⁴⁹ See above, p. 18.

⁵⁰ Verg. *A.* 6.724-51; Braund (1997) 209-10.

⁵¹ Hinds (2002) 128; Feldherr (2002) 171.

⁵² Summarised by Long (2007) 193ff.

belief as a committed Stoic,⁵³ as an almost- or not-quite-orthodox Stoic whose pessimism fatally undermines a conceptualisation of the ordered workings of the universe,⁵⁴ and as a nihilist for whom the universe is a “broken machine”.⁵⁵ For Lucan, the *locus amoenus* is a synonym for the cosmos and a means of critiquing the Stoic conceptualisation of cosmic harmony. This is signalled in his first sustained engagement with the *topos* in book 2:⁵⁶ a representation of the landscape surrounding the river Po and the destruction wreaked by Phaethon. In many variants of the myth, including Ovid’s presentation (Ov. *Met.* 2.235ff.), Phaethon’s destructive joy-ride leads to his destruction at Jupiter’s hands, before the king of the gods then goes on to restore the landscape to its former beauty. Ovid maps the Stoic processes of conflagration and renewal onto the landscape and in the *Metamorphoses* Jupiter, at the behest of Earth herself, restores the landscape with special attention given to Arcadia as an idealised *locus amoenus* landscape composed of cool shades, breezes and running streams.⁵⁷ The restored landscape becomes representative of the renewed cosmos. The destruction and restoration of the landscape draws on a Stoic allegorising tradition that considers the flight of Phaethon as a symbol of cyclical conflagration and renewal (*ekpyrosis* and *diakosmesis*),⁵⁸ guided by a rational *logos*, where the Universe remains in cosmic “sympathy”.⁵⁹ The fire of Phaethon is the conflagration,⁶⁰ and Jupiter’s restoration of the landscape symbolises the renewal of the cosmos. On a political level, Jupiter’s role is akin to that of Augustus following the civil wars; yet on another, this is an ongoing

⁵³ Marti (1945) 352ff.; D’Alessandro Behr (2007) 11-5; Narducci (2004) 18-9.

⁵⁴ Colish (1985) 253-8; Most (1989) 2054-5; LaPidge (1979) 344ff.; Feeney (1991) 279-85.

⁵⁵ Johnson (1987) 111; Sklenář (1999) 282; Sklenář (2003) 2-3; Henderson (1998) 209-10; Feeney (1991) 283; Masters (1992) 63-5.

⁵⁶ The engagement with the concepts of cosmos and creation are signalled in the opening lines of book 2 (2.1-15).

⁵⁷ Ov. *Met.* 401-16.

⁵⁸ Colish (1985) 24-5; cf. Sen. *Nat.* 3.29.5-30.8.

⁵⁹ Hays (1983) 7-10; Sklenář (1999) 282; Hahn (1977) 185; White (2003) 133-8; LaPidge (1979) 347.

⁶⁰ Cf. Deucalion’s flood; Hahn (1977) 184-5; cf. Hardie (1986) 192-3 on fire and flood as agents of cataclysm in the *Aeneid*; cf. Lucr. 5.380-415 on fire, flood, and civil war among the elements; Green (1942) 55.

pattern in the *Metamorphoses* which presents universal chaos transformed into order,⁶¹ but Ovid's is not an unproblematic presentation of the narrative. Jupiter's role is problematised by its situation between two lighthearted tales of his amorous adventures which undercut his authority.⁶² Moreover, within the wider narrative framework of the *Metamorphoses* stability is only ever a momentary event, and in a poem where dissolution and transformation are the only real constants, claims to order are constantly being undermined; Lucan draws upon Ovidian chaos and instability in his own representation of Phaethon's destruction of the Earth.⁶³

Lucan's version of the myth is embedded as part of a topographical description of the city of Capua and the Apennine mountains; this *locus amoenus* may be a brief "mythological digression" inserted into a passage that draws attention to Caesar's spatial violation into Italy,⁶⁴ but it carries significance as being prioritised as the first landscape of its kind: *hunc fabula primum / populea fluvium ripas umbrasse corona*, Luc. 2.410-1 ("According to myth [*fabula*], this was the first river to be shaded by a ring of poplars"). Again, there is an immediate political interpretation: Caesar is the Po, tearing up the Apennine landscape which represents Pompey,⁶⁵ in a manner commensurate with Lucan's famous simile depicting Caesar as a bolt of lightning set against Pompey's aged oak tree.⁶⁶ However, Lucan alludes to the Phaethon narrative as *fabula*, signalling the intertextual and allegorical potential of the myth;⁶⁷ moreover, the assertion of priority situates the Po within a context of creation mythology, engaging

⁶¹ Cf. Pl. *Ti.* 22b; Otis (1970) 91; cf. Lucr. 5.396-410, criticising Stoic allegorisations of the Phaethon myth.

⁶² Evans (2008) 48-9, 91; Richlin (1992) 158-179 on divine rape in the *Metamorphoses* as a capricious expression of power.

⁶³ Wheeler (2002) 68-9; Tarrant (2002) 349-60.

⁶⁴ Fantham (1992a) 154-6.

⁶⁵ Hardie (2003) 2-3; Müller (1995) 370-1.

⁶⁶ Luc. 1.136-57.

⁶⁷ Hinds (1998) 1-5 on 'Alexandrian footnotes'; D'Allessandro Behr (2007) 107-11, 121 on *fabula* and allegory in the *Bellum Civile*; Feeney (1991) 254-5; Fantham (1992a) 160; Wheeler (2002) 369-71 on Lucan's invocation of the Phaethon episode of the *Metamorphoses* at several points in the *Bellum Civile*, with particular reference to Nero.

with the subject of Ovid's first books.⁶⁸ A parallel between cosmic cycles, creation and civil war is signalled early in book 2 and reiterated throughout: the book opens with the narrator discoursing on the nature of the universe and its creation (Luc. 2.1-15),⁶⁹ and later a speech attributed to an old man suggests that prior civil disturbances between Marius and Sulla are bound with current *discordia* in an instance of cyclical civil war (2.68-233).⁷⁰

Where Ovid's named rivers, including the Po, are entirely dried up and destroyed (*Met.* 2.257-9),⁷¹ Lucan's river Po resists the heat of the sun and plays a direct role in preventing the total destruction of the earth. Ovid's Tellus (Earth) laments (*Ov. Met.* 2.271-300) and claims that the damage can only be rectified with the action of the gods: only Jupiter can restore the landscape (*Ov. Met.* 2.403-8). Lucan constructs the episode in physical terms, subverting his allegorising models: it is not a god or cosmic force, but the cooling power of the river Po that preserves the earth: *hunc habuisse pares Phoebis ignibus undas*, Luc. 2.415 ("this river had water equal to the fire of Phoebus"). Where Stoic rationalisation of the myth could understand the river and deity as allegorical depictions of "a totally unitary reality" in which physical matter, mind, and the universe were organised into the *logos*,⁷² Lucan isolates the Po from the divine world, breaking the monistic connection between nature and divinity. Lucan allots to the river the role traditionally attributed to the divine level in the resolution of chaos, and while Stoic physics understood that god as a principle of reason was inseparable from nature within the *logos*, Lucan undermines this by emphasising the individual character of the Po: all other water sources are dried up by Phaethon (2.413), but the Po remains

⁶⁸ Priority: *primum*, 2.410; also note the relatively rare *umbrasse*, 411: the verb *umbro* otherwise finds its earliest usage at Lucr. 2.628, where the poet denies the efficacy of allegorical interpretations of the cosmos; cf. OLD s.v. *umbro*; Verg. *A.* 6.772

⁶⁹ Cf. 2.38-63.

⁷⁰ Cf. Luc. 1.72-80; Hardie (2003) 3. Barton (1984) 25, 107; Leigh (1997) 299; Gowing (2005) 85-6.

⁷¹ Cf. Jones (2005) 88-9.

⁷² Hays (1983) 5-20; also Colish (1985) 22-35.

isolated from the destruction and this river alone is capable of bringing Phaethon's fiery ride to an end. Conflagration is ended by the act of a single river rather than a unified cosmos acting in harmony, and rather than Stoic rationality, Lucan's isolation of the river rationalises it as a physically plausible event free of the Stoic *logos*.⁷³

In addition to being isolated from the *logos*, Lucan depicts the Po as an irrational force equally capable of destroying the surrounding landscape as much as nourishing it. Lucan problematises the river as a cosmological metaphor, suggesting irrationality and the proneness of the universe to arbitrary acts of violence, metaphorically enacting civil war across the river landscape and eliding the element of divine control.⁷⁴ Despite its life-sustaining properties, the Po is also a destroyer: *quoque magis nullum tellus se solvit in amnem, / Eridanus fractas devolvit in aequora silvas / hesperiamque exhaurit aquis*, 2.407-10 ("There too the Po (earth releases into itself no greater river) rolls through broken forests, exhausting the Italian plain with its waters"). Lucan is ambiguous in his treatment of the river, emphasising its nourishing of the Italian terrain as well as the destructive power it wields over the *locus amoenus* upon its banks. Like the civil war in which the Romans are directing their martial energies inwards to wage war upon themselves, the landscape is at war with itself;⁷⁵ the *silvae* being destroyed by the river are the *populea* that shade its banks. Lucan suggests that destruction is permanently embedded within this landscape, caused by the Po itself as well as other landscape elements.⁷⁶ The harmony of the Stoic, "rationally ordered cosmos" is tempered by the disharmony of the destructive river.⁷⁷ With the river Po, Lucan

⁷³ Feeney (1991) 273.

⁷⁴ Cf. the river of Hor. *Carm.* 1.2 which also represents civil discord brought to order by Augustus; cf. Tarrant (2002) 356-8 who suggests Lucan draws upon recurring chaos through metamorphosis in Ovid's cosmological system; Wheeler (2002) 376.

⁷⁵ Cf. Masters (1992) 41; Hardie (2003) 3, who suggests that the Apennines are associated with Pompey; thus, the destructive/nourishing Po represents Caesar.

⁷⁶ Cf. *rapax*, 2.406; *verberat*, 2.407; Fantham (1992a) 156.

⁷⁷ Sklenář (1999) 282.

emphasises the contradiction that exists in the concept of cyclical destruction and restoration,⁷⁸ questioning and problematising the Stoic view that the *logos* provides rational control throughout nature. Reflecting Lucan's "nihilistic" cosmology and symbolising the epic universe, the river Po suggests that nature's destructive power, metaphorically representing civil conflict, is antithetical to a rational god or *logos* that guides the universe to a state of order.⁷⁹

By constantly redefining the landscape through which it flows, the dual-natured river Po figures perpetual change that reinforces the confusion and chaos of civil war, suggesting that Roman history is the story of ongoing chaos rather than increasing degrees of order.⁸⁰ The struggle for control of the Roman world might pretend to strive for order, but the fact of civil war dooms this from the start: indeed, the pro-Pompeian narrative persona is undermined and equal culpability allocated to Pompey for the depths of civil war; later in the poem Lucan uses a simile to compare the flooding Po with a period in which Pompey emulates intense Caesar-like activity;⁸¹ the river rages in its destruction (*furens*, 6.274). By attributing the restoration of the landscape to the fickle river that is also capable of destroying it Lucan overtly abandons the idea that there is a beneficial, patriarchal figure or guiding principle that can ensure peace and stability. Further, the recurring nature of the violence at the Po figures as a metaphor for the cyclical nature of Roman civil violence: having cast the conflict between Marius and Sulla as an analogue for the war between Caesar and Pompey (2.81-233), Lucan implies that civil discord is a permanent aspect of the Roman political landscape, stretching back even towards the epic and mythical beginnings of Rome with Aeneas' quasi-civil

⁷⁸ Cf. Luc. 6.272-8.

⁷⁹ Cf. Luc. 7.445-55; Sklenář (2003) 5; Colish (1985) 254ff.

⁸⁰ Cf. Hardie (2003) 20.

⁸¹ 6.272-7: *sic pleno Padus ore tumens super aggere tutas / excurrit ripas et totos concutit agros; succubuit si qua tellus cumuloque furentem / undarum non passa ruit, tum flumine toto / transit et ignotos operit sibi gurgite campos: / illos terra fugit dominos, his rura colonis / accedunt donante Pado.*

conflict in Italy, the fraternal strife between Romulus and Remus, and the historical conflicts with Rome's Italian neighbours. In this context the ongoing violence of the Po finds its parallel in Roman history: the current civil disturbance may be the most devastating event of its kind so far, but it is not necessarily unique.⁸²

Further, there are poetic consequences for the Po's refiguration of the Italian *locus amoenus* that are demonstrative of Lucan's refiguration of the Latin epic landscape. Ovid's version of the narrative has a markedly metapoetic setting: prior to his unfortunate journey, Phaethon visited the palace of his father, the Sun-god.⁸³ Phaethon is mesmerised by an artistic depiction of creation and the cosmos upon the doors of the palace, for which a compelling argument has been made that they figuratively represent the order brought by the poet upon his material; the disjunction of artistic order and cosmic chaos of the Phaethon narrative suggests the efficacy of the poet as an agent of order.⁸⁴ Although Lucan does not replicate anything like the artwork reproduced on the doors of the palace, the epideictic depiction of landscape replicates the ecphrasis and its metapoetic context; as such, the Po engages with the Callimachean aesthetics of the *Hymn to Apollo*, in which the Euphrates functions as an abstraction for poetic production, a dirty and overflowing river that represents the worst excesses of epic poetry;⁸⁵ Lucan adopts the metapoetic symbolism of the river as the Po rips through the surrounding *silvae*,⁸⁶ refiguring the landscape as well as Lucan's poetic material.⁸⁷ The fractured landscape is indicative of Lucan's fractured poetics: thus, the Po comes to represent not only the dissolution of the cosmos, but also the internal warfare that underlies Lucan's act of poetic creation. This is explored further in Lucan's distortion of

⁸² Hershkowitz (1998b) 203.

⁸³ Ov. *Met.* 2.1-18.

⁸⁴ Wheeler (1995) 117.

⁸⁵ Call. *Ap.* 105-113. See above, p. 14.

⁸⁶ 2.409: *fractas silvas*.

⁸⁷ OLD s.v. *silva* (5); see above, p. 23.

the *locus amoenus* into the *locus horridus* and the subsequent destruction of this landscape in its first appearance during Caesar's siege of Massilia in book 3.

2.2: Cut to ribbons: deforming the Massilian landscape

As with his version of the Phaethon narrative, Lucan's grove at Massilia represents the refiguration and destruction of the *locus amoenus*. At Massilia the agent of violence is Lucan's antihero, Caesar, whose need for timber and deforestation of the countryside is attested in the historical sources.⁸⁸ Lucan's version represents an expansion and "deformation"⁸⁹ of Caesar's account in which the general's impiety and violence against the forest and city of Massilia functions as a metaphor for the impiety of civil war.⁹⁰

Masters has shown that the episode has a metapoetic character and that it is the "deformation" of a literary tradition, too: Lucan refigures the Massilian *silva*, both in the sense of trees and his poetic material, demonstrating his poetic reuse and reconstruction of the Latin epic tradition.⁹¹ The Massilian grove is an ancient home to fearful gods and powers; significantly, Lucan claims that it has never been touched until Caesar arrives and deforests it in order to supply materials for his siege of the city (Luc. 3.399).⁹² Lucan is relentless in his extended description of its terrors, generated by the appropriation of elements from *loca amoena*⁹³ which are negated and fully inverted into an evocation of evil and horror:⁹⁴

*Lucus erat longo numquam violatus ab aevo
obscurum cingens conexas aera ramis*

⁸⁸ Caes. *Civ.* 1.36, 2.1; 2.15. Liv. 110 is fragmentary. Hunink (1992) 168-9; Masters (1992) 13-20; Tommasi Moreschini (2005) 145; Dyson (1970) 36-8 sees this as an example of Lucan's "thought on the relation between historical action and mythological process". Cf. Leigh (1999) 174-7.

⁸⁹ Masters (1992) 23.

⁹⁰ Phillips (1968) 300; Rowland (1969) 204; Saylor (2003) 381.

⁹¹ Cf. Masters (1992) 25-9 on Lucan's "desecration" of the *silva* of Ovid's *locus amoenus* to generate what he calls the *locus foedus*. Cf. Spencer (2005) 67.

⁹² Cf. 6.29-47.

⁹³ Santini (1999) 208; Augoustakis (2006) 635.

⁹⁴ Bramble (1982) 48-9; Esposito (2004) 43-4; cf. Sen. *Oed.* 530-47; Töchterle (1994) 433.

*et gelidas alte summotis solibus umbras.
 hunc non ruricolae Panes nemorumque potentes
 Silvani Nymphaeaeque tenent, sed barbara ritu
 sacra deum; structae diris altaribus arae
 omnisque humanis lustrata cruoribus arbor.
 si qua fidem meruit superos mirata vetustas,
 illis et volucres metuunt insistere ramis
 et lustris recubare ferae; nec ventus in illas
 incubuit silvas excussaue nubibus atris
 fulgura: non ulli frondem praebentibus aurae
 arboribus suus horror inest. tum plurima nigris
 fontibus unda cadit, simulacraque maesta deorum
 arte carent caesisque extant informia truncis.
 ipse situs putrique facit iam robore pallor
 attonitos; non vulgatis sacrata figuris
 numina sic timeant: tantum terroribus addit,
 quos metuunt, non nosse, deos. iam fama ferebat
 saepe cavas motu terrae mugire cavernas,
 et procumbentis iterum consurgere taxos,
 et non ardentis fulgere incendia silvae,
 roboraque amplexos circum fluxisse dracones.
 non illum cultu populi propiore frequentant
 sed cessere deis. medio cum Phoebus in axe est
 aut caelum nox atra tenet, pavet ipse sacerdos
 accessus dominumque timet deprendere luci.*

(Luc. 3.399-425)

There was a grove, never violated since ancient ages; it surrounds air, dark because of intertwining branches and shadows cold from all the sunlight removed deep down. Here, there live no rural Pans, and no Fauns, kings of the woods, and no nymphs, but sanctuaries of gods worshipped with barbaric rites; the altars were heaped with dreadful offerings and every tree draped with human blood. If antiquity, in awe of the gods, has been worthy of any trust, even birds fear to perch on those branches and in those dens beasts fear to lie down; no breeze moves those trees nor lightning thrown from black clouds: even though the trees do not hold forth their leaves to any wind, they rustle themselves. There, abundant water falls from dark springs, and gloomy images of the gods are without refinement, standing out, unformed, from fallen trunks. The decay itself and paleness, due to the rot of the wood, now make people fearful; people should be less afraid of gods worshipped in common forms: so much does it add to their terrors, not to know the gods whom they dread. Now rumour already told that frequently hollow caverns bellowed because of an earth-quake, that yew-trees collapsed and rose again, and that fire flashed from trees that were not ablaze, and that entwined around the trees serpents were gliding. People do not resort to this grove to worship from close by, but left the place for the gods. When Phoebus is in mid heaven or black night holds the sky, the priest himself shudders to approach and fears to surprise the master of the grove.⁹⁵

Lucan deconstructs each element of the *locus amoenus* in detail, turning it into a landscape redolent of malevolence and evil; the first word of the ecphrasis, *lucus* (grove), might suggest an open, light space, yet is here turned to describe an enclosed,

⁹⁵ One of the unnamed gods; Hunink (1992) 179.

dark and sinister environment.⁹⁶ Yet even in comparison with its Senecan models, Lucan's grove is excessively depraved, obliterating any possibility that the grove could be redeemed. Seneca's groves also recall the *locus amoenus*, but his depictions of the *locus horridus* do not carry the same force: Seneca's *Oedipus* features a grove that is decaying and gloomy (Sen. *Oed.* 530-47);⁹⁷ but while this grove is ancient like Lucan's, it does not receive the same extended description as the Massilian grove, nor does it inspire terror in the same manner; it is not made home to unfamiliar gods, but is the site of rituals that fit into the established framework of Greek and Roman religious sacrifice (*Oed.* 548ff.). Lucan's grove shares the suggestive physical topography of Seneca's at *Thyestes* 641-82, although this grove is less fully realised than Lucan's, and the horrific atmosphere is equally dependent on the Tantalid kings who visit the grove as it is on the natural landscape. Lucan's allusion to the Senecan landscape recalls the depravities of the *Thyestes* and the human sacrifice committed by Atreus. Human sacrifice is an integral element of Lucan's Massilian grove, and will be seen in his development of the *locus horridus*.⁹⁸

While Lucan's horrific groves are places of chaos, they are not depicted chaotically:⁹⁹ Lucan is consistent in his depiction of *loca horrida* as inversions of the *locus amoenus*, and he uses this to greater effect than if he were simply to depict a malevolent landscape without reference to the schemata of the *locus amoenus*.¹⁰⁰ The Massilian grove is a place of barbaric worship for strange, un-Roman, primordial gods who have taken the place of the nymphs and sylvan gods who are usually associated

⁹⁶ Cf. Cogny and Cogny (1981) 277ff; Hinds (1987) 36-42; Hunink (1992) 170; TLL 7.2.1750.71-73. Cf. Sen. *Oed.* 530; *Thy.* 669, 696; Verg. *A.* 1.441, 9.86; Ov. *Fast.* 6.503, 3.295; *Fast.* 2.449-50 makes an explicit connection between *lucus* (grove) and *lux* (light); cf. Prop. 4.4.3; the Augustan *luci* are *loca amoena*.

⁹⁷ See above, p. 26.

⁹⁸ The *locus horridus* at *Her. O.* 1618-41 is not as extensive, and lacks the force of Seneca's other *loca horrida*.

⁹⁹ Cf. Spencer (2005) 52.

¹⁰⁰ Sklenář (2003) 1-3.

with Mediterranean groves. The rough images and statues of gods, formed long ago from cut trees and which are now rotting, generate terror;¹⁰¹ like Vergil's Avernus, birds do not come to this place (407),¹⁰² and the leaves are reportedly subject to movement by supernatural forces rather than a breeze. Water is abundant, but it comes from black springs (*nigris fontibus*, 411-2); there is shade but it is unpleasantly cold and prevents any light from penetrating the grove.¹⁰³ Unlike the Senecan *locus horridus*, but in keeping with his treatment of the gods throughout the rest of the epic, Lucan does not explicitly depict the gods as actors;¹⁰⁴ rather, it is ancient images of the gods, combined with a sense of supernatural foreboding and the evidence of barbaric ritual that keeps the Massilians away. Moreover, the gods of the grove are differentiated from those of the Greco-Roman pantheon by their association with human sacrifice,¹⁰⁵ a practice abhorrent to civilised Romans. The gods of the grove cannot be approximated to any Greco-Roman deities or any foreign gods familiar to the region.¹⁰⁶ Lucan's redefinition of the religious landscape establishes that the traditional Roman deities have been displaced in the Massilian grove by primordial, unknown powers which find expression through natural components of the landscape, such as the breezeless movement of the leaves (410-1) or the sounds and motions of earthquakes (417-20). The gods of the Massilian grove deny civilised Roman worship: Roman religion fits into the life of the state and carries a degree of expectation that both public participation and private

¹⁰¹ 3.413-5.

¹⁰² Leigh (1993) 220.

¹⁰³ Hunink (1992) 171.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Feeney (1991) 301.

¹⁰⁵ 3.405; Santini (1999) 215.

¹⁰⁶ Luc. 3.415-7; cf. Tommasi Moreschini (2005) 146. Cf. Hunink (1992) 184, 176-7. Green (1994) suggests that the grove is analogous to various groves of Diana and that the Massilians' historical devotion to Artemis/Diana suggests that the deities of the grove should be seen in the context of Diana's barbaric, Scythian guise rather than her civilised Greco-Roman form; while an attractive supposition (given that Diana/Hecate will come to be associated with the *locus horridus*), this contradicts Lucan's assertion that the grove is home to gods unknown to the Massilians or to the neighbouring Gauls.

practice fit established norms that are suggestive of stability and order;¹⁰⁷ yet, the religion of the grove represents something uncivilised, unknown and frightening.

The Massilian grove has been understood as standing for a number of elements within the poem: on one level, the decayed grove with its oak that is attacked by Caesar (3.432-5) alludes to Lucan's initial comparison of Pompey to an aged and venerable oak tree (1.136-43),¹⁰⁸ and Caesar, made analogous to a bolt of lightning,¹⁰⁹ is capable of being understood as the bolt that will finally destroy the Massilian grove (which has never once been pierced during a storm, 3.410). Similarly, it is possible to examine the grove as a parallel for the decayed city of Rome which has brought civil war on itself through its moral decline.¹¹⁰ However, the religious element of the grove narrative gives the episode a wider, cosmic dimension.¹¹¹ Lucan recasts the gods of epic, generally removing them from direct action in the poem;¹¹² yet the Massilian grove foregrounds a preoccupation with religion and religious practice.¹¹³ Leigh contends that Caesar is an unwitting "culture-hero", demonstrating the absence of the gods and exposing the emptiness of belief in the divine (bringing "light" to the darkness of the woods¹¹⁴). This is attractive, especially following the analogy raised between Caesar and the river Po, which both destroys and nourishes the Italian landscape;¹¹⁵ Caesar, like the Po, thus has positive characteristics, just like the otherwise destructive river. Yet this analysis of Caesar's role at Massilia remains problematic, given Lucan's negative portrayal of

¹⁰⁷ Tommasi Moreschini (2005) 140ff; Feeney (1998) 2-6.

¹⁰⁸ Hunink (1992) 181; Rowland (1969) 206-7; Saylor (2003) 381.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. 1.151-7.

¹¹⁰ Cf. 1.160-82; Colish (1985) 260.

¹¹¹ Cf. Phillips (1968) 300.

¹¹² Although cf. *Patria's* appearance to Caesar at 1.183ff.; Feeney (1991) 272.

¹¹³ Leigh (1999) 171-7; Tommasi Moreschini (2005) 144-7.

¹¹⁴ On Caesar's association with light, and his action against the "perpetuating darkness and terror of the grove", Leigh (1999) 174-7; Santini (1999) 208; also Hunink (1992) 169. Hunink views the episode within a pre-existing association between Caesar and light/heat/activity and Pompey with darkness/passivity.

¹¹⁵ Above, p. 44; cf. Augoustakis (2006) 638.

Caesar.¹¹⁶ Thomas has argued that Lucan's Massilian episode is patterned after Vergil's ambivalent depiction of Aeneas' acts of "tree desecration" in the *Aeneid*, which engages with the myth of Erysichthon in order to develop a sense of unease as the gods fail to punish Aeneas.¹¹⁷ Where Leigh highlights Lucan's portrayal of Caesar's "reckless self-assertion" in the grove,¹¹⁸ his argument draws on the lack of divine retribution in order to cast Caesar and Lucan as collaborators combating the irrational at Massilia,¹¹⁹ and this is problematic in two ways: firstly, Leigh constructs Caesar as a positive analogue for Aeneas, viewing the desecration of the grove as an act of enlightenment;¹²⁰ thus the actions of Caesar and Aeneas parallel the historical actions of Octavian and Agrippa in draining Lake Avernus, thereby challenging the superstitious *locus horridus* described by Vergil in book 6 of the *Aeneid*.¹²¹ As further support for his argument, Leigh draws on the Ovidian Erysichthon narrative (Ov. *Met.* 8.738ff.), another of Lucan's models:¹²² both Caesar and Erysichthon attack the landscape, and both deliver the first blow against the trees when their followers hold back. However, while the threat of divine punishment is common to both narratives (in Ovid's version this comes from the nymph of the stricken tree; in the *Bellum Civile* it is enunciated through the Massilians' reported wishes), it is only the Ovidian character who actually receives any punishment; Erysichthon is given an insatiable hunger that leads to self-cannibalism. Caesar, despite vocally inviting the gods to do their worst (436-7), goes unpunished. Leigh's analysis of the correspondence between the two passages is to see the divergence in the treatment of the perpetrators of the crime as signalling the success of Caesar in (en)lightening the

¹¹⁶ Tommasi Moreschini (2005) 145-6.

¹¹⁷ Thomas (1988) 264-70; Santini (1999) 220. Cf. Verg. *A.* 3.22-68, 6.124-210.

¹¹⁸ Leigh (1999) 196.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.* 177; although cf. Augoustakis (2006) 638 who suggests that Lucan implies punishment will catch up with Caesar.

¹²⁰ Leigh (1999) 174 n. 27 responds to Thomas' "pessimistic perspective".

¹²¹ *Ibid.* 189.

¹²² Cf. Call. *Cer.* 31-117; Phillips (1968) 298.

grove and subverting the role of the divine: “The light, the light of reason, enters a place of darkness... The poet and the general are at one in their drive for demystification”.¹²³ Yet in addition to reinforcing the lack of divine punishment, the Ovidian intertext can be understood as suggesting Caesar’s own boundless appetite.¹²⁴ This may not be a punishment, but by establishing Erysichthon’s action as his model and raising the expectation of punishment through the besieged Massilians, Lucan foregrounds Caesar’s own insatiable hunger: Caesar’s lust for destruction is already impossibly boundless, reflected by his immediate departure for Spain to engage in further fighting before the siege of Massilia is even complete.¹²⁵ Caesar’s insatiable hunger is a hunger for civil war, making this the ultimate in self-cannibalism: the Romans consume themselves in an orgy of violence in which Erysichthon becomes a reflexive metaphor for the Roman state turning on itself. Moreover, the evidence of human sacrifice within the grove foregrounds an interpretation of civil war as a sacrilegious and perverse sacrifice: on one level the Massilians (and the pro-Senate Romans) are sacrificed to Caesar’s ambition; on another, the destruction of the grove and the Massilians represents a figurative sacrifice of the Romans to the gods of disorder, symbolising Roman self-cannibalism. Indeed, the theme of human sacrifice will become a leitmotif associated with Lucan’s *locus horridus*; thus, the lack of immediate divine punishment does not have to register the favour of the poet for Caesar’s action. Further, Caesar’s act in the grove is analogous to Lucan’s refiguration of Latin epic: symbolically, Lucan cannibalises his predecessors in order to remake his *Bellum Civile*; the poet is Erysichthon, endlessly consuming and refashioning his models, again paralleling the endless action of the river Po against the Italian countryside, and revealing an ambiguous attitude towards poetics which is suggestive of Lucan’s destructive creative

¹²³ Leigh (1999) 179.

¹²⁴ Phillips (1968) 300 suggests this but does not elaborate.

¹²⁵ 3.453: *impatiens*. Cf. Hunink (1992) 186.

energy.¹²⁶ Sacrilegious sacrifice and self-consumption are embedded within the poem and written across its landscapes.

It is also not clear that the gods of the grove are meant to stand for “all the old divine machinery”.¹²⁷ Throughout the narrative, Lucan has differentiated between the gods of the Romans and the barbaric gods of the Massilian grove (402-5; 415-7). Clearing the grove without punishment might reinforce the suggestion that the “old” gods are unable to act, but it does not necessarily mean that every aspect of the divine has been done away with: moreover, inaction does not necessarily imply inability to act, but could instead suggest that the gods are *unwilling* to act. Indeed, Lucan’s complaint that punishment is deflected onto the *miseri* (449) suggests that the gods do act, but just not in the way they are expected to. The deforestation needs to be regarded within the dominant context of the grove: illogicality and chaos. Caesar’s act is only impious when viewed within the epic framework of Vergil and Ovid; but Lucan’s *locus horridus* provides a physical manifestation of the gods of chaos, existing as a supernatural landscape which fails to correspond to the norms of Greco-Roman religious practice. Ultimately the grove provides a microcosmic parallel for the theological framework of the epic, where the civilised and beneficent Roman gods find themselves displaced by unknown, malignant gods. This is a perversion of religious values,¹²⁸ and the supernatural element of the Massilian grove can only be overcome by another elemental force: the *furor* of Caesar,¹²⁹ which exposes the universal susceptibility to cosmic

¹²⁶ Cf. Murray (2004) 212-6.

¹²⁷ Leigh (1999) 177.

¹²⁸ Santini (1999) 211.

¹²⁹ Cf. 5.504ff. and Caesar’s attempted sea-crossing; a challenge to both nature and to the gods (although unsuccessful, Caesar nevertheless survives the episode). LaPidge (1979) 368; Hershkowitz (1998b) 211.

instability and *nefas*. Caesar does not so much oppose the grove, as surpass it:¹³⁰ yet his desecration is in accord with the ethics promoted by the gods of chaos who inhabit it.¹³¹

Caesar destroys the concord of nature and enacts the cosmic disaster;¹³² at Massilia his elemental power easily surpasses the deities of the grove, assisted by the paradoxical receipt of divine favour, despite his perpetual impiety.¹³³ Lucan invokes Caesar's providentially favoured status, responding to the Massilians' expectation that Caesar will receive divine punishment: *quis enim laesos impune putaret / esse deos? servat multos fortuna nocentes / et tantum miseris irasci numina possunt*, 448-9 ("For who could have thought that the gods' injury would not be punished? Fortune protects many criminals, and the gods can only be wrathful with the unlucky"). The Massilians' expectation fails to recognise the distinction drawn by Lucan between the gods of the grove and the gods of Rome: Lucan alludes to the precedent set by Erysichthon's punishment from the gods, but this precedent is not followed by the gods of the grove. Moreover, while the gods here appear to be opposed to Fortuna, cheated of their revenge on the desecrator of the grove by the providential nature of his actions,¹³⁴ this is to assume that the *numina* that Lucan refers to are the beneficent gods of Rome and that they will react in a logical, consistent manner. Rather, the gods with whom Lucan populates the grove are gods of chaos and there is no reason why they should reserve their punishment for the guilty: thus, it is the *miseri* of Massilia who are punished rather than the guilty Caesar.¹³⁵ Ultimately, Caesar's *furor* facilitates the dissolution of the universe; thus, the Fortuna that favours Caesar is a version of Fortuna that inexorably

¹³⁰ Hunink (1992) 176.

¹³¹ Cf. Hardie (1993) 61-2; Malamud (2003) 38.

¹³² Colish (1985) 256; Tommasi Moreschini (2005) 140; Phillips (1968) 300.

¹³³ Caesar shows his awareness of his favoured status at 1.309-11, 1.358-66 and 5.325-32; Colish (1985) 262.

¹³⁴ Hunink (1992) pp. 184-185.

¹³⁵ Cf. Barton (1984) 244.

leads towards cosmic anarchy.¹³⁶ In the topsy-turvy world of the *Bellum Civile* punishment is visited upon the innocent while the guilty walk free, and the failure to punish Caesar is another example of the gods behaving in a capricious and chaotic manner. Destroying the grove at Massilia exposes the lack of any cosmic plan. Lucan does use Caesar as a device of revelation; but this is not “enlightenment”.¹³⁷ Moreover, Lucan’s transformation of the *locus amoenus* into the *locus horridus* functions as a symbol of the dissonance between Lucan and his Augustan poetic antecedents, signifying his subversive response to the canonical texts of the Roman literary landscape.

2.3: Prophetic landscapes: the groves of Phemonoe and Erictho

Recent scholarship on Lucan has begun to recognise the primacy of Erictho and her necromancy in the thematic movement of the *Bellum Civile* and to explore the implications of the witch for Lucan’s poetics.¹³⁸ This has fitted in with the witch’s pairing with the Pythia’s prophecy in book 5 of the poem;¹³⁹ and, just as Lucan supplants the *locus amoenus* at the Po with the *locus horridus* at Massilia, Lucan’s pairing of these two prophetic episodes utilises the symbolism of the topographical setting, displacing the ineffectual pleasance of the Pythia with the efficacious *locus horridus* of Erictho.¹⁴⁰ Doing so facilitates Lucan’s subversion of prophetic discourse in two ways: the failure of prophecy at Delphi signals the exhaustion of the *locus amoenus* and its aetiological significance;¹⁴¹ and the supremacy of Erictho patterns a new poetics which reflects the madness of civil conflict and confirms the decline of the Vergilian

¹³⁶ Sklenář (1999) 284.

¹³⁷ Cf. Feeney (1991) 284.

¹³⁸ Masters (1992) 179ff.; Johnson (1987) 1-34.

¹³⁹ Cf. Ahl (1976) 130; Masters (1992) 205-15.

¹⁴⁰ Makowski (1977) 198.

¹⁴¹ O’Higgins (1988) 212; Masters (1992) 147-9 on the silence of the Delphic Oracle.

conflation of state and poetics through the *locus amoenus* at Elysium.¹⁴² Lucan splits the Sibyl to form the Pythia and Erichtho: Vergil's Sibyl is a priestess of both Apollo and Trivia;¹⁴³ yet while Apollo's vatic power (conducted through the Pythia) is subverted towards violence and prophetic impotence, Erichtho's association with the wild, Underworld persona of Diana/Trivia as Hecate is revealed to be ascendant,¹⁴⁴ associating Erichtho and her successful prophecy with the gods of Massilia and their promotion of Caesarian chaos.

i) Phemonoe

Apollo's shrine at Delphi has as its setting in the *Bellum Civile* a *locus amoenus* of groves, trees and shade (Luc. 5.64ff.). Moreover, like the Po, it is afforded some geographical significance: where that was the first *locus amoenus*, the Delphic grove is exactly at the centre of the Earth.¹⁴⁵ Following the Roman Senate's decision to take action in defence of the Republic, Appius, fearful of the outcome, travels to Delphi to consult the oracle (5.69-70). As with the Po narrative, Lucan contextualises his narrative by engaging with the concepts of creation, destruction and renewal:¹⁴⁶ as well as referring to Deucalion's flood by alluding to Parnassus' ability to keep its peaks above the water, Lucan introduces the aetiological narrative of Apollo's destruction of the Python (5.71-85).¹⁴⁷

Although making clear reference to the Castalian Spring and the trees of the grove,¹⁴⁸ Lucan's depiction of the *locus amoenus* is characterised by brevity, but this

¹⁴² Feeney (1991) 288-9; Masters (1992) 194; above, p. 18.

¹⁴³ Verg. A. 6.35: the Sibyl is *Phoebi Triviaeque sacerdos*.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. Korenjak (1996) 198, 209; Soubiran (1998) 173.

¹⁴⁵ Luc. 5.71-2; Delphi's position at the centre of the Earth is traditional.

¹⁴⁶ Barratt (1979) 29-30; Dick (1965) 462-5.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Ov. *Met.* 1.312-47, 416-51; Evans (2008) 44 on the killing of the Python as an arbitrary act of violence in a post-renewal landscape.

¹⁴⁸ Luc. 5.125; 5.153-7.

also signals the limited influence of the pleasance on the characters of the episode; their decreased relationship with the landscape is indicative of the problems of a universe dominated by civil war, of which a further indication is the silence of the grove. *Loca amoena* such as Vergil's Elysium are filled with sound and song,¹⁴⁹ and as the location of an oracle, the landscape at Delphi is associated with pronouncements on the future; yet Lucan emphasises the silence of both the god and the ineffectual prayers of those who approach (5.104-6, 111-4); the priestesses are satisfied with this silence (5.114-6). It is silence rather than song that is prized at Lucan's Delphi, despite its proximity to Parnassus, home of the Muses and sacred to Apollo as a god of song as well as prophecy.¹⁵⁰ Lucan's depiction of Parnassus has already prompted Masters to describe the episode at Delphi as "an extended piece of metapoetic discussion" in which Lucan exploits interpretations of vocabulary that carry overtones of song and singing as well as examining the metapoetic force of the *vates* as a means of exploring the *furor* experienced by both the Pythia and the poet himself.¹⁵¹ Masters' discussion concentrates on Lucan's Delphic episode as a "patterned" response to the Underworld episode of *Aeneid* 6 in which the confusion of an attempt to glean an irrelevantly minor piece of information about the impending war demonstrates the failure of epic poetry to deal with something as devastating as the disaster of civil war;¹⁵² as such, the episode is another example of the "fractured voice".¹⁵³ The use of the *locus amoenus*, however, also exploits connotations of aetiology, engaging with the conceptualisation of metamorphosis as a means of understanding the nature of the universe as presented in the *Metamorphoses*. Lucan signals this by constructing his Delphic narrative as a variant of the rape in the grove *topos*.

¹⁴⁹ Above, p. 19.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Hes. *Th.* 36-115.

¹⁵¹ Cf. Luc. 5.150, 165, 184; Verg. *A.* 6.662. Masters (1992) 117.

¹⁵² *Ibid.* 118, 133-48.

¹⁵³ Cf. Feeney (1991) 278.

Groves are frequently morally ambiguous places: areas of great beauty that promise safety but which nevertheless become the sites of violent depravities, particularly in the *Metamorphoses*.¹⁵⁴ Violence is common in the landscapes of the *Bellum Civile*; yet Delphi is explicitly differentiated from other Lucanian landscapes as Lucan's narrator claims that Delphi alone is free from human wickedness (5.103-4).¹⁵⁵ Yet the divine grove at Delphi becomes a location for human violence as Appius forces the Pythia to prophesise; moreover, Lucan makes the god of the grove complicit in this act of violence. Although it is Appius and the priest who force the Pythia to prophesise, the god of the shrine also perpetrates an act of violence upon the Pythia with his vatic inspiration (5.118-20): this is described in the terms of force and violation,¹⁵⁶ particularly as the Pythia is subjected to a mental transformation. The god has power over the Pythia in a further example of a complex relationship between the divinities of Lucan's *Bellum Civile* and the chaotic cosmos; as with the deflection of punishment from Caesar onto the Massilians by the chaotic gods of the *locus horridus*, the attack on the Pythia is a further demonstration of dissolution and destruction. As at Massilia, the identity of the god is ambiguous: although associated by topography (Parnassus) and aetiology (the python), Apollo is directly named only twice, as the episode begins and ends.¹⁵⁷ Apollo is frequently named using his epithets in the narrative,¹⁵⁸ and while there are no doubt aesthetic reasons for the choice of nomenclature, it is striking that Lucan opens his description of Delphi with an admission that he does not know the precise identity of the god responsible for vatic inspiration (5.86-101); this also includes

¹⁵⁴ Above, p. 22.

¹⁵⁵ Barratt (1979) 36-7.

¹⁵⁶ 5.165-9. Cf. 5.167: *irrupit*; OLD s.v. *irrumpe*; cf. Caes. *Gal.* 7.70.6; Sen. *Con.* 4.3); cf. Verg. *A.* 3.443: *impleo*. On *rumpe* and its compounds (denoting bursting) having sexual connotations, Adams (1982) 150-1; cf. Pl. *Cas.* 326; Prop. 2.16.14; Hor. *S.* 1.2.118. Cf. Stat. *Theb.* 3. 341; cf. Barratt (1979) 55-6.

¹⁵⁷ 5.85, 197.

¹⁵⁸ 5.80, 82: *Paeon*; 5.128: *Phoebas*; 136: *Phoebi*; 139: *Paeon*; 152: *Phoebi*; 156: *Phoebo*; 167: *Phoebados*; 167: *Paeon*; 170: *Phoebea*; 174: *Phoebe*; 187: *Phoebo*; 199: *Paeon*; 221: *Paeon*; 223: *Phoebi*.

a short passage describing Stoic interpretations of the universe.¹⁵⁹ In this case, Lucan's uncertainty reflects his uncertainty regarding the nature of the cosmos;¹⁶⁰ moreover, it engages with his sense of divine antipathy towards humanity:¹⁶¹ like the unknown gods of Massilia who promote chaos by punishing the innocent, the god of the Delphic *locus amoenus* appears to indulge in a taste for chaos and destruction, on this occasion violating the Pythia; moreover, where the Massilian grove is associated with the practice of human sacrifice, at Delphi the Pythia is effectively sacrificed to Appius' desire for prophecy. Even where the Olympians are involved in his poem, Lucan focuses on divine personae which are not quite coterminous with their positive identities but instead are developed as capricious and violent; indeed, these aspects which are foregrounded by the violence of Apollo and Jupiter as rapists in the *Metamorphoses*, but also Diana in her revenge upon Actaeon. Lucan's interest in the darker side of the Olympian deities is revisited by means of his Erictho narrative and the grove which she inhabits.

Lucan places an emphasis on the virginity of the Pythia:¹⁶² just as many victims in Ovid are virginal characters (of both sexes), the Pythia's status as a young maiden is reinforced throughout Lucan's narrative. Many Ovidian victims are also subject to some form of role reversal; particularly unfortunate in Ovid are those hunters who become the hunted, who, as Hinds points out, are generally "virgin devotee[s] of Diana".¹⁶³ In his description of the Pythia, Lucan draws a clear parallel with the characteristically virginal victim in the *locus amoenus*. Despite there being dispute over whether the

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Barratt (1979) 32-6.

¹⁶⁰ D'Allessandro Behr (2007) 118.

¹⁶¹ Cf. Feeney (1991) 285.

¹⁶² Luck (1985) 281. There is little ancient or modern consensus on the sexual status of the Pythia. Diodorus Siculus writes that following the rape of a virgin Pythia it was decided that the priestess should be a woman of fifty or over who wore the dress of a virgin (D. S. 16.26.6). Plutarch writes that the Pythia should be virginal young girl (*De Pythiae Oraculis* 405).

¹⁶³ Hinds (2002) 131.

Pythia was a virgin or not even in antiquity, Lucan repeatedly makes use of the term *virgo* in referring to the Pythia; generically, to all Priestesses of Delphi once (5.97), and three times with specific reference to Phemonoe (5.141, 161, 193) within the episode.¹⁶⁴ Lucan reiterates the virginal status of the Pythia and emphasises the Pythia's status as one who has never been subjected to the power of the god, claiming that the oracle has not been consulted for centuries.¹⁶⁵ Lucan puts his virgin Pythia into a virginal *locus amoenus* pregnant with the Ovidian threat of violence.

Consequently, Lucan's narrative questions the value of poetic aetiology: in the *Metamorphoses*, rapes and violations within groves tend to climax with a metamorphosis that gives the victim some kind of eternal life or memorial in return; victims are inscribed into the landscape.¹⁶⁶ Metamorphosis becomes a cosmological agent playing a part in the resolution of chaos into order: victims become a permanent part of the environment, taking the form of a river, tree or other topographical feature. Metamorphosis can therefore be understood as a formative agent creating a stable world, culminating with the stability offered by Rome and finally the Principate.¹⁶⁷ While Feldherr sees metamorphosis in Vergil as emphasising a "world of unstable ephemerality that can only be at odds with the poem's movement towards the foundation of Rome as the centre of a stable cosmos",¹⁶⁸ it remains that even if metamorphosis does undermine the teleological flavour of the poem, the *Aeneid's* overt movement ultimately depicts a sequence of events that will lead to Roman *imperium sine fine*. However, it is the subversive vision of metamorphoses "associated with the dehumanizing violence and immorality of Rome's civil wars" that supplies the genesis

¹⁶⁴ Moreover, Phemonoe is recorded as the name of the first Delphic priestess: Paus. 10.4; Dick (1965) 461-6.

¹⁶⁵ 5.163. Cf. Plutarch *De Defectu Oraculorum* 411-3.

¹⁶⁶ Such as Dryope, victimised by Apollo, *Ov. Met.* 9.332. Cf. *Verg. A.* 6.234-5: Misenus is immortalised as the promontory at Misenum.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Solodow (1988) 207; Graf (2002) 115-9.

¹⁶⁸ Feldherr (2002) 168.

of Lucan's interpretation of metamorphosis.¹⁶⁹ Lucan denies the efficacy of aetiology by making the lack of final resolution more overt. Victims in the *Bellum Civile* are denied permanent inscription in the landscape and decay, leading to death, is the unavoidable result of metamorphosis. In the case of the Pythia, she can no longer enjoy the calm of an existence without knowing the power of Apollo, and her eventual death is assured by the metamorphosis of her status from 'virgin' to violated.

Lucan's Pythia is subject to a metamorphosis that is both mental and physical, beginning with her seizure by the god: this is a dangerous process (5.97-101, 116-120, 161-197). In her frenzy the Pythia dominates and disturbs the cave (169-74, 190-3),¹⁷⁰ as her mental distress spills over into the physical space of the cavern. Yet while metamorphosis tends to occur on a physical level, it has been suggested that physiological change reflects the psychological state of an individual, "clarifying" innate characteristics.¹⁷¹ For instance, Ovid's depiction of Lycaon's transformation into a wolf clarifies and physicalises his prior predatory and wolf-like psychology, reifying his character in physical form (*Ov. Met.* 1.230ff.). Lucan focuses on a psychological transformation over the physical changes she experiences, which are generally limited to a deterioration of her bodily state; not only is the Pythia denied a permanent memorial within the landscape, but Lucan does not allow for "clarification" of any essential characteristic. This contrasts with the similar transformation of Hecuba in the *Metamorphoses*: driven insane by rage upon the killing of Polydorus, Hecuba's wrath is physically embodied by her metamorphosis into a dog (13.568-75). Lucan rationalises the change, denying the supernatural and cosmological implications of a physical metamorphosis, and disallowing the possibility of a physical change such as that resulting from Hecuba's madness. This is not a miraculous and supernatural change, but

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.* 168.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. 5.153-7: when she fakes possession, the Pythia does not dominate the space.

¹⁷¹ Solodow (1988) 220; cf. Feldherr (2002) 171-3, in response.

an internal, psychological and natural transformation that features only plausible physiological changes such as the Pythia's racing heart.

Following her violation by the god the Pythia suffers distressed speechlessness reminiscent of that caused by Hecuba's transformation:

*nec, qui solet esse timenti,
terribilis sed pallor inest; nec fessa quiescunt
corda, sed, ut tumidus Boreae post flamina pontus
rauca gemit, sic muta levant suspiria vatem.*

(5.215-8)

the paleness in her is not like that of one afraid, but terrifying, nor does her wearied heart rest, but, as the swollen sea sighs hoarsely after the North wind has blown, so silent sighs relieve the prophetess.

When the god leaves her, the Pythia falls to the ground and is temporarily robbed of speech. In contrast, Hecuba's ability to articulate speech had been removed as she metamorphosed into a wolf: *at haec... rauco cum murmure*, Ov. *Met.* 13.567 ("but she, with hoarse grumbling..."). Hecuba's change is a physical one: she is physiologically incapable of articulating intelligible sounds, just *rauca murmura*. Instead, a simile compares the Pythia to a natural element that is *rauca*, suggesting that the faculty of speech not has been physically removed from her but that she suffers from psychological turmoil. Lucan rationalises the change, making the psychological metamorphosis of the Pythia physiologically plausible. The Pythia too is subject to the "broken voice", but in this case this is symptomatic of her broken mind.

In this *locus amoenus* there is no poetic fame for the Pythia, either as a prophetess (the power to foretell the future is taken from her, snatched by Apollo as he departs, 5.222-4) or as a transformed victim. The Pythia's prediction is short, misleading, and as Lucan interjects, inappropriate to the civil war context (197ff.);¹⁷² and where the poetic aetiology of Vergil and Ovid can supply a sense of progress from chaos to order, stabilising landscape and detailing the origins of the world, the

¹⁷² Barratt (1979) 65.

instability that remains in the Lucanian *locus amoenus*, coupled with the lack of permanent memorial, indicate Lucan's challenge to the validity of poetic progress to stability. Contextualised by the preceding landscapes at the Po and Massilia, Lucan channels the chaos of the universe through the violation of the Pythia in the Delphic grove, using it to further contest the validity of poetic aetiologies that stake a claim for the imposition of order. Lucan's subversive approach is further demonstrated in his second prophetic episode, involving the diametric opposite of the powerless Pythia and her *locus amoenus*; Erictho and her landscape of extreme depravity: the *locus horridus* of Thessaly.

ii) Erictho

Erictho's position in the poem and her relationship to the Delphic episode asserts the supremacy of Lucan's Caesarian impulse over the traditional virtues of Rome which are revealed to be exhausted by the Pythia's failure to communicate the future to Appius;¹⁷³ Sextus Pompey prefers to seek out the power of a witch as a result of their superiority to the traditional oracular seats of prophecy (6.419-34). Moreover, the Erictho episode is fashioned as a further response to Vergil's Underworld scene and the future virtues of Rome promised within.¹⁷⁴ Masters has suggested that the inaccuracies of Lucan's Thessalian "excursus" intertextually engage with Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in order to exploit the "topographical symbolism" of the landscape, suggesting that Thessaly is a landscape worthy of the events that happen there;¹⁷⁵ Lucan's description of Thessaly begins with an emphasis on its topographical boundaries, Ossa, Pelion, Othrys and Pindus: yet it is a liminal landscape between the human world and Underworld as well

¹⁷³ Ahl (1976) 128; cf. Makowski (1977) 198.

¹⁷⁴ Masters (1992) 193-6; Johnson (1987) 29; cf. Morford (1967a) 67-72; Gordon (1987) 233ff; Korenjak (1996) 154.

¹⁷⁵ Masters (1992) 177; cf. Tupet (1988) 421-2; Mayer (1981) 17.

as the site of moral transgression, chaos,¹⁷⁶ and civil war (6.333-42).¹⁷⁷ Thessaly is the land which gave birth to warfare; violence is deeply embedded in its soil (6.380-412); it is even the birthplace of the Delphic python (407-9).¹⁷⁸ Thus, it is significant that supplantation of oracular and sibylline prophecy is accompanied by the replacement of the *locus amoenus* with the *locus horridus* landscape.¹⁷⁹

Lucan's use of landscape effectively establishes a parallel between Caesar and Erictho: they are respectively associated with the *loca horrida* of Massilia and Thessaly, bringing both together as agents of chaos representative of the "broken machine". Erictho provides a paradigm for Caesar's *furor*,¹⁸⁰ and both expose the chaotic and capricious nature of the organising principles of the universe.¹⁸¹ Erictho recasts Caesar's localised actions at Massilia within a cosmic setting; as Caesar receives no punishment for his sacrilege in the grove, Erictho receives no punishment for her evil and impiety. Instead, the gods collude in Erictho's *nefas*,¹⁸² answering her prayers despite her evil intent (although Erictho mentions that she cannot change the plans of Fortuna, 6.615;¹⁸³ this can be paralleled with the god of Delphi's refusal to change the course of events on Earth, 5.104-6). In common with the Delphic episode, Lucan's narrator asks a series of questions with regard to the nature of the relationship between witchcraft and divinity;¹⁸⁴ moreover, the series of questions once again throws up an ambiguity concerning the nature of the deity that presides over Erictho's witchcraft (6.497-9).¹⁸⁵

¹⁷⁶ 6.472-80; LaPidge (1979) 368.

¹⁷⁷ Lucan refers to Thessaly's connection with the Underworld, 6.378-80: *hunc fama est*. Note that the mountains of Thessaly challenge the heavens, 6.410-12; cf. Parnassus' height at 5.75-8.

¹⁷⁸ 6.413: *damnata tellus*.

¹⁷⁹ Masters (1992) 187; Korenjak (1996) 177.

¹⁸⁰ LaPidge (1979) 368-9; Hershkowitz (1998b) 218; Erictho invokes the Furies (6.730ff.), whereas Caesar emulates them; cf. Hardie (1993) 61-2.

¹⁸¹ Erictho herself occupies a space between the mortal world and that of the gods; cf. 6.513-5, 6.492-509, 527-8.

¹⁸² The gods grant Erictho *omne nefas*, 6.527; cf. 6.706-7.

¹⁸³ Soubiran (1998) 169; Martindale (1977) 379.

¹⁸⁴ Korenjak (1996) 131-2; Soubiran (1998) 167.

¹⁸⁵ Tupet (1988) 421.

Erictho desires the chaos and dissolution manifest in the poem's wider cosmic setting; she inverts and provides an opportunity for "negative enumeration" where Lucan demonstrates the Roman values that have been lost in the path to civil war.¹⁸⁶ Like Caesar, the witch causes chaos in the landscape,¹⁸⁷ and in doing so she ensures that cosmic chaos and dissolution occur. Moreover, Erictho's necromancy gives an accurate portrayal of the triumph of chaos and the destruction of the Pompeian army (6.776-820), in contrast to the misleading pronouncement of the Pythia (5.196-7).

Thessaly's reputation as a landscape of chaos increases its suitability as the site of Rome's self-sacrifice;¹⁸⁸ Lucan's depiction of Erictho's necromancy within a *locus horridus* restates his thematic interest in the nature of civil war as cannibalistic human sacrifice, signalled as the witch enacts a quasi-sacrificial ceremony on the body of a soldier. Claimed in antiquity to be the home of witches,¹⁸⁹ Lucan inverts elements of the *locus amoenus* with his depiction of Thessalian topography:¹⁹⁰ the region has running rivers, trees and shade;¹⁹¹ however, Lucan twists the pleasance into an altogether more rugged landscape,¹⁹² emphasising the darkness cast by the mountains and the turbulence of the Thessalian rivers.¹⁹³ In addition to this, Lucan's narrator looks ahead to the battle of Pharsalus and laments the association of this otherwise fertile landscape with warfare (380ff.; 395ff.).

Once both armies have established their camps, Sextus Pompey makes a journey to see Erictho, giving Lucan a further opportunity to describe the infamous inhabitants

¹⁸⁶ Martindale (1980) 374; Gordon (1987) 234.

¹⁸⁷ Tupet (1988) 427.

¹⁸⁸ Mayer (1981) 17. Although Pharsalia is in Greece and some participants in the battle are non-Roman, Lucan's focus is on the internal nature of the conflict. Being on foreign soil emphasises the "Roman-ness" of the combatants: if this was a battle fought between Romans and Greeks, it would not be sacrilegious.

¹⁸⁹ Soubiran (1998) 164-5.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. Verg. *A.* 6.237ff.; Sen. *Oed.* 530-47; Töchterle (1994) 430-1.

¹⁹¹ Luc. 6.338.

¹⁹² Indeed, Lucan twists the shape of the landscape itself, shifting the locations of Ossa and Pelion, and also by including the Argolid river Inachus in his catalogue, possibly alluding to Ovid; see Masters (1992) 164-7

¹⁹³ 6.345-7.

of that country as well as the topographical elements that contribute to the witches' power (438-42); subsequently Lucan describes the place of the witches within the poem's theological system, and attributes to these beings, particularly Erictho, a special relationship with the gods (451; 461ff.; 492-506; 730ff.). The power of the witches easily extends to controlling nature (461ff.),¹⁹⁴ and this includes the power to alter topographical elements such as rivers and mountains, as well as the movement of the sun and the moon. The manipulation of space is given a further cosmic dimension through its relation to the elements;¹⁹⁵ *aether* (fire), wind, water and earth are all affected by the witches of Thessaly.¹⁹⁶ Yet none of these abilities and practices are wicked enough for Erictho, whom Lucan describes as being more powerful and wicked than her peers (507-9);¹⁹⁷ Erictho rifles tombs (6.515-8) and manipulates the gods for her *nefas* (6.527-8), but she also poisons the environment around her: *semina fecundae segetis calcata perussit / et non letiferas spirando perdidit auras*, 6.521-2 ("her tread burns the seeds of the fertile cornfield and her breath wastes air that was not harmful"). The Thessalian geography is pockmarked with the evidence of her incursions;¹⁹⁸ likewise, civil war pollutes the battlefield of Pharsalus. Erictho's relentless activity parallels Caesar's restlessness: she is "a living caricature of wickedness, a pure distillation of frenetic immorality".¹⁹⁹ Once she has (enthusiastically) agreed to Sextus' request and informed him that the easiest way to learn the future is to reanimate the corpse of a recently deceased soldier, Erictho effects an immediate change in nature, making the night darker (624-6),²⁰⁰ before scrambling around in order to find a suitable

¹⁹⁴ Gordon (1987) 234-9 on the antithesis established between magic and normal religious activity.

¹⁹⁵ LaPidge (1979) 368-9.

¹⁹⁶ 6.462-82.

¹⁹⁷ Martindale (1980) 370-1.

¹⁹⁸ 6.573-6.

¹⁹⁹ Johnson (1987) 20-1; LaPidge (1979) 368; Barton (1984) 144: she is "the blood sucking paradigm of death".

²⁰⁰ Erictho's power over night is reasserted at 6.826-30.

body. Erictho's attempt to find a suitable corpse reveals Lucan's rationalising tendency: she must find a corpse which still has intact lungs and the physical capacity for speech (627-31). Then Erictho and Sextus descend into a grove that functions as a liminal space between the human world and the Underworld,²⁰¹ a *locus horridus* condemned to witness her depravities.²⁰² *Haud procul a Ditis caecis depressa cavernis / in praeceps subsedit humus, quam pallida pronis / urguet silva comis et nullo vertice caelum / suspiciens Phoebus non pervia taxus opacat*, 642-5 ("Not far away from the dark cavern of Dis the ground fell steeply downwards, the ground on which a dim wood with downward-bending branches presses hard, and a yew-tree, that does not see the sky with its top and is impenetrable to Phoebus, shades it"). This grove with its *silva*²⁰³ is dark and dank; Erictho's magic provides the only light (646-8),²⁰⁴ and the air is fetid and stale (648-9). It is a suitable place for Erictho's sorcery.

Erictho's oracular scene reflects the distaste of civil war,²⁰⁵ and the grove functions as a localised distillation of the horror of the cosmos. Here there has been a "reclassification of religious values in a world reversed, a world where *virtus* has been supplanted by *crimen*, and *pietas* by its inverse".²⁰⁶ This reclassification of values is reflected in the episode's parallel with Caesar's destruction of the Massilian grove: Caesar redrew the religious landscape by desecrating the grove and deflecting punishment from himself onto the innocent *miseri*, and Erictho's unholy acts in the *locus horridus* are designed to ensure suffering is directed towards the Romans for her own benefit (578-87). Moreover, Erictho's *carmina* register a further deformation of the

²⁰¹ Soubiran (1998) 170.

²⁰² 6.640-1.

²⁰³ Korenjak (1996) 177.

²⁰⁴ Cf. 3.420.

²⁰⁵ Martindale (1980) 377. Makowski (1977) 196; Johnson (1987) 19.

²⁰⁶ Gordon (1987) 234.

poetic tradition;²⁰⁷ while the Pythia is reduced to the sound of hoarse nature (*rauca*, 5.218) Erictho encompasses all the harsh sounds of the natural world from animals to waves crashing against the shore (6.685-93). Erictho's vatic ability to speak *nefas*, that which must not be spoken,²⁰⁸ parallels Lucan's attempt to perform the civil war through epic poetry, and her successful *novus ritus* (6.509) marks Erictho's ascendance over the traditional means of oracular prophecy at Delphi.²⁰⁹

Just as the gods demanded human sacrifice at Massilia, Erictho's grove is the location for what is effectively another human sacrifice: in order to prophesy, she must use, wound and animate by spells the corpse of a soldier (667ff.). During the associated prayer Erictho plays upon the idea of sacrifice to the gods, perverting the act of piety to engage with the idea of human (including child) sacrifice in order to facilitate the spread of *nefas*;²¹⁰ indeed, Erictho's powers appear to include an ability to reveal the secrets of hell (including those of the Furies, Hecate, Proserpina and even Pluto), indicating a measure of her Caesarian challenge to the rulers of the cosmos (730ff.). Erictho's necromancy sets her up as a counterpart to Caesar at Massilia: both impose themselves upon a *locus horridus* in order to further their designs, and both enact a form of human sacrifice (Caesar figuratively through his pursuit of civil war and association with the grove,²¹¹ and Erictho more literally). Like Caesar, Erictho is favoured by chaos, and her ultimate threat is to invoke an unnamed being more powerful than the Olympians.²¹² this being is akin to the gods of the Massilian grove, even going as far as breaking (usually inviolable) oaths sworn on the Styx.²¹³ Moreover, Erictho stresses her

²⁰⁷ Masters (1992) 205-15; Erictho's *carmina* are spoken with a mouth that is contaminated by *nefas*, 6.706-9 ("si vos satis ore nefando / pollutoque voco").

²⁰⁸ O'Higgins (1988) 217ff.

²⁰⁹ Masters (1992) 213-5; cf. *carmen novus*, 6.578.

²¹⁰ 6.706-11; Martindale (1977) 386; Korenjak (1996) 199-201; Soubiran (1998) 173; Gordon (1987) 241.

²¹¹ Above, p. 55.

²¹² 6.746-9. Korenjak (1996) 210-12 suggests Hermes Trismegistos.

²¹³ 6.748-9; Soubiran (1998) 174-5.

allegiance to Hecate over the other forms of the goddess' tripartite existence,²¹⁴ while it is not unusual for witches to be associated with this savage persona of Diana, Erictho's status as a follower of Hecate reiterates the subordination of the Olympians to their wilder counterparts.²¹⁵ The association between the witch, Hecate and the *locus horridus* will also be picked up by the epicists who follow Lucan.

The capricious nature of these chaotic gods means that not all of Erictho's plans and desires are fulfilled: despite her powers, her greatest wish is denied (at least within the scope of the extant epic). In preparing for Pharsalus, Erictho most desired parts from corpses of Caesar and Pompey (5.587-8); yet Erictho is denied their bodies, as both die far away from the fields of Thessaly. In this respect, Erictho's efficacy is doubtful, and her belief that the gods are obeying her commands is misguided: Erictho's primary aim is subordinated to Caesar's survival. The witch may facilitate cosmic dissolution, but ultimately it is Caesar who is given the opportunity to wreak further, human, evil across the landscape. Chaotic gods may give and take favour at a whim; but they are more consistent in their support of Caesar.

Ultimately, the triumph of chaos is revealed by the corpse's description of a jubilant gathering of Roman criminals, inverting Aeneas' vision of the great and the good in book 6 of the *Aeneid*;²¹⁶ the inhabitants of both Elysium and the *locus horridus* of Tartarus have abandoned their homes (782-3), and the Elysian *locus amoenus* has been contaminated with wickedness (788-9). Vergil's optimism for the Roman future has given way to the catastrophe of Caesar, and so the wicked rejoice and the virtuous weep (776-99).²¹⁷ Moreover, this blurring of boundaries within the Underworld stretches to the relationship between the human and hellish spheres: just as the grove is

²¹⁴ 6.700: *Hecates pars ultima*; cf. 6.737. There are no other references to Hecate in the *Bellum Civile*. Cf. Verg. A. 6.35; Korenjak (1996) 198, 209; Soubiran (1998) 173.

²¹⁵ Cf. 6.75, referring to the savage persona of Diana as the goddess at Aricia; also 3.87.

²¹⁶ 6. 777-820. Cf. Martindale (1980) 369; Masters (1992) 193-4.

²¹⁷ O'Higgins (1988) 219-20.

a liminal space, the lord of the Underworld prepares for Pompey's arrival by opening his realm (799-802).

A final incongruity caps Erictho's interaction with the corpse: although she has engaged in acts of impiety, her final act is to cremate the soldier upon a funeral pyre (820-25). As an unburied corpse, the soldier would not have gained peace in the afterlife; moreover, burial of a deceased colleague is an archetypal request made of a hero who makes a descent into the Underworld.²¹⁸ Even in the context of her sacrilegious rites, Erictho's act is an important act of piety.²¹⁹ This reinforces the chaotic nature of a scene in which even the representative of chaos and malignancy can perform acts which would otherwise fit into the framework of Roman religious piety. Erictho's final pious act contrasts with Caesar's actions: after the battle, Lucan gives an extensive description of Thessaly, giving graphic descriptions of rivers running with gore and bodies piled high (7.786-94). Again, the theme of human sacrifice is recalled;²²⁰ but this time, Caesar sits to dine among the dead, enjoying the spectacle. In his madness (*furens*, 7.797) Caesar refuses to give proper funeral rites to any of the deceased (7.797ff.), demonstrating that his immoral excesses can outdo even Erictho, the worst of all the witches.²²¹ Recalling the perverse actions of the gods at the Massilian grove, Lucan describes the dead as *miseri* left in the sight of the guilty gods (7.798). Just as incredulous as the Massilians who expected punishment for Caesar's desecration of the grove, Lucan attributes the blame for the disaster to the gods (7.869-72). Following Caesar's lack of piety, birds and animals come to feast on the bodies of the dead, with the result that *locus amoenus* landscapes are turned into *loca horrida*:

²¹⁸ Cf. Hom. *Od.* 11.51ff.; Verg. *A.* 6.337ff; moreover, Aeneas' entry into the Underworld is made dependent on his burial of Misenus, 6.149ff.

²¹⁹ Cf. Statius' *Thebaid*, where the importance of funeral rites becomes a leitmotif of the poem; Pollmann (2004) 32-6.

²²⁰ Cf. Hardie (1993) 56.

²²¹ Cf. Stat. *Theb.* 11.537-8, as the Furies are outdone by the violence of Polynices and Eteocles.

omne nemus misit volucres omnisque cruenta / alite sanguineis stillavit roribus arbor,
7.836-7 (“every wood sent birds, and every tree dripped with bloody dew from the
bloodstained birds”). Caesar may have destroyed the Massilian grove, but after
Pharsalus, every wood becomes the Massilian grove, dripping with gore and blood.

Although a liminal space, Erictho’s grove is the dark heart of Lucan’s epic: it is
the centre of the narrative, and the visceral depiction of the Thessalian *loca horrida*
prior to and following the battle are embedded as the poem’s defining motif; moreover,
Pharsalus is the crucial moment in Caesar’s impious war and the self-destruction of the
Roman state. As such, the *locus amoenus* is pushed to the margins of the world,
relegated with Cato, the paradigmatic Stoic and defender of the Republic, to the
unknown ends of the Earth.²²² Lucan tests myth’s capacity to mediate between cosmos
and history by placing the ultimate Stoic into a landscape of real and mythological
excesses which exposes the paradoxes of civil war.

2.4: Cato in the garden: a rational man in a world gone mad

Throughout his poem, Lucan has tested the limits of Augustan poetics, myth, history,
allegory, and the irrational world of the civil war; and in book 9 these categories are
brought to the point of collapse with the entrance of Cato into the mythological garden
of the Hesperides. Having persuaded the Pompeian faction to fight for the Senate
following the death of Pompey,²²³ Cato leads the army into Africa. This is an encounter
between historical fact and mythological space in which Lucan pushes the historicity of
Cato’s journey to its limit, introducing the ideal rational Stoic into a landscape of
mythological extremes replete with allegorical potential.²²⁴ Lucan’s emplacement of

²²² Cf. Bartsch (1997) 35.

²²³ 9.167-293.

²²⁴ Wick (2004) 132; Leigh (2000) 109.

Cato within the *locus amoenus* focuses attention on the tensions that exist between the desire for rationalisation and the irrationality of *Bella...plus quam civilia*.²²⁵

Consequently, the narrative works not only on an allegorical level but extends to become a metapoetic comment on the utility of allegorical exegesis in epic poetry,²²⁶ problematising interpretation of Cato's journey as a metaphor for Stoic *virtus*.²²⁷ Yet ultimately, the symbolic victory is the only victory left for both Cato and Lucan.²²⁸

On the arrival of the Republican army in Libya Lucan stresses the role of *natura* in forming the inhospitable area around the Syrtes; Cato and his men must conquer *natura* by *audax* in what appears to be a rationalised conflation of the region's excessive heat and rough seas.²²⁹ This is to be a trial of Cato's fortitude; yet the emphasis on the role of *natura* in creating the landscape contrasts with the panegyric of Cato in the second book,²³⁰ where Cato is described as wishing to observe limits in accordance with *natura*.²³¹ Cato is pushed to extremes and into conflict with nature by love for his *patria* (2.382).²³² This is symptomatic of the paradoxes engendered by the Libyan landscape; Cato is marginalised, fighting against *natura* whilst embedded within a chaotic landscape redolent with mythological possibility.²³³ Lucan rationalises much of the Libyan landscape in accordance with topographical and geographical knowledge, juxtaposing myth with reality in a manner that alienates Cato and his men from their environment. This is not dissimilar to Lucan's rationalisation of the river Po's role in the Phaethon narrative; however, that episode was isolated from the historical action of the poem and no actors from the civil war narrative impinged upon the topography of

²²⁵ Cf. Feeney (1991) 273-9.

²²⁶ Cf. Malamud (2003) 39

²²⁷ Cf. Fantham (1995).

²²⁸ Cf. Masters (1992) 208: "The result of Pharsalus cannot be altered".

²²⁹ Wick (2004) 113-4; cf. 9.301-18; 368-78.

²³⁰ 2.380-3.

²³¹ Fantham (1992a) 150; Fantham problematises Cato's role as a Stoic sage, 122-52; cf. Luc. 9.379-410; 9.564-85. Cf. Johnson (1987) 55-7; Billerbeck (1986b) 3123-9.

²³² Cf. Luc. 2.283-325.

²³³ Cf. Sklenář (1999) 282; Leigh (2000) 109.

the river; however, in Libya Cato and his men march not only into a desert but into a narrative which itself becomes allegorised as a metaphor for Stoic endurance under tyranny. Cato's presence in the desert becomes paradoxical as the general seeks to maintain the boundaries between history and myth by elaborating the mysteries of the cosmos even while he participates in a symbolically loaded tale.²³⁴

Cato's march begins with the abandonment of his ships at Lake Triton, which in contrast to the excited waters of the Syrtes is *torpens palus* (9.347). At the banks of Triton Cato and his men find a *locus amoenus* which includes the mythical Garden of the Hesperides; elements of the garden's history such as Hercules' theft of the golden apples are relegated to the realm of myth and are chronologically isolated from Cato's travels: *fuit aurea silva*, 9.360 ("There was a golden grove"). Yet Lucan suggests no doubt over the reality of the geographical reality of the *hortus*,²³⁵ although it is made clear that since the theft of the apples the garden has been desolate: *Hesperidum pauper spoliatis frondibus hortus*, 358 ("the Garden of the Hesperides, poor from the theft from its leaves"). Hercules is problematised as a Stoic hero: not only is his raid characterised as theft, but his act is sanctioned by a tyrant (*tyrannus*, 9.367); moreover, as Martindale observes, Hercules' physicality renders him suspect as a potential *sapiens*.²³⁶ Yet it is this physicality which Cato replicates in his march through the Libyan desert.

The garden as *pauper* contrasts with the *divitiae* ("riches") it bore prior to Hercules' visit; and in conjunction with the barren sands of the desert,²³⁷ the empty garden suggests the disjunction between the richness of allegory and Cato's insistence upon laying bare the workings of the universe.²³⁸ Cato's boundary-transgressing march into the landscape of Libya represents a challenge that denudes the mythological space

²³⁴ Cf. Bartsch (1997) 35; Leigh (1997) 267.

²³⁵ 9.357-8. Cf. Ahl (1976) 260.

²³⁶ Martindale (1981) 77-8. Cf. Sen. *De Constantia Sapientis* 2.1-2.

²³⁷ 9.378: *steriles harenae*.

²³⁸ Cf. 4.588: *sicca harena*; another African landscape dominated by the figure of Hercules.

of its meaning. Hercules' spoliation of the garden is not the most auspicious *labor* for the saviour of the Republic to be associated with,²³⁹ and it is not an unqualified endorsement of Cato or the philosophical values he represents.

The Garden of the Hesperides foregrounds a Libyan landscape of myth that contrasts with Cato's own certainty in the rationality of the world, acting as a gateway into a symbolically loaded landscape which oscillates between the realms of myth and reality. On a symbolic level, the harshness of Lucan's Libya and its inhabitants has been read as a topographical and ethnographical metaphor for the rigidity of Cato's Stoic principles;²⁴⁰ further, it has been read as an allegory of the hard path to virtue.²⁴¹ Libya is frequently represented as a fantastical location suitable for allegoresis;²⁴² this is evident in the Garden of the Hesperides, into which Cato follows Hercules in emulation of the hero.²⁴³ Later in the book, Cato and his men traverse territory occupied by vicious snakes, the presence of which is explained in a mythological digression explaining that the creatures sprang from Medusa's blood, dripping as Perseus flew across Libya on the winged horse Pegasus. On one level, the narratives of heroes such as Hercules and Perseus serve to reinforce the heroised portrayal of Cato;²⁴⁴ however, on another, the disjunction between the rationalised landscape and its symbolic potential generates a tension that questions both allegorical and rationalised discourses, challenging the use of mythology as a means of mediating between cosmos and history. Cato's rationality prompts him to attempt to traverse the Syrtes on foot;²⁴⁵ this is despite a clear

²³⁹ Cf. Martindale (1981) 76-8.

²⁴⁰ Thomas (1982) 108-12; Leigh (1997) 100-2; Morford (1967b) 125-9.

²⁴¹ D'Allessandro Behr (2007) 110-11; *contra* Malamud (2003) 39; cf. Ahl (1993) 136; Fantham (1992b) 96-7.

²⁴² Leigh (2000) 104; Malamud (2003) 39.

²⁴³ Ahl (1976) 91-113. Cf. Martindale (1981) 74-6 who problematises Hercules' role in the *Bellum Civile*; cf. D'Allessandro Behr (2007) 125-6.

²⁴⁴ Cf. Bartsch (1997) 34; Hercules' *labores* are generally positive, but his despoliation relieves the garden of its own *labores*, 9.365; cf. Wick (2004) 130.

²⁴⁵ Given his armed strength, Cato believes that the onset of winter will protect him from the extremes of the landscape; 9.374-8.

knowledge of the crossing's challenges, which resonate with Hercules' *labores*.²⁴⁶ Contrasting with the calm of the landscape at Triton, Cato displays *impatiens virtus* (9.371) which not only leads him to march his men across the desert rather than wait for a season amenable to further sea-travel, but also aligns him with the restlessness of Caesar at Massilia.²⁴⁷ Cato acknowledges the symbolic potential of the march,²⁴⁸ but specifically aims for *campi steriles*, 9.382 ("barren plains").²⁴⁹ Cato's hortation prefaces another rationalisation of the physical characteristics of Libya; but even this discussion is marked by Lucan's narrator asking a question concerning the trustworthiness of *fama*.²⁵⁰ Lucan deploys *fama* to distinguish myth from the realities of the universe; but in so doing he suggests the potential dissolution of the boundary between truth and fiction.²⁵¹ Appropriately, just as Cato transgresses the boundary between myth and reality, Lucan is referring to the boundaries between the continents.

Both Cato and Lucan's "openly cynical" eyewitness narrator repeatedly call attention to the realities of the world,²⁵² and even when Lucan relates the narrative of Perseus' flight, he qualifies it by condemning its deceit. Two statements made by the narrator suggest a disconnection between the things that are true (*vera*) and their exposition through rumour and myth (*fama/fabula*):²⁵³ the first, embedded within Lucan's description of the Garden of the Hesperides invokes the right of *vates* to engage

²⁴⁶ 9.379-81.

²⁴⁷ Cf. Wick (2004) 138; Hershkowitz (1998b) 246. *Impatiens*: 1.93 (a simile concerning the unbearable relationship between *triumvirs*); 1.124 (Caesar); 1.611 (a sacrificial victim's distress); 3.453 (Caesar); 6.424 (Sextus); 7.866 (Thessaly, unable to bear crops); 8.578 (Cornelia, emotional and unwilling to be left behind by Pompey, Mayer (1981) 153); 9.857 (a speech attributed to Cato's men who call Libya *impatiens*). *Impatiens* is used once in the *Aeneid*, referring to a horse unable to endure a wound (Verg. A. 11.639). Cf. Dick (1965) 465 on Cato and Appius' dealings with oracles.

²⁴⁸ 9.385.

²⁴⁹ Cf. 9.378.

²⁵⁰ 9.411-12; Masters (1994) 160.

²⁵¹ Wick (2004) 159. Cf. Sal. *Jug.* 17.

²⁵² Cf. 9.398-9; Martindale (1981) 75; Masters (1994) 161.

²⁵³ Cf. Laird (2003) 158-65.

in eliciting the truth:²⁵⁴ *invidus, annoso qui famam derogat aevo, / qui vates ad vera vocat*, 9.359-60 (“Spiteful is he who takes rumour [*fama*] from the ancient past, who calls *vates* to truth”).²⁵⁵ The second statement appears to problematise the practice of poets who allegorise as a means of making palatable the truths of universe, implying that such discourse serves only to mask *vera* and confuse the intended audience: continuing his exploration of African topography, Lucan asks why Libya is dominated by snakes, prefacing a mythological excursus on the generation of serpents from Medusa’s blood with the revelation that the *vera causa* will remain unknown: *Cur Libycus tantis exundet pestibus aer / fertilis in mortes, aut quid secreta nocenti / miscuerit natura solo, non cura laborque / noster scire valet, nisi quod vulgata per orbem / fabula pro vera decepit saecula causa*, 9.619-23 (“Why the Libyan climate overflows with such pestilence, is so fertile with death, or what infliction mysterious nature has mixed in the ground, no cares or labours of ours will be able to know; but throughout the world a well known myth [*fabula*] has deceived the ages in place of the true cause [*vera causa*]”).²⁵⁶ Glenn Most takes the view that “Lucan disparages those who seek truth in the ancient poets...and asserts that myths, so far from revealing the truth about nature, conceal it and deceive mankind”.²⁵⁷ Yet *invidus* is not a simple disparagement of those who seek truth; it is an attack upon those who demand that the poet must supply the truth directly and consistently. Lucan’s statements initially represent a paradox, although they can be reconciled as a means of prompting his reader to think critically about what is going on in the African narrative; Lucan calls “attention to its [the narrative’s] allegorical meaning and message” with the first statement,²⁵⁸ while the latter warns “about the fictional nature of the *fabula* he is about to relate in

²⁵⁴ Hays (1983) 5ff. Cf. O’Higgins (1988) 208-10.

²⁵⁵ Cf. Hes. *Op.* 9-10; *Th.* 26-8; Wick (2004) 135.

²⁵⁶ “Negative enumeration”; Martindale (1980) 374; Esposito (2004) 64-5; Henderson (1998) 189.

²⁵⁷ Most (1989) 2056.

²⁵⁸ D’Alessandro Behr (2007) 107.

order to help the readers raise their critical antennae”.²⁵⁹ This is persuasive, but does not quite account for the disconnection between Lucan’s location of his narrative within the realm of *fabula*²⁶⁰ and Cato’s insistence upon foregoing *fabula* in order to expose physical reality. Cato is lauded as *parens verus patriae*, 9.601 (“the true father of the state”); this is not only politically resonant but is charged by its reference to Cato as *verus* within a narrative dominated by questions concerning the nature of truth. Cato’s position is demonstrated when asked to submit to the oracle at Ammon: instead, he discourses on Stoic cosmology, asserting a message of Stoic providence.²⁶¹ Moreover, Cato’s vision of the perfection of the divine *logos* is contradicted by the spiralling *nefas* and destruction which undermines the providential view of the universe.

Following Lucan’s long narrative of the genesis of the Libyan snakes, Cato’s men are assailed by a variety of serpents which cause increasingly gruesome deaths, all of which are reported in analytical detail, yet are consonant with a heroised representation of the Roman general (9.706-937). Cato is uncomfortably placed in a position where as a character in the narrative he must expound the truth, but as a symbol in the poem he must himself represent a greater truth. Notably, Lucan allocates to *natura* (621) the “true” reason for the poisoning of Libya with snakes and serpents, again foregrounding the paradox of Cato’s challenge to nature;²⁶² further, the *labor* (621) that might reveal to humanity the origins of the snakes engages with the paradigmatic Hercules, this time separating the mental task of science from the physical *labor* of crossing the desert.²⁶³

Water is resonant as a symbol for allegorical discourse throughout the narrative: leaving behind the wild waters of the Syrtes, the garden of the Hesperides’ lack of water

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 110.

²⁶⁰ Malamud (2003) 40.

²⁶¹ 9.544-86. Cf. Sklenář (1999) 293.

²⁶² Cf. 9.629: *natura nocens*.

²⁶³ Cf. scientific observations of the earth’s curvature at 9.495-7.

signals the barrenness of its allegorical potential; this is carried over into those landscapes which are classified as *steriles*.²⁶⁴ Within the desert, Cato and his men encounter water on several occasions: firstly, a trickle of a stream is uncovered (*parva unda*), and when a soldier gathers it to hand to Cato, the general pours it out onto the sand so that each soldier might receive an equal amount: none.²⁶⁵ Tellingly, in this moment of extreme egalitarianism Cato becomes *invidiosus*, envied by all;²⁶⁶ he becomes the object of the *invidus* who demands truth but his reaction is to pour the water away in anger (*ira*, 509). Cato spurns water that would relieve only his own thirst as it would not extend to all of his men, and he also perceives it as a slight against his hardiness; the rationalist likewise rejects the palliative potential of allegory, especially when it is not available to the body of the population. When understanding of allegory is restricted it does not represent *vera*, but is instead confusing. Lucan cannot write allegory in order to relieve his own suffering; his meaning must be plain to the wider body who pick up his *Bellum Civile*, otherwise the endeavour is worthless, the *labores* are wasted.

The next location with water encountered by Cato and his men is the temple of Ammon, which marks a return to a *locus amoenus* environment, although its fertility is attributed to divinity as well as to a local spring (9.522-3): *silvarum fons causa loco, qui putria terrae / alligat et domitas unda conectit harenas*, 9.526-7 (“A stream is the cause [*causa*] of trees in the place, which joins the powdery soil and binds the mastered sands with water”). Presumably the army drinks here; and as noted, Cato declines the opportunity to consult the oracle, asserting his own knowledge of the cosmos (9.554-85). Moreover, Cato is described as oracular and inspired by divinity carried within his heart (564-5); Cato has direct access to *vera* and requires no intermediary. Indeed,

²⁶⁴ Cf. 9.455-6.

²⁶⁵ 9.500-510.

²⁶⁶ 9.505.

Cato's discourse on the nature of the universe specifically asks why the god would choose to hide truth in the *steriles harenae* (576). Yet the alignment between Cato and oracular pronouncement further problematises his position of rationality;²⁶⁷ Cato, like the Pythia, appears subject to vatic inspiration;²⁶⁸ even if his words are rational, their origin in the god is not necessarily so.

Cato teaches his thirsty soldiers to endure their suffering (587-90), and when the army does discover water, Cato is always last to drink (591-3). Yet as he does so, Cato himself becomes larger than life: his feats of endurance and the exploit of leading his men into the desert cause him to gain *magna fama* (593-4). Cato straddles the boundary between the perception of his own perceived rationalism and the mythological potential of his epic march, and as the army crosses the landscape of Libya *fama* accrues to the general, embedding him within the symbolic space. This reaches its apex when Cato leads his men to a large spring which is filled with snakes. Typically, Cato serves as an example: they are scared of the snakes, but Cato drinks from the spring and delivers a rational explanation of why the men should not fear the water, claiming the venom is only deadly when mixed with blood (9.604-18).²⁶⁹ This is the only spring in the whole Libyan desert where Cato drinks first (9.616-8). It has been argued that the *fons* represents the fountain of poetry; Malamud suggests it is a "poisoned well" of inspiration for both Cato and Lucan: this is a bloodied source of *nefas*,²⁷⁰ leading into a Medusa narrative which symbolises the ethical, political and poetic horror of civil war.²⁷¹ Lucan engages with a number of themes that have recurred in book 9 such as the role of *natura* (9.629), and aside from his warning concerning the lack of *vera* in the

²⁶⁷ Cf. Long (2007) 189.

²⁶⁸ Wick (2004) 220-1; Colish (1985) 257.

²⁶⁹ Malamud (2003) 43: what in Lucan's poem is not drenched in blood?

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.* 39-43. D'Allessandro Behr (2007) 110-11 who views this as more positive: allegorical interpretation is endorsed but warnings are issued as to its potential for confusion.

²⁷¹ Fantham (1992b) 109, 119; cf. Malamud (2003) 32.

tale, Lucan embeds this narrative within a barren landscape that is emphatically not a *locus amoenus*: *non nemorum protecta coma*, 9.627 (“not covered by the foliage of trees”). Medusa’s throat is revealed to be origin of snakes (629-31),²⁷² making it the metaphorical birthplace of false words; the snakes themselves pour forth noisy hisses (*stridula sibila*, 9.631). Yet while to look upon Medusa is to die, to drink from the *fons* is to live, if one is careful. Contextualised by the symbolic landscape of Libya Lucan foregrounds the dangers of allegorical discourse; yet as Cato drinks from the waters, Lucan suggests that it is not possible to reject such methods of interpretation completely. Those poisoned by the Libyan snakes are unfortunate; care must therefore be taken to avoid a gruesome end (interpretatively as well as physically),²⁷³ but correctly armed against confusion one can participate in allegorical discourse.²⁷⁴ In acknowledgement of this, Cato and the remainder of his men emerge from the desert and arrive in a *locus amoenus* at Leptis: *iamque procul rarae nemorum se tollere frondes*, 8.944 (“and now, sparse in the distance leaves of trees raised themselves”). Here Cato winters his army, proved categorically wrong in his earlier belief that the winter would make the journey across the desert easier.²⁷⁵

Yet while this signals Lucan’s acknowledgement that the only victory available is the symbolic victory, it nonetheless reiterates the futility of Cato’s faith in Stoic providence and rationality: despite his best efforts to understand the universe, it nonetheless collapses into chaos. Cato may stand for rational Stoic *virtus* and the law,²⁷⁶ but in an irrational cosmos, that offers no guarantee of success. Right may be on the side of Cato, but the universe is not: *victrix causa deis placuit, sed victa Catoni*, 1.127 (“the victor found favour with the gods, the defeated with Cato”).

²⁷² 9.629: *primum*; cf. 2.410.

²⁷³ 9.734-937.

²⁷⁴ Cf. the Psylli, whose blood protects them from snake venom, 9.889-937.

²⁷⁵ Hershkowitz (1998b) 237-8.

²⁷⁶ Fantham (1999) 114-5.

At the height of Cato's journey through the desert Lucan embeds a description of simple and happy African natives which contrasts with the discordant degeneracy of Rome. Lucan alludes to his own Massilian narrative and Caesar's desecration of the sacred grove: *in nemus ignotum nostrae venere secures*, 9.429 ("Our axes have invaded unknown woods"). The reference to "our axes" is misleading: it is accurate in that it refers to Roman axes, principally recalling the axe of Caesar at Massilia; yet it misleads by eliding the distinction between the two sides in this war, two factions which could not exist in a rational cosmos where civil war would be unthinkable. Even though it is Caesar who deforests the grove, the ill-effects are deflected onto his opponents as a result of the chaotic nature of the universe.²⁷⁷ Lucan alludes to Ovid's depiction of the Actaeon myth:²⁷⁸ in his transgression, Actaeon is an innocent whose error is accidental.²⁷⁹ Like the Massilians, Actaeon is one of those *miseri* upon whom divine wrath is unleashed undeservedly. Cato's soldiers recognise they have transgressed against an unnamed god by venturing into the Libyan desert (9.859-62);²⁸⁰ thus Actaeon, the Massilians, and Cato's army are all *miseri* caught up in *bella plus quam civilia*. Even though his cause is just Cato is powerless to resist the energy of Caesar or the wrath of the gods of chaos; moreover, at worst Cato emulates Caesar in pushing his men towards their annihilation. This will not save him or the Republic, but facilitates the slide of the universe towards chaos and *nefas*.

²⁷⁷ Above, p. 56.

²⁷⁸ Cf. Ovid *Met.* 3.175, *per nemus ignotum...pervenit*; Wick (2004) 164.

²⁷⁹ Schlam (1984) 89-7; Anderson (1993) 118-24. Cf. Parry (1964) 272-4.

²⁸⁰ Cf. the unnamed gods of the Massilian grove; Erictho's unknown patron divinity.

2.5: Ruination and refiguration: Rome and Troy

When Caesar deforests the Massilian grove, Lucan despoils the *locus amoenus* with the very act of describing its dark counterpart.²⁸¹ Focussing on Caesar's act of cutting the trees of the grove rather than the landscape, Masters suggests that Lucan deploys this *locus horridus* in conjunction with another *topos*: the cutting of a grove to provide wood for a funeral pyre. As evidenced by Erictho's necromantic sacrifice and funerary arrangement for her selected corpse, the funeral pyre becomes an important element associated with the *locus horridus* in the *Bellum Civile*. Discussing the Massilian grove, Masters draws on a suggestion by Williams that the funeral pyre *topos* epitomises the continual process of "poetic reforming" within the Latin epic genre.²⁸² The refiguration of the Homeric funeral pyre by successive Latin poets (who subsequently engage with each other's texts) demonstrate the manner in which Latin poets refigure the poetic landscape, just as their protagonists refigure the landscape within the poems. Masters adds Lucan to this group of poets, and suggests that the Massilian grove represents a metapoetic statement regarding his use of his epic predecessors,²⁸³ foregrounding Lucan's "despoliation of what is sacred and revered in the literature of the past".²⁸⁴ With the *locus horridus* Lucan attempts to translate the pleasance into a new mode of expression suitable for the post-civil war age; Lucan refigures the *locus amoenus* to suggest that the chaos of civil war and dissolution of the cosmos can be best articulated through the unpleasant landscape. At Delphi, Lucan suggests the fallibility of epic and the impossibility of making traditional epic forms suitable to narrate the history of civil

²⁸¹ Masters (1992) 27-9.

²⁸² Williams (1968) 263-67, citing: Hom. *Il.* 23.117-20; Enn. *Ann.* 6.187-91; Verg. *A.* 6.179-82; Sil. 10.527-34; Stat. *Theb.* 6.90-107. See above, p. 49.

²⁸³ Cf. Caes. *Civ.* 2.14.

²⁸⁴ Masters (1992) 29; 179-96.

war:²⁸⁵ the Pythia is unable to give a clear prophecy, and she is made subject to a metamorphic transformation in a *locus amoenus* for which there will be no permanent memorial. Erictho and her grove enunciate a universal preference for chaos and *nefas*; and Cato's excursus in the barrenness of Libya allows the *locus amoenus* to exist only as a symbol that cannot express the reality of post-civil war Rome. After Pharsalus Rome itself is reduced to desolation:

*crimen civile videmus
tot vacuas urbes. generis quo turba redacta est
humani! toto populi qui nascimur orbe
nec muros implere viris nec possumus agros:
urbs nos una capit. vincto fossore coluntur
Hesperiae segetes, stat tectis putris avitis
in nullos ruitura domus, nulloque frequentem
cive suo Romam sed mundi faece repletam
cladis eo dedimus, ne tanto in corpore bellum
iam posit civile geri. Pharsalia tanti
causa mali.*

(7.398-408)

We see so many empty cities as evidence of the civic crime. How reduced are the crowds of the human race! We people, who are born on the whole Earth, are unable to fill cities or fields with men: we are all held in one city. The fields of Italy are tended by chained labourers; the decaying house with its ancient roof stands, about to crumble on no-one; and Rome is frequented by no citizen of her own but overflows with the dross of the world, and we have given her to such disaster that in such a great body it is no longer possible to wage civil war. Pharsalus is the cause of such an enormous catastrophe.

This portrayal of Rome's decline prompts Lucan's narrator to make an anguished disavowal of divine providence;²⁸⁶ moreover, this manifests the earliest stages of civic decay and prefigures a visit made by Caesar to the ruins of Troy that follows Cato's sojourn in the desert in book 9:²⁸⁷

*circumit exustae nomen memorabile Troiae
magnaue Phoebai quaerit vestigia muri.
iam silvae steriles et putres robore trunci
Assacari pressere domos et templa deorum
iam lassa radice tenent, ac tota teguntur
Pergama dumetis: etiam periire ruinae.*

(9.964-9)

²⁸⁵ Above, p. 59.

²⁸⁶ 7.454-5. Cf. 445-6.

²⁸⁷ Hardie (2003) 16; cf. Gowing (2005) 88-94.

[Caesar] walks around the famous name of burnt Troy and seeks the great remains of Phoebus' wall. Now barren woods and trunks of trees rotten in their core have covered Assacarus' houses and, with weary roots, now grip the temples of the gods, and all of Pergamum is covered by thickets: even the ruins have perished.

Despite Troy's *fama* (9.961) Caesar stumbles around its landmarks, failing to recognise the reduced trickle of Xanthus (9.974-5). Yet Lucan launches into apostrophe to claim posterity for their joint effort: *Pharsalia nostra / vivet, et a nullo tenebris damnabimur aevo*, 9.985-6 ("Our Pharsalus will live, and we will be damned to the shadows by no age"). Resolutely, these fractured landscapes are the consequence of *Pharsalia nostra*; despite disclaiming their horror, Lucan cannot deny his own part in their creation. This is the fame that derives from Lucan's landscapes: Vergil's optimistic Elysian *locus amoenus* supplanted by Troy and Rome rendered as *loca horrida*; these are the landscapes that will define the response of the Flavian epicists to civil war, as well as to the *Bellum Civile*.

3: Suicides and sacrifices: transgressive landscapes in the *Argonautica*

In his *Bellum Civile* Lucan uses the *locus horridus* to replace the *locus amoenus* as the dominant cosmic metaphor and articulate the poetics and ethics of *nefas*:¹ and where the pleasanace continues to exist, it is also made subject to the increasing supremacy of chaos. Lucan deconstructs the ideal landscape to establish the *locus horridus* as a physical manifestation of *crimen*; in addition to this, both the *locus amoenus* and the *locus horridus* foreground Lucan's ambivalence concerning the Roman epic tradition. Valerius Flaccus' epic *Argonautica* follows his epic precedents by drawing upon landscape's potential as a moral measure for human action:² moreover, Valerius' deployment of the *locus horridus* is paradigmatic of his response to the changes in poetic and spatial perception wrought by Lucan's imposition of overt *Bella ... plus quam civilia* into Roman epic.³ Valerius' landscapes occupy common ground with those of the *Bellum Civile* in their subversion of the Augustan vision of *imperium sine fine* enunciated by the *Aeneid*: contextualised historically by the reign of Nero, the further outbreak of civil war in 69 AD, and the restoration of peace with the advent of the Flavian regime, Valerius' poem engages with Lucan's *locus amoenus* and *horridus* landscapes as well as the canonical Augustan texts in order to articulate a complex and ambiguous response to the contemporary situation at Rome.

The poem describes the voyage of Jason and the Argonauts as they attempt to retrieve the Golden Fleece from Colchis; while Valerius draws upon Apollonius Rhodius' Hellenistic *Argonautica* as a model for the narrative action of the epic, he also looks to the *Aeneid* as a poetic and tonal model for his poem.⁴ In doing so, Valerius

¹ Cf. Masters (1992) 25-9, 205ff.

² Cf. Segal (1969) 1.

³ Luc. 1.1.

⁴ Vessey (1982a) 86; Barich (1982) 70, 114-128; Hershkowitz (1998a) 9-12; Kleywegt (2005) xii-xiv; Hardie (1990a) 5.

constructs a cosmic framework that understands the voyage of the Argonauts as part of a universal history embracing Roman origins;⁵ as Vergil makes Aeneas' voyage the crux of universal history, so the voyage of the *Argo* is established as the first part in the chain of fate:⁶

*'vetera haec nobis et condita pergunt
ordine cuncta suo rerumque a principe cursu
fixa manent'*

(1.531-3)

'All these things, anciently established for us, proceed in their proper sequence and remain fixed from the beginning in the course of events'

However, while the *Argonautica* embraces this Vergilian cosmic outlook, it avoids the certainty of *imperium sine fine*: Jupiter resists naming Rome as the final iteration of earthly empire.⁷ This contrasts with Jupiter's specificity in referring to the end of Greek dominance, and also seems surprising in the face of a Vergilian model in which Aeneas' voyage is identified as a watershed in history's progress towards an Augustan Rome that is constructed as the *telos* of history.⁸ Valerius' Jupiter is more ambiguous concerning the future:⁹

*'hinc Danaum de fine sedet gentesque fovebo
mox alias. pateant montes silvaeque lacusque
cunctaque claustra maris...
experiar, quaenam populis longissima cunctis
regna velim linquamque datas ubi certus habenas.'*

(1.555-60)

'Hence it is resolved concerning the end of the Greeks and soon I will foster other peoples. Let mountains, forests and lakes and all the barriers of the sea open...I shall test which reign I wish to be longest over all peoples and where I leave the given reigns for certain.'

Having initially suggested that the course of world history was fixed, Jupiter implies that he has yet to make trial of various peoples before deciding to whom he shall assign

⁵ V. Fl. 2.242-6; cf. Tissol (1997) 170.

⁶ V. Fl. 1.1: *prima*. Feeney (1991) 319, 331; Spaltenstein (1991) 97; Kleywegt (2005) 312-37; Zissos (2005) 504-5; Vessey (1982a) 93; Davis (1990) 46; Hershkowitz (1998a) 43; Taylor (1994) 217. Cf. Cat. 64.11; Ov. *Am.* 2.11.1-2 on *Argo* as the first ship.

⁷ Although cf. O'Hara (2007) 78-82 on ambiguity in Vergilian prophecy.

⁸ Cf. Verg. *A.* 1.257-79; 12.793-840. Otis (1963) 225ff., 353ff.; Austin (1971) 100ff.; Hardie (1986) 25, 364ff.; Feeney (1991) 139-141, 155; Zetzel (1997) 196-7.

⁹ Lefèvre (1998) 230-2; Feeney (1991) 336. Cf. Franchet d'Espérey (1998) 219-20, who suggests that Jupiter's speech is merely formulaic.

rulership of the earth; rather than pointing to the Romans, Jupiter is no more specific than to promise the world to *gentes alias*.¹⁰ This ambivalence exploits the ambiguities discernable in Vergil's Jovian prophesies,¹¹ as well as engaging with Ovidian and Lucanian destabilisation of cosmic certainty.¹² Jupiter's ambivalence towards Rome functions as a leitmotif for an ambiguity that runs throughout the poem, and which finds expression not only in the wider cosmos as ruled by Jupiter and fate but also within the landscapes of the poem.¹³

Such ambiguities are a consistent and discordant element despite the pervasive Vergilianism of the poem. Landscape itself is implicated in both the certainty of Jupiter's prophecy (*someone* will rule in perpetuity) as well as its ambiguous implications.¹⁴ Generic disjunction complicates Valerius' epic narrative: the poem's combination of epic, elegiac and tragic elements problematises a reading of the poem as nationalist epic,¹⁵ and, as Zissos notes, Valerius exploits tensions within the genre of Roman epic by using allusions to Lucan's *Bellum Civile* in order to "inject a sense of ... ironic doubling ... *ironia allusiva* ... [that are] aimed at counteracting the stylistic and ideological influence of the *Aeneid*".¹⁶ These "intertextual ironies" are inscribed into the *locus amoenus* and *locus horridus*.¹⁷ Although Vergil's epic is diffuse with ethical and moral complications that undermine a fully positive reading of Aeneas and Augustan Rome, its ideological weight is balanced towards Aeneas' destined rise from the eastern ruins of Troy to the Italian triumph in the west; consequently, Vergil's successors were able to exploit the gap between the idealised Roman foundation myth and the epic

¹⁰ Lefèvre (2004) 134-5; Manuwald (1999) 177-224.

¹¹ O'Hara (2007) 102-3.

¹² Cf. the intertextually engaged Phaethon narratives of Ovid and Lucan (Ov. *Met.* 2.235ff.; Luc. 2.399ff.) in which instability is suggested by the ambivalence of Jupiter or the cosmic system.

¹³ Manuwald (1999) 176, 199; also 262ff. Cf. Zissos (2005) 508-9.

¹⁴ 1.556-7.

¹⁵ Cf. Stover (2003) 123-5; Feeney (1991) 319-24.

¹⁶ Zissos (2004b) 36.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 23. Cf. Pollini (1986) 26, 38.

universe of the *Aeneid*,¹⁸ and the ambiguity of the *Argonautica* is epitomised by the spatial and geographical movement of the *Argo*: while the ship opens up the Mediterranean world to travel and trade, it also reverses the journey of Aeneas, moving from west to east.¹⁹ Politically, Valerius' poem has been variously interpreted as being either supportive of or undermining imperial power: either offering a positive vision of the transition from the Julio-Claudian regime to that of their successors, the Flavians;²⁰ or a potentially more ambiguous interpretation which foregrounds the negative elements of Jason's character as a "mythic prototype" for Domitian.²¹ Ambiguity, therefore, is a recurrent theme throughout the poem as Valerius destabilises his heroes, the certainty of nationalist epic,²² and the claims of stability made by the imperial regime.

In the *Argonautica* cosmic and textual ambiguities are rendered manifest in a *locus amoenus* influenced by Ovid's and Lucan's deployment of metamorphosis as an aetiological tool which underscores a trend towards impermanence and ephemerality rather than defining the origin of a stable cosmos with Rome as its *telos*.²³ In addition to this, the poem displays a complicated moral ambiguity that is established by Lucanian *loca horrida* that are generally associated with transgressive characters in the poem;²⁴ Valerius' unpleasant landscapes are indebted to Lucan's repositioning of the *locus horridus* as the fundamental landscape of *crimen* and *nefas*. Valerius' *loca horrida* draw together transgressive characters within a unified framework that stresses an ambiguity that is even translated forward from the epic towards Medea's ultimate transgressions,

¹⁸ Cf. Hardie (1993) 1-18, 83; Hardie (1990a) 17; Thomas (2001) 55ff. On Augustan "institutional aetiology" Hardie (1986) 135; Tarrant (1997) 178-9.

¹⁹ Of course, the *Argo* would have returned in the missing portion of the text; cf. Barich (1982) 95.

²⁰ Taylor (1994) 216.

²¹ Toohey (1993) 191. Malamud and McGuire (1993) 210-12. Cf. Davis (1990) 48

²² Cf. Feeney (1991) 328.

²³ Above, p. 63. Cf. Zetzel (1997) 193-6; Boyle (1993b) 82-94; Graf (2002) 118; Myers (1994) 6, 19; Habinek (2002) 56-9; Hershkowitz (1998a) 212-8.

²⁴ Cf. Barich (1982) 133; Zissos (2005) 505.

the chief of which lie outside the narrative bounds of the *Argonautica*.²⁵ As a result, Valerius emphasises the complex aspects of the actors in his poem, especially that of Medea, but also nominally pious characters such as Jason's mother Alcimede.

3.1: Paradise lost? Aeson and Alcimede in the *locus horridus*

Valerius' deployment of landscape consistently establishes ambiguity and tension;²⁶ nowhere is this more explicit than at the end of the first book, in an episode for which there is no precedent or model in Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica*.²⁷ Book one ends with a *locus horridus* that foregrounds the contamination of the spaces of Roman epic by Lucan's poetics of civil war, in which the potential for exemplary action in emulation of Aeneas by Jason's parents is tainted by criminality and excess. Culminating with an Underworld scene, the first book represents a dislocation of this traditional episode from its usual position at the centre of epic.²⁸ Moreover, Valerius integrates into his quasi-Vergilian narrative allusions to the emblematic *locus horridus* of Erichtho, embedding the destabilisation and dissonance of civil war in the foundation of his poem.²⁹ In doing so, Valerius highlights the extent to which the structure of his episode emulates that of Lucan's *Bellum Civile*, and also engages in his own refiguration of the poetic spaces of Roman epic, suggesting the extent to which Lucan redefined the delimitation of Roman poets' horizon of expectation.

²⁵ Barich (1982) 62, 72-84.

²⁶ Shreeves (1978) 82.

²⁷ Perutelli (1982) 123.

²⁸ Hom. *Od.* 11; Verg. *A.* 6; Luc. 6.

²⁹ Cf. Perutelli (1982) 127-40, suggesting the *Aeneid* is the model for the episode, but that the integration is inconsistent.

Following Jason's departure Valerius foregrounds what is effectively a civil war at Iolcos,³⁰ adopting a variant of the myth in which Jason's parents meet their death shortly after the Argonauts depart.³¹ Having taken Pelias' son with him, Jason (correctly) feels a premonition of danger concerning his parents (1.693ff.); this gives Valerius the opportunity to refocus the action of the epic on Iolcos,³² where Alcimedede is preparing a sacrifice that will form the basis for a *nekuia*: like Erictho, Alcimedede is a Thessalian witch and she restores to the human sphere Aeson's deceased father, Cretheus. Although Valerius' depiction of the ritual and the landscape within which it takes place is not as developed as that of the *Bellum Civile*, it nonetheless draws on the Lucanian *locus horridus* in order to establish a connection between the two Thessalian witches,³³ creating an unsettling atmosphere which problematises the status of Aeson and Alcimedede;³⁴ despite being rewarded with an eternity in the Elysian *locus amoenus*, Valerius refrains from designating Aeson and Alcimedede as heroic *exempla*.³⁵

Cretheus informs Aeson and Alcimedede that Jason is to succeed and that he will return triumphant (1.741ff.), exclaiming that this event will make him wish to return to life in the human world.³⁶ This forms a direct contrast to the soldier resurrected by Erictho, who wishes only to die.³⁷ However, Cretheus mixes his message of Vergilian optimism with a pessimistic assessment of the immediate future, recommending suicide

³⁰ Hershkowitz (1998a) 133; V. fl. 1.747: *fraterna ... arma*; cf. Stat. *Theb.* 1.1: *fraternas acies*. Cf. Zissos (2004b) 25.

³¹ Cf. D.S. 4.50.1-7; Apollod. 1.9.27; Ov. *Met.* 7.159ff. recounts Medea's rejuvenation of Aeson; Apollonius gives no further narrative of Jason's parents. Cf. Franchet d'Espérey (1988) 197; Manuwald (2000) 325-6. Cf. Zissos (1999) 291.

³² Kleywegt (2005) 404-5.

³³ Spaltenstein (2002) 274; Kleywegt (2005) 429. Cf. Hershkowitz (1998a) 132 fn. 111; Franchet d'Espérey (1988) 193-4 does not view the epithet "Thessalian" as pejorative. Alcimedede is referred to as Thessalian at 1.737, 780 and 7.198-9.

³⁴ Cf. Zissos (1999) 294.

³⁵ Cf. Manuwald (2000) 333-8 who foregrounds the positive actions of humans in a morally ambiguous universe; cf. Perutelli (1982) 127 on Aeson and Vergil's Priam; cf. Verg. *A.* 2.509ff.

³⁶ 1.746.

³⁷ Luc. 6.757ff.

to Aeson and Alcimedede (1.749-51);³⁸ Pelias is coming to kill them and he suggests that the most honourable course of action is to join him in the Underworld. After a moment's thought in which Aeson considers his ability to fight as a hero (759-761), Alcimedede persuades her husband to follow Cretheus' advice (762-766) and the pair drink poison following a further sacrifice to Hecate as *tergeminam eram* (the triple-formed goddess, 1.781) and a curse uttered by Aeson upon his brother (774ff.).³⁹ Their infant son, Promachus, is left living in order that he might remember the glorious deeds of his father (769-73); however, as his parents die, soldiers kill the young boy (818ff.). Following their suicide, Aeson and Alcimedede enter the underworld with Cretheus, and they enter into the *locus amoenus* of Elysium, passing the *locus horridus* of Tartarus to which Pelias will be consigned.

The episode has been read as a commentary on the practice of suicide in the empire particularly under the reigns of Nero and Domitian; for Hershkowitz, Aeson and Alcimedede are exemplars of the mythic hero as well as Roman-style Stoics, committing suicide to oppose a tyrannical dictator and being justly rewarded with an eternity in Elysium;⁴⁰ for Feeney their entry into Elysium is a "tepid and unmoving moment" which alleviates their earthly misery by promising a sure reward to the virtuous.⁴¹ This is to underplay the more disturbing elements of the episode, and it is also to fail to see the narrative and its landscapes within the context of the epic as a whole or even on its own allusive terms; although the suicide of Aeson and Alcimedede is conducted in Stoic terms, the consistent allusion to Erichtho and the topography of *nefas* undermines the positive assertions on the literal level.⁴² McGuire and Zissos detect this more ambiguous

³⁸ Cf. Luc. 6.802-5; see Zissos (2004b) 36 fn. 51.

³⁹ Cf. A. R. 1.251ff.; Spaltenstein (2002) 287.

⁴⁰ Hershkowitz (1998a) 136; Cf. Seneca's Stoic suicide as portrayed at Tac. *Ann* 15.60-3; Manuwald (2000) 331-2, 338; Taylor (1994) 233-5; McGuire (1997) 192; McGuire (1990) 24.

⁴¹ Feeney (1991) 336-7.

⁴² Zissos (2004b) 24, 36.

attitude towards the virtues of suicide;⁴³ McGuire notes two aspects of the suicide that undermine its status as exemplary behaviour: the treatment of Promachus,⁴⁴ and the nature of suicide itself as the “preserve of fanatical and excessively ferocious opponents to tyranny”.⁴⁵ The latter is exemplified by the presence of the *Furarium maxima* (1.816);⁴⁶ Promachus, on the other hand is intended by his father to preserve the memory of his father’s death, but his murder prevents this, and McGuire suggests that Valerius uses “memory” (*meminisse*, 1.773) as a means of ironically emphasising Aeson’s hopes for his son.⁴⁷ The emphasis on memory, and the ability of poetry to function as a means of memorialising the dead recalls this central concept of the *Aeneid*,⁴⁸ as well as a commemorative function that is common in Roman poetry.⁴⁹ However, the suicide can be described as “self-silencing”,⁵⁰ and McGuire suggests that Valerius also problematises the commemorative aspect of poetry when Jason’s family arrive in Elysium. Like Vergil’s Elysium, Valerius’ space is filled with song; yet he implies that song is not so important in the human world,⁵¹ and contrasts the songs of the idealised *locus amoenus* with the *locus horridus* on earth from which Aeson and Alcimedede are fleeing and which fails to participate in the remembrance of Aeson’s death.⁵² As a *locus amoenus* Elysium is a metaliterary landscape; yet in addition to the unsettling tones identified by McGuire, Valerius also exploits the *locus horridus* by contaminating the Vergilian potential of Alcimedede’s *nekuia*. Valerius invokes Aeneas’

⁴³ McGuire (1997) 190; Zissos (2004b) 36; cf. Perutelli (1982) 123-4.

⁴⁴ McGuire (1997) 194; also McGuire (1990) 27.

⁴⁵ McGuire (1997) 187.

⁴⁶ McGuire (1990) 26.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 27ff.; cf. *memorem umbram* (applied to Aeson) at 1.826.

⁴⁸ Verg. A. 9.446-9 on Euryalus and Nisus, whose memory Vergil claims will last as long as Rome and the imperial family, by virtue of his poetry; cf. Hardie (1994) 53ff.

⁴⁹ Cf. Hor. *Carm.* 4.8, 4.9.

⁵⁰ McGuire (1997) 187.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* 196-7; McGuire cites: *ubi sol totumque per annum / durat aprica dies thiasique chorique virorum / carminaque et quorum populis iam nulla cupido*, 1.843-5; Davis (1990) 70; Spaltenstein (2002) 304; although cf. Kleywegt (2005) 488-9.

⁵² See above, p. 18. McGuire (1997) 197; Zissos (1999) 296 on “poetic memory”; Albrecht (1997) 938 and “the immortality of *pietas*”

journey to the Underworld in book 6 of the *Aeneid*, but colours and unsettles *pious Aeneas'* trip with Lucan's depiction of Sextus Pompey's consultation of Erictho. Alcimedede is linked to Lucan's Erictho and the necromantic and unsettling connotations of the *locus horridus* set up a pattern of transgression that will be revisited in further narratives set within similar *loca horrida*; these transgressions articulate the "conflict between piety and sin" that is a key tension throughout the epic,⁵³ and that finds expression in the character of Medea.⁵⁴

Unlike Erictho, Alcimedede does not delight in wickedness and depravity; indeed, this has led to the suggestion that Valerius owes little to the *Bellum Civile's* scene of necromancy.⁵⁵ Further, at least initially, Alcimedede's rites recall Odysseus' *nekuia* in the eleventh book of the *Odyssey*, and, like those rites, the consultation of a ghost does not bring the same authorial condemnation as Erictho's impious resurrection of a dead body.⁵⁶ Valerius sets the scene with a minimum of description:

*in scrobibus cruor et largus Phlegethontis operti
stagnat honos saevoque vocat grandaeva tumultu
Thessalis exanimis atavos magnaepue nepotem
Pleiones.*

(1.735-8)

In a trench stands blood and a great offering to hidden Phlegethon, and with fierce cries the aged witch [*Thessalis*] calls upon her lifeless ancestors and the grandson of great Pleione.

Further description of the location for the rites follows at 1.755ff.; Valerius implies here that the recall of Cretheus to life takes place in a grove, although his use of *nemus* is more likely to apply to wood piled up for the rites or decorating the place.⁵⁷ At 1.774, however, Valerius resumes his description of the landscape once again, formalising the sense of this location as a *locus horridus*:

⁵³ Davis (1990) 69.

⁵⁴ On the conflict within Medea between *pudor/pietas* and *amor*, Hull (1975) 7-8, 20-1. Cf. Stover (2003) 131.

⁵⁵ Kleywegt (2005) 427; cf. Zissos (2004b) 36.

⁵⁶ Cf. Hor. *S.* 1.8.23-9.

⁵⁷ The sentence is notably problematic; Spaltenstein (2002) 282 (who draws a parallel here with Valerius' use of *nemus* at 1.122 and *silva* at 3.427); cf. Kleywegt (2005) 439.

*veteris sub nocte cupressi
sordidus et multa pallens ferrugine taurus
stabat adhuc.*

(1.774-6)

Underneath the gloom of an ancient cypress, a bull hitherto still stood, filthy and pale in copious murky gloom.

Again, the emphasis resides on the opposition of this landscape to the beauty of the *locus amoenus*: flowing rivers are replaced by stagnant pools of blood; trees cast gloomy rather than cooling shade, and with his aged cypress tree Valerius is able to suggest a context of mortality and the Underworld;⁵⁸ further, Valerius' *sub nocte* recalls Vergil's *katabasis*,⁵⁹ and it has also been suggested that his use of the cypress tree here also recalls the funeral rite of Misenus, which preceded Aeneas' venture into the Underworld.⁶⁰ Valerius' landscape intertextually engages with the opening to the Underworld at Verg. A. 6.236ff.;⁶¹ however, where Vergil's landscape focuses on the bleak aspect of the Avernine landscape, leaving the squalor and filth for the Tartarean Underworld,⁶² Valerius reads the Vergilian landscape through the Thessalian *locus horridus* and brings Erichtho's bloody and rotten landscapes to the human world. Valerius' characters take pains to stress their piety;⁶³ yet Valerius' filtration of the landscape through that of the *Bellum Civile* allows him to taint the Stoic sacrifice of Aeson and Alcimede with the connotations of the impious human sacrifice of the *Bellum Civile*.⁶⁴ In calling Alcimede *Thessalis*, Valerius underscores the allusion to Erichtho established by his deployment of the *locus horridus*.

⁵⁸ Spaltenstein (2002) 285; Kleywegt (2005) 450. Cf. Sen. *Oed.* 530-49. See above, p. 26.

⁵⁹ Verg. A. 6.268 *sola sub nocte*; Spaltenstein (2002) 286; Kleywegt (2005) 450. Cf. V. Fl. 8.25 (*nemoris sacra...nocte*) and Medea's meeting with Jason in the grove of the Golden Fleece, another moment of transgression and piety/impiety taking place in a *locus horridus*.

⁶⁰ Cf. Verg. A. 6.216; Spaltenstein (2002) 286; also Verg. A. 3.64 and the funeral of Polydorus; Kleywegt (2005) 450.

⁶¹ Above, p. 31.

⁶² Cf. Tartarean Acheron and Cocytus at Verg. A. 6.295ff.

⁶³ I.e. Aeson stresses his piety to Jupiter as he begins his curse; 1.788ff.

⁶⁴ Zissos (2004b) 25.

Vergil's Avernine landscape, while disturbing, retains a sense of piety: *pius Aeneas* (*Aen.* 6.232) fulfils all of the obligations presented to him by the Sibyl. Further, while sacrifice is foremost in each of the rites,⁶⁵ in Vergil's epic the blood for the initial sacrifice comes from freshly slaughtered bulls,⁶⁶ and the blood goes into cups ready for the sacrifice. In Lucan, the source of the blood remains unnamed, but it is fresh and it is rubbed into the wounds of the dead soldier, giving the ritual airs of a human sacrifice.⁶⁷ Valerius does not specify the source of the blood for his initial sacrifice, but instead integrates it into the *locus horridus*: *in scrobibus cruor et largus Phlegethontis operti / stagnat honos*, 1.735-736. Similarly, blood comes to play a significant role in the eventual suicide of Aeson and Alcimedede, who drink blood (presumably from a bull mentioned at 1.775) under the eyes of the *Furiarum maxima* (1.816). However the intertextual link established between Valerius' and Lucan's *loca horrida* amplifies the suggestion of human sacrifice and contributes much to the disturbing force of Valerius' scene.

For both Aeneas and Odysseus, their interaction with the dead is linked to the pious performance of religious ritual: Elpenor, unburied after a fatal accident at the home of Circe, requests that Odysseus ensures that the proper funeral rites are performed.⁶⁸ Aeneas' journey is explicitly dependent on his performance of funeral rites for Misenus: (*A.* 6.149-51; 6.212ff.).⁶⁹ Lucan's revision of the Underworld scene perverts Aeneas' pious rites into a human sacrifice, using living (or at least warm, *ferventi sanguine*, 6.667) blood, applied to a human body, to resurrect the dead.⁷⁰ Valerius' necromancy narrative appears to revert to the pious model established by

⁶⁵ Cf. Hom. *Od.* 11.23-50.

⁶⁶ Verg. *A.* 6.243ff.

⁶⁷ Luc. 6.667ff. See above, p. 55.

⁶⁸ Hom. *Od.* 11.57-80.

⁶⁹ Austin (1977) 86-97.

⁷⁰ It is not specified whether the blood is human or not.

Vergil: unlike Erictho, who is never referred to as a *sacerdos* (priestess), Alcimedede is called such at 1.755, implying a degree of piety;⁷¹ however Valerius alludes to Lucan's description of Erictho with his depiction of Alcimedede's ritual: *hunc sibi praecipuum gentis de more nefandae / Thessalis in seros Ditis servaverat usus* 1.779-80 ("The witch [Thessalis] had kept him [the bull] above all others, according to the custom of her wicked race, long hence for the use of Dis"). Spaltenstein and Kleywegt suggest that there is no direct criticism of Alcimedede here, but that *nefanda* refers generically to her Thessalian race.⁷² However, in describing the *Thessalis* as a member of a *gens nefanda*, Valerius alludes to the *nefas* of Lucan's civil war,⁷³ as well as to Erictho's impiety; *nefas* is Lucan's song, and Lucan's Erictho is the "most appropriate catalyst for nefarious revelations".⁷⁴ Valerius too deals in civil war and the transgression of proper, pious behaviour; even the voyage of the *Argo* will involve spatial transgression as the ship crosses the hitherto unbroken marine boundary between east and west,⁷⁵ and there will be transgressions committed by the Argonauts as well as Medea and a variety of other characters.

Aeson's *sacra novat* (1.774) takes place within an explicitly evoked *locus horridus* and recalls further the funereal and sacrificial elements of the ritual, as well as having an Ericthonian tinge.⁷⁶ Further, the presence of the black bull recalls the role of bulls in Aeneas' appeasement of the Underworld gods in order to guarantee safe passage; these bulls are mentioned by the Sibyl following her injunction to bury Misenus at *Aen.* 6.153. Valerius' *sordidus et multa pallens ferrugine taurus*, 1.775 is

⁷¹ Cf. Luc. 651: Erictho is *vates*, also an otherwise positive word; O'Higgins (1988) 218. Spaltenstein (2002) 281; Kleywegt (2005) 439 on *sacerdos* as referring to Alcimedede at this point, rather than Aeson or a third participant in the scene.

⁷² Spaltenstein (2002) 287; Kleywegt (2005) 452-7; Kleywegt also notes a parallel with Luc. 6.578. Cf. Zissos (2004b) 36; Perutelli (1982) 128-30.

⁷³ Cf. Luc. 2.4 on civil war as *nefas*; on Erictho and *nefas*: 6.510, 527, 569, 706.

⁷⁴ O'Higgins (1988) 217, also fn. 28. See also Masters (1992) 205-15.

⁷⁵ Cf. Barich (1982) 95; Davis (1990) 47; Hardie (1993) 83.

⁷⁶ Luc. 6.509: Erictho turns to *novus ritus*.

problematic:⁷⁷ Valerius implies that the bull was selected by Alcimedede for some unknown part of the ritual that resurrected the ghost of Cretheus: however, the bull itself becomes part of a perverse ritual that will culminate in human sacrifice. Regardless, Aeson takes charge of the ritual and, following a prayer which establishes his own piety,⁷⁸ sacrifices the bull, bringing Jason's parents safely into Elysium (1.785ff.). Following the suicide, Cretheus escorts Jason's parents into the Underworld, where they will be safe from Pelias' rage. Paralleling Lucan's soldier, Aeson and Alcimedede see death following a necromancy as a passage to safety: they cannot be touched by Pelias, while Erictho's subject, having received proper funeral rites, is able to rest in the Underworld without having to wander restlessly as an unburied corpse, or worry about being used for another such ritual.⁷⁹ Cretheus functions as an echo of the soldier's corpse: both attempt to persuade the individuals consulting them that they should take their own lives.⁸⁰ Yet the parallel with Erictho's corpse and the connection to the funeral rites of Misenus establishes further dissonance in Valerius' narration:⁸¹ neither Alcimedede nor Aeson will receive proper funeral rites; nor will their son Promachus.⁸² By bringing attention to the Lucanian aspect of the *nekuia* through his depiction of landscape Valerius directs attention towards the structural similarities between his narrative and that of the *Bellum Civile*: where Vergil's pious narrative begins with a burial, continues with a sacrifice and ends with Aeneas' descent into the Underworld, Valerius instead follows Lucan; Erictho begins with one form of human sacrifice,

⁷⁷ Kleywegt (2005) 449ff.

⁷⁸ Cf. Manuwald (2000) 329.

⁷⁹ See above, p. 73.

⁸⁰ V Fl. 1.749ff.; cf. Luc. 6.797-809.

⁸¹ Kleywegt (2005) 450 on the "funereal" Cypress tree mentioned at 1.774.

⁸² McGuire (1997) 194.

consults the soldier, and then ends with a further human sacrifice/funeral, confusing the ultimate impious act with the final piety that should be shown to the dead.⁸³

Valerius insinuates Lucanian elements into his scene of prophecy, destabilising the Vergilian model. Yet Valerius resists engaging in Lucanian deconstruction of the Underworld itself: Aeson and Alcimedede gain access to an Elysium that draws heavily on Vergil's depiction of that *locus amoenus*,⁸⁴ while Pelias will be consigned to a Tartarean *locus horridus*. In contrast to both Vergil and Lucan, however, Roman history goes unnarrated:⁸⁵ prophecy throughout the episode has been limited to the family of Aeson, despite Jupiter having established the journey of the *Argo* as part of his divine plan.⁸⁶ Valerius alludes to the civil war of Lucan's shattered underworld by depicting Tartarus as holding *turbam ruentem*, 1.850 ("the onrushing host");⁸⁷ while this does not suffice to destabilise the peace of Elysium, it reiterates Lucanian ambiguity in both the earthly and ethereal landscapes of the poem; in addition, Valerius continues to contaminate the Vergilian epic model with the alternative provided by Lucan's anti-*Aeneid*. Tellingly displaced from its traditional position at the centre of epic, Valerius' situation of this allusive landscape at the commencement of his poem serves to highlight the programmatic function of the episode, which states the ambiguities of characterisation that will recur, creating a ripple of moral ambivalence that resonates throughout the epic as the *locus horridus* begins to assume primacy over the *locus amoenus*.⁸⁸ However, Valerius continues to deploy the pleasance, using it in a manner which restates the ambiguous outlook of the *Argonautica*; this is evident in his depiction of the disappearance of Hylas from the *Argo*'s crew.

⁸³ Table 2.

⁸⁴ Franchet d'Espérey (1988) 197; Manuwald (2000) 337.

⁸⁵ Although a discordant note is perhaps raised by Valerius' revelation that song is no longer prized in the human world: see McGuire (1997) 230-2.

⁸⁶ Cf. Zissos (2004b) 32.

⁸⁷ Cf. Luc. 6.781: *inpiaque infernam ruperunt arma quietem*.

⁸⁸ Cf. Davis (1990) 70.

<i>Aeneid</i>	<i>Bellum Civile</i>	<i>Argonautica</i>
Burial of Misenus (6.156-235)		
Sacrifice (6.236-63)	Sacrifice & threats by Erictho (6.667-776)	Sacrifice (1.730-40)
Tartarus and Elysium; prophecy (6.268-892)	Prophecy; Tartarus and Elysium (6.776-820)	Prophecy of Cretheus (1.741-51)
	Sacrifice/funeral of the soldier (6.820-30)	Sacrifice/suicide (1.774-817); death of Promachus (1.818-26)
		Tartarus and Elysium (1.827-50)

Table 2: Narrative structure of Underworld scenes in the *Aeneid*, *Bellum Civile* and *Argonautica*

3.2: Lost in paradise? Hylas in the *locus amoenus*

Valerius' depiction of the Hylas' disappearance draws upon the aetiological force of Ovid's *locus amoenus* in order to set up an environment which confounds the expectations of his audience and severs the connections between origins and the events that derive from them. Valerius introduces notes of textual ambiguity that reflect Jupiter's ambivalent programmatic statements in the first book; in doing so, Valerius also reveals a questioning attitude towards the conception of poetic innovation,⁸⁹ particularly with regard to the popularity of the Hylas episode in ancient poetry.⁹⁰ This ambiguous attitude to the aetiological exploration of Rome's past is commensurate with Valerius' ambiguous approach to the imperial dynasty and imperial ideologies of stability.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Malamud and McGuire (1993) 195-6; cf. Cat. 64 and the *Argo*'s role in the cycle of history; Davis (1990) 47 on the voyage of the *Argo* as a metaphor for the poet's creative process. Cf. Zissos (2004a) 72.

⁹⁰ Theoc. 13; A. R. 1.207ff.; Prop. 1.20; Verg. *Ecl.* 6.43-44; *G.* 3.6: *cui non dictas Hylas puer?*

⁹¹ Cf. Davis (1990) 47-51.

In book 3 the *Argo* lands at Mysia (3.481-6), where Juno plans to remove Hercules from the ship's crew by engineering the disappearance of his companion, Hylas (3.487ff.).⁹² Following Ovid's common use of the *locus amoenus*, Mysia is the scene of a rape driven by the erotic desire of the nymph Dryope.⁹³ Valerius describes landscape that is itself ambiguous and deceptive: the *locus amoenus* at Mysia is described as Dryope engages in her own hunt, and the scene is heavily eroticised (3.525-6).⁹⁴ As Dryope returns to her stream she is shocked by the destruction caused by Hercules' search for a new oar; and an ominous tone is developed throughout the episode with mountains that are *umbrosus* (565) and a forest that is *densus*, *excelsus* and *opacus* (484, 485, 533).⁹⁵ This is contrasted with a typically attractive and inviting scene through which Hylas pursues his quarry before taking some rest:

*credit Hylas praedaeque ferox ardore propinqua
insequitur...
cum puerum instantem quadripes fessaque minantem
tela manu procul ad nitidi spiracula fontis
ducit et intactas levis ipse superfugit undas.
hoc pueri spes lusa modo est nec tendere certat
amplius; utque artus et concita pectora sudor
diluerat, gratos avidus procumbit ad amnes.*

(3.549-57)

Hylas believes it, and burning headstrong for a nearby prize, he follows it; at the same time ... while the animal leads the boy, who is approaching and threatening his weapon with a weary hand, into the distance towards the bubbles of shining spring and itself jumps lightly over the unbroken waters. Thus the hope of the boy is deluded and he does not struggle to extend [the hunt] further; and as sweat had drenched his joints and excited breast, the greedy boy falls beside the pleasing waters.

This welcoming landscape, about to be violated by the *avidus* Hylas, is familiar from Ovid's use of such idyllic settings where the *locus amoenus* is host to violence.⁹⁶ Yet it

⁹² Spaltenstein (2004) 157; Garson (1963) 266.

⁹³ Apollonius does not name the nymph, and Theocritus attributes the rape to three nymphs, none of whom are Dryope. Dryope is herself the subject of a violent transformation for which there are competing versions; cf. *Ov. Met.* 9.331-62.

⁹⁴ *V. Fl.* 3.521-8. Murgatroyd (1992) 88; Spaltenstein (2004) 155.

⁹⁵ Murgatroyd (1992) 88; cf. *Prop.* 1.20.39-40.

⁹⁶ Hinds (2002) 131; Parry (1964) 280-2; Williams (1991) 175-85 on Apollonius.

is the boy who becomes a victim of sexual violation.⁹⁷ Echoing Hylas' own greed as he violated the grove, Dryope drags him into her pool:⁹⁸

*illa avidas iniecta manus heu sera cientem
auxilia et magni referentem nomen amici
detrahit.*

(3.562-4)

She, throwing up her greedy hands, drags him, alas, too late for help he is calling and shouting the name of his great friend.

As well as drawing on previous versions of the Hylas myth, Valerius combines a number of Ovidian archetypes in his handling of Hylas and Dryope:⁹⁹ Along with Ovid's Narcissus, Salmacis and Hermaphroditus provide sensual and erotic archetypes for the Hylas episode.¹⁰⁰ Hermaphroditus violates Salmacis' grove but becomes the victim of violent metamorphosis;¹⁰¹ however, the hunt motif has an emblematic function in Valerius' Hylas narrative, while Hermaphroditus is not hunting as he is caught by the nymph, and hunting is emphatically rejected by Salmacis herself.¹⁰² Valerius combines eroticism and violence with the hunt;¹⁰³ indeed, Hercules too has violated the grove in order to obtain wood for a new oar. Dryope is emotionally stunned as she discovers the devastation Hercules has caused in the landscape;¹⁰⁴ her emotional state is linked to the destruction of the *locus amoenus*.¹⁰⁵

*e quibus Herculeo Dryope percussa fragore,
cum fugerent iam tela ferae, processerat ultra
turbatum visura nemus fontemque petebat
rursus et attonitos referebat ab Hercule vultus.*

(3.529-32)

Of these Dryope, having heard Hercules' crash when the animals were already fleeing from the weapons, had gone far in order to see the disorder of the grove; and she went back to her spring, and she carried back from Hercules a stunned face.

⁹⁷ Cf. Actaeon's violation of Diana's grove.

⁹⁸ Cf. A. R. 1.1207-39; Williams (1991) 175ff.

⁹⁹ Cf. Malamud and McGuire (1993) 202-3 who draw a comparison with the auto-eroticism of Ovid's Narcissus; also, Salmacis' rape of Hermaphroditus in the *Met.*; Spaltenstein (2004) 156, Malamud and McGuire (1993) 205-8.

¹⁰⁰ *Ov. Met.* 4.320-8.

¹⁰¹ *Ov. Met.* 4.352-5.

¹⁰² *Ov. Met.* 4.302-4.

¹⁰³ Segal (1969) 49; Hinds (2002) 131.

¹⁰⁴ *V. Fl.* 3.565-8.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Shreeves (1978) 7; Barich (1982) 78; Zissos (2005) 508.

Violence enacted in the grove has psychological resonance.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, as a huntress, Dryope fits more than adequately into the role of an Ovidian victim: sexually alluring, separated from her companions, and, as a hunter, also a follower of Diana.¹⁰⁷ Both Hercules and Hylas are therefore established as aggressors against the landscape and the nymph,¹⁰⁸ but this is inverted as Hylas is transformed from hunter to prey, echoing Ovid's Actaeon narrative.¹⁰⁹ Valerius offers a number of environmental and topographical signals that allude to the landscape of the Actaeon narrative, beginning with the Argonauts reaching the shores of Mysia at midday:¹¹⁰

*Iam summas caeli Phoebus candentior arces
vicerat et longas medius revocaverat umbras.*

(3.481-2)

Now, Phoebus, burning stronger, had risen past the highest heights of heaven and midday had shortened the long shadows.

As Spaltenstein notes, this is a traditional means of establishing the temporal setting;¹¹¹

but Valerius' specific description of the sun at midday and use of language recalls

Ovid's introduction to his Actaeon narrative:

*iamque dies medius rerum contraxerat umbras
et sol ex aequo meta distabat utraque*

(Ov. *Met.* 3.144-5)

and now midday had contracted the shadows of things, and the sun was equally distant from either end of its turning-point.

Similarly, Valerius' *locus amoenus* echoes several aspects of the grove in which Actaeon meets his doom. Both groves are thick with pine trees; (the Mysian ridge is *pinea* at 3.521, but Juno rests against *piceae...opacae* at 3.533, while Diana's grove is *piceis* and *acuta densa cupressu* at Ov. *Met.* 3.155; Valerius also describes the Mysian grove as *densa* at 3.484 as Hercules and Hylas penetrate the forest); both Ovidian and

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Luc. 5.215-8: the Pythia's rape in the Delphic *locus amoenus*. See above, p. 64.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Spaltenstein (2004) 157.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. 5.530.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Segal (1969) 44.

¹¹⁰ Cf. A. R. 1.1172-1181, as the Argonauts arrive in the evening.

¹¹¹ Spaltenstein (2004) 143.

Valerian pools are *fontes* described as *undae* (Ov. *Met.* 3.161; V. Fl. 3.553-4).¹¹² Valerius follows Ovid in emphasising the “sexual symbolism and ambiguity of water”;¹¹³ Ovid juxtaposes the pseudo-violation of Diana’s virginity with the pure water of her pool,¹¹⁴ and it is with water that Diana transforms Actaeon into the form in which he will meet his doom.¹¹⁵ Similarly, Hylas has leaped over the *intactae undae* (3.554), but greedily prepares to break its waters to satisfy his thirst before being grabbed by the equally greedy Dryope (*avidus*, 3.557; *avidas* 3.562). Dryope emulates Diana to become the aggressor against Hylas as he echoes Actaeon’s unfortunate penetration of Diana’s grove.¹¹⁶ The eroticism of Dryope’s abduction of Hylas also reflects on the sexual potential of the relationship between Hercules and Hylas, which is largely subjugated to a “recuperated” and Romanised portrayal of Hercules, but remains active on an intertextual level.¹¹⁷ Once again, these actions reflect Valerius’ sustained thematic engagement with transgressive and ambiguous behaviour: each character in the narrative acts to some extent in a morally ambiguous manner. This reflects the wider program of moral ambiguity in the poem and Juno’s intervention (3.509ff.) establishes a parallel with both Cretheus’ ghost in book 1 as well as the morally ambiguous persuasion of Medea by Juno and Venus later in the poem.

Malamud and McGuire have stressed the indeterminacy of the boy’s transformation as well as the text that records it,¹¹⁸ stressing Valerius’ references to multiple variants of the narrative as well as to the “frustrated vision” of Hylas that deprives him of any tangible existence.¹¹⁹ As Malamud and McGuire point out, Valerius

¹¹² Cf. Malamud and McGuire (1993) who compare Valerius’ Hylas narrative with Ovid’s Narcissus episode (itself thematically linked with the Actaeon narrative; Segal (1969) 42).

¹¹³ Segal (1969) 44.

¹¹⁴ Ov. *Met.* 3.163-4.

¹¹⁵ Ov. *Met.* 3.193-7.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Malamud and McGuire (1993) 203.

¹¹⁷ Cf. Hershkowitz (1998a) 150-9; Malamud and McGuire (1993) 208.

¹¹⁸ Malamud and McGuire (1993) 201-15.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.* 212-5.

ambiguously refers to one version of the myth in the first book when Mopsus predicts Hylas' rape and disappearance;¹²⁰ ‘*subita cur pulcher harundine crines / velat Hylas? unde urna umeris niveosque per artus / caeruleae vestes?*’, 1.218-20 (“ ‘Why does beautiful Hylas cover his hair with unexpected reeds? From where [is] the urn on his shoulders and the blue clothing on his snowy limbs? ’ ”). Although Mopsus does not refer to Hylas as carrying an urn until after he has been abducted and transformed into a river deity,¹²¹ the prophecy nonetheless recalls another version of the myth in which Hylas is stolen while he looks to fill an urn with water.¹²² Valerius significantly alters the narrative when he returns to it; rather than looking for water to prepare a meal for Hercules, Hylas is hunting, encouraged by his older companion (3.545-51).¹²³ In addition to his suggestion of narrative ambiguity, Valerius implies Hylas' intangible and ambiguous position in the landscape, denying the boy a physical position in the Mysian topography which undermines the certainty of aetiological discourse: after being drawn into the water by the nymph, Hylas later appears in a vision explaining that he is now a river being himself (4.25-30). Many Ovidian metamorphoses result in a physical embodiment within the landscape and Valerius prepares his readers to expect Hylas to receive a similarly tangible new form as an element of the topography,¹²⁴ partially based upon the boy's prior physicality.¹²⁵ Yet following his abduction, Hylas is limited to appearance as a *visus*, a dream,¹²⁶ (4.22) and *umbra*, a shadow or ghost (4.41).¹²⁷ Even the *locus amoenus* assumes an ambiguous status and deceives Hercules as he searches

¹²⁰ *Ibid.* 197-8; Hershkowitz (1998a) 152.

¹²¹ Possibly as an indication of his new, supernatural attachment to the river; Kleywegt (2005) 138.

¹²² Cf. Theoc. 13.39, A. R. 1.1207, 1235-7; Murgatroyd (1992) 84.

¹²³ Malamud and McGuire (1993) 196-8, who suggest the desire of Calais to abandon Hylas at 3.690-2 refers to his attempted rape (another sexual transgression) in the Propertian variant of the myth, Prop. 1.20.25-30. See also Hershkowitz (1998a) 26-7, and Spaltenstein (2004) 192.

¹²⁴ Cf. Ov. *Met.* 5.487-8: Arethusa; *Met.* 3.509-10: Narcissus.

¹²⁵ V. Fl. 3.564.

¹²⁶ Cf. Verg. A. 8.33, where Tiberinus appears to a sleeping Aeneas; on this as a model for Hercules' dream vision of Hylas, Spaltenstein (2004) 210.

¹²⁷ Cf. Malamud and McGuire (1993) 212-5 on Hylas as an example of frustrated vision.

for the missing boy; *responsant silvae et vaga certat imago*, 3.597 (“the woods answer and the wandering echo emulates [his cries]”).¹²⁸ The *imago*, not only an echo of Hercules’ cries,¹²⁹ but also a representation that contends (*certat*) with Hercules, appears to lead him through the forest, frustrating his heroic expectation of finding the boy: the episode undermines not only poetic and aetiological certainty, but also exposes the ambiguity of spatial perception.

Indeed, the *locus amoenus* is complicit in the deception of Hercules,¹³⁰ upon Jupiter’s command: it is the fragrance of the grove that sends Hercules to sleep and brings about his vision of Hylas (4.15-17). Landscape continues to reflect emotional states: while Hercules has been responsible for the destruction of grove in his search for an oar (causing Dryope’s distress), the *locus amoenus* is explicitly restored when the hero goes to sleep: *tandem fessis pax reddit silvis / fluminaque et vacuis auditae montibus aerae*, 4.21-1 (“At length peace is restored to the tired woods and rivers and breezes are heard on the empty mountains”). Hercules, as a transgressive aggressor against the *locus amoenus*, is also made subject to a psychological metamorphosis that in this case restores his emotional balance:¹³¹ Hercules is sprinkled with *redolentem rorem* (4.15) by Jupiter, contrasting with Diana pouring water from her pool on Actaeon’s head in order to transform him into a stag (Ov. *Met.* 3.189-91).

Predominantly, Valerius’ Ovidian models in the Hylas narrative are aetiological in nature: Narcissus and Salmacis both function as *aitia* explaining natural (or supernatural) phenomena. As well as equating Hylas’ transgressions with those of Actaeon’s, the intertextual relationship with that particular episode also reflects on the lack of aetiological resolution in Valerius’ Hylas narrative; like Hylas in the

¹²⁸ Cf. Verg. *E.* 10.8: *respondent omnia silvae*; Barchiesi (2001) 139-40.

¹²⁹ TLL 7.1.408.45; Spaltenstein (2004) 172.

¹³⁰ Shreeves (1978) 76.

¹³¹ Cf. the Pythia’s mental transformation; see above, p. 64.

Argonautica, Actaeon is subject to metamorphosis without receiving a permanent memorial,¹³² and as such, the allusion contributes to the sense of ambiguity that surrounds the whole Argonautic project: the voyage will lead to success for Jason and will ensure that power passes from east to west; but Valerius does not resolve the question of to which other peoples (*gentes aliae*) ultimate power will pass. This also contrasts with Apollonius' explicitly aetiological account in which the rape of Hylas originates certain cult practices as well as the foundation of the city of Trachis;¹³³ both of these elements are omitted by Valerius.¹³⁴ Within his narrative (itself an *imago* of the original myth and its countless variants), Valerius stresses narrative dissonance, inviting his readers to make certain assumptions while simultaneously confounding the possibility of establishing a single, definitive version of the Argonauts' loss of Hercules and Hylas.¹³⁵

Although this episode predominantly engages with Ovid's *locus amoenus*, it does so in a manner consonant with Lucan's engagement with Ovidian landscapes in the *Bellum Civile*: the lack of aetiological resolution in the narrative questions poetic and imperial ideologies which tie the mythical past to an understanding of history as an ordered progression towards inevitability.¹³⁶ The ambiguous aetiological focus provided by the *locus amoenus* of the Hylas episode not only underscores Jupiter's ambivalent prophecy, but also contributes to the problematisation of Roman epic as a medium for commemoration: without any topographical monument, it is again left to Valerius' text to provide remembrance for Hylas' life and misfortune.¹³⁷ Valerius challenges a

¹³² See above, p. 63.

¹³³ A. R. 1.1343-57. On aetiology and the landscape of Apollonius' *Argonautica*, see Williams (1991) 22; also Feeney (1991) 93-4; Hunter (1993) 41. See also Spaltenstein (2004) 172 for Valerius' allusion to this *aition* at 3.596-7.

¹³⁴ As according to his usual strategy; see Hershkowitz (1998a) 212-8; cf. Hutchinson (1988) 93-6.

¹³⁵ Malamud and McGuire (1993) 214-5.

¹³⁶ I.e. Lucan's Phaethon, Delphic, and Cato narratives; cf. Hardie (1986) 68.

¹³⁷ Cf. the memorialisation of Aeson and Alcimedea.

positivistic mode of reading epic that understands epic mythology as explaining and recording the inexorable progress of history towards its culmination in the Roman empire, using landscape to identify the moral ambiguity of each of the actors in his Hylas narrative as they switch from aggressor to victim, and *vice versa*. This receives further exploration and elucidation in further engagements with both *locus amoenus* and *locus horridus* in the *Argonautica*.

3.3: Strangers in a strange land: Cyzicus, Amycus and the Argonauts

Further episodes in Valerius' poem exploit landscape in order to sustain the moral ambiguity of his epic universe as well as to problematise Rome's role in Jupiter's cosmic plans. Lucan's reorientation of Roman poetic horizons is demonstrated in two notable instances of Valerius' manipulation of the spaces of the *Argonautica* which destabilise the overarching Vergilianism of the poem; Valerius draws upon the sense of unease that develops from a Lucanian thematic connection between the unpleasant landscape and the practice of human sacrifice; this further consolidates the ambiguity of the Argonauts' supposedly civilising journey into the east. Two *loca horrida* bookend the *locus amoenus* of the Hylas narrative and foreground transgressive behaviour on the part of the Argonauts as well as the peoples they meet, equating the transgression of spatial and geographical boundaries with the transgression of moral boundaries.¹³⁸ Moreover, in both narratives, Valerius inverts or subverts the *locus amoenus*. As is typical within his morally ambiguous *Argonautica*, Valerius resists outright condemnation of the actors in one of these significant episodes: the Argonauts' unfortunate visit to Cyzicus and the land of the Doliones (2.634-3.458). This is not the

¹³⁸ Cf. Manuwald (1999) 261-2; also, sea travel not only allows opportunities for trade and contact; but also for war: Manuwald (2000) 335; Hardie (1993) 83.

case in the second episode, which nonetheless develops the theme of human sacrifice that resonates within the *locus horridus*: the boxing match between the Dioscuri and the tyrant Amycus (4.99ff.). Each of these narratives deploys the *locus horridus* in order to establish an atmosphere of danger and transgression, providing Valerius with an opportunity to comment on his relationship with his Vergilian and Apollonian models as well as engaging with Lucan's *Bellum Civile*.¹³⁹

i) Cyzicus

Jason's parents commit suicide in the ethically charged environment of the *locus horridus*, a liminal space that interfaces both with the Underworld as well as with Erichtho's landscape of *nefas*. Similarly, following the Argonauts' accidental attack on the Doliones and the death of their king Cyzicus,¹⁴⁰ Valerius' *locus horridus* establishes an atmosphere of moral transgression and psychological torment; the Argonauts are afflicted by a plague of lethargy and grief despite having carried out appropriate funerary arrangements (3.362-76). Upon consulting Mopsus (3.377ff.), Jason learns that the malady can be countered and the Argonauts cleansed from their sin by carrying out a sacrifice within a *locus horridus*.¹⁴¹ The connection between the rites of purification, the Underworld and the *locus horridus* are made explicit by Mopsus' explanation (3.397-416). Like the suicide of Alcimede and Aeson, death, sacrifice and the epic landscape are tied together with the concept of memory, both in terms of the proper remembrance of the dead as well as the quality of Mopsus' own personal memory.¹⁴² Mopsus describes in an ambiguous and simplistic fashion the circumstances arising

¹³⁹ Manuwald (1999) 261-8 highlights the importance of the Cyzicus episode in the structure of the epic and within the context of Jupiter's world-plan.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Burck (1970) 181ff.

¹⁴¹ 3.417ff.

¹⁴² Cf. Hylas' "memorialisation" (or lack thereof) in the landscape, above, p. 107.

from the attack on the Doliones that result in the plague of lethargy:¹⁴³ mortals killed and driven to early death take their anger with them to the Underworld and are permitted to return to the Earth to torment their killers (3.384-90). Despite this, Mopsus suggests that the plague of lethargy has a natural explanation; it is guilt in the Argonauts' own minds that harries them (3.393).¹⁴⁴ Nevertheless, the remedy for their malady is a ritual designed to placate the ghosts of the dead, despite the psychological origin of their guilt (rather than supernatural forces). Mopsus connects the expiation of the Argonauts' sin to two separate *loca horrida*: the first is described via Mopsus' own narration, recalling the Underworld by alluding to the *nekuia* in book 11 of the *Odyssey* with a reference to the land of the Cimmerians,¹⁴⁵ as well as referring to Vergil's

Avernine landscape:

*memori iam pridem cognita vati
est procul ad Stygiae devexa silentia noctis
Cimmerium domus et superis incognita tellus
caeruleo tenebrosa situ, quo flammea numquam
Sol iuga sidereos nec mittit Iuppiter annos.
stant <ta>citae frondes immotaque silva comanti
horret Averno iugo. specus umbrarumque meatus
subter et Oceani praeceps fragor arvaque nigro
vasta metu et subitae post longa silentia voces.*

(3.397-405)

Known long since to the mindful seer, there lies, far away, sloping down to the silence of the Stygian night, the home of the Cimmerians and a land unknown to the gods above, a place tenebrous in its dark setting, where the sun never drives its flaming car, nor does Jupiter send the starry seasons. The leaves stand silent, and the motionless Avernine forest bristles on the densely overgrown ridge. A cave and the path of the shadows is underneath, and Oceans's headlong crash, fields ravaged by black fear, and after long silence, sudden cries.

Encountering this *locus horridus* through Mopsus highlights its qualities as the literary Underworld-type: it is characterised as soundless and still, with unmoving trees and branches; further, within the *locus horridus* are silences which alternate with screams (3.402-5). Underworld landscapes are sites for learning moral, philosophical and poetic truths, as Aeneas finds when the Sibyl escorts him into the Underworld; it is in this

¹⁴³ Spaltenstein (2004) 115ff. on the vagueness of the passage; cf. *Aen.* 6.724ff.; Garson (1964) 271.

¹⁴⁴ Hershkowitz (1998b) 22-3.

¹⁴⁵ Hom. *Od.* 11.14; Spaltenstein (2004) p. 123.

place that Mopsus learns from Celaeneus what lustrations should be made for the dead (3.409). As with the suicide of Aeson and Alcimedea, Valerius places an emphasis on memory: travelling into Elysium, Mopsus is a mindful prophet (*memori vati*, 3.397).¹⁴⁶ Again, Valerius links memory to the Underworld landscape, and heightens the ritual memorialisation of the dead. Memory here is also a form of intertextual recall: textual resonances invoke the poems of Vergil and Lucan by means of the landscape, and the episode itself is a modification of Apollonius' narrative; this is intensified by Mopsus' status as a *vates*, a producer of song as well as prophecy.¹⁴⁷

Valerius' pair of *loca horrida* recall Lucan's Massilian landscape, a location of transgression and human sacrifice despoiled by the immoral figure of Caesar. In Lucan's epic, the Massilian landscape offers a figurative commentary on the *nefas* of civil discord;¹⁴⁸ yet in the *Argonautica* Jason and his men are absolved from guilt. The intertext directs the reader towards a moralistic reading of Jason's encounter with the Doliones: where Caesar fails the test of morality, Valerius' Jason passes – at least here.¹⁴⁹ However, in terms of his poetics, Valerius demonstrates his own willingness to despoil the literary tradition, frustrating his readers' expectations and redefining the epic landscape in order to foreground the moral transgression at the heart of the Cyzicus episode.

After he has described the ritual and the rationale behind it to Jason, Mopsus gives instructions to bring the rest of the Argonauts at the appropriate time, and he seeks out a suitable *locus horridus* characterised by gloom and darkness (3.424-9). This stands in direct contrast to the corresponding ritual landscape of the Apollonian text; although that begins as an unremarkable grove, the ritual resolves it into a beautiful and divinely

¹⁴⁶ Cf. 1.826: Aeson's shade is *memorum umbram*.

¹⁴⁷ Above, p. 20.

¹⁴⁸ Luc. 3.399ff.; above, p. 49.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Shreeves (1978) 89-91.

charged *locus amoenus* (A. R. 1.1142-8). Conversely, Valerius' Phrygian *locus horridus*, like Lucan's Massilian grove, becomes a place of worship for unknown gods: *aras ignotaque nomina divum / instituit*, 3.426-7 ("he sets up altars and unknown names of gods").¹⁵⁰ Just as Caesar destroys the Massilian grove for his war machines, the Argonauts strip bark from this grove for their ritual. Significantly, Mopsus must finalise this landscape as a *locus horridus* (3.426-9), just as in Apollonius' narrative it is the Argonauts' rites that turn the grove of Rhea into a *locus amoenus*. In the Hellenistic epic, Rhea listens to the Argonauts' prayers graciously (1.1139) and is favourable towards them: this is expressed through the text and to the Argonauts by the transformation of the grove into a landscape of abundance:

Trees poured forth fruit in abundance, and around their feet the earth spontaneously sent up flowers amidst the soft grass... Before this, there had been no flowing water on Dindymon, but in their honour she now caused an endless stream to gush down from the thirsty summit.

(A. R. 1.1142-8)¹⁵¹

Apollonius has the landscape transformed by the Argonauts' sacrifice into a *locus amoenus*;¹⁵² moreover, Apollonius does not mention the guilt of the Argonauts in slaying their hosts, except when Orpheus commands them to dance to drown out the noise of lamentations coming from the city of the Doliones (A. R. 1.1137-8); further, Apollonius' narrative enumerates several geographical and religious *aetia* which are omitted by Valerius. Apollonius' Argonauts wear their armour to dance and make as much noise as they can; conversely, the Valerian Argonauts take part in a sombre sacrifice which is accomplished in silence (3.441); the only armour that is referred to is affixed to effigies of the slain (3.444-5).

Where Apollonius' Argonauts are simply concerned with obtaining favourable conditions from the gods to carry on their journey, Valerius' Argonauts are aware of

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Luc. 3.417.

¹⁵¹ Tr. Hunter (1993).

¹⁵² Williams (1991) 208-209. cf. Spaltenstein (2004) 131; Spaltenstein (2002) 171-172.

their transgression. However, the funereal aspect of the sacrifice nonetheless carries with it implications of human sacrifice, even if carried out by proxy through the veneration of the warrior-effigies. Valerius adopts the funerary symbolism of three-times repeating an action, echoing the initial funeral of the Doliones (3.347-9).¹⁵³ When the Argonauts come to make their sacrifice, the Argonauts march three times in silence: *ter tacitos egere gradus, ter tristia tangens / arma simul vestesque virum lustramina ponto / pone iacit, rapidis adolentur cetera flammis*, 3.441-3 (“three times they performed the steps in silence and he, three times touching the sad arms and at the same time the clothes of the men, throws the lustral offerings behind him into the sea; the rest is burnt by the greedy flames”).¹⁵⁴ Trees from the *locus horridus* landscape are rendered into images of the slaughtered men; the topography of the landscape becomes the object of the sacrifice as well as the material used for the sacrifice. The adoption of the *locus horridus* as an ethical space allows Valerius to suggest that his Argonauts are not the amoral figures of the Hellenistic epic; rather, they are morally aware individuals who seek to maintain their own piety in the face of a morally ambiguous universe.¹⁵⁵

It has been noted that the Argonauts are not the only transgressors in the Dolionian episode; Cyzicus himself has transgressed against the gods and the night attack is punishment for his impious killing of Cybele’s lion (3.19-31).¹⁵⁶ This is entirely an innovation of Valerius,¹⁵⁷ and it forms the fundamental divine and mythic underpinning of the narrative. Causation for the episode is attributed to Cybele, although it is to Jupiter that the function of ending the night-attack is allotted (3.249).¹⁵⁸ Superficially, this can be interpreted as representing a form of antagonistic dualism

¹⁵³ Cf. Pollmann (2004) 282.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Verg. A. 1.1 *arma virumque* for *arma...vestesque*.

¹⁵⁵ Manuwald (1999) 195-6.

¹⁵⁶ Garson (1964) 269; Hershkowitz (1998a) 172-4; Manuwald (1999) 264-5.

¹⁵⁷ Burck (1970) 180.

¹⁵⁸ Manuwald (1999) 177.

between the force of civilisation and barbarity: Cybele, a strange, eastern and wild goddess counters Jupiter's position as a Roman god of order. This is not quite the case; although Jupiter has a plan for world order, he appears to take a *laissez-faire* attitude to the details which allows humanity to be subject to seemingly capricious divine decisions,¹⁵⁹ permitting the Argonauts' journey to be endangered by the fight with Cyzicus. Cybele is able to indulge her anger because Jupiter is not concerned with details,¹⁶⁰ and does not step in until the last moment to preserve the Argonauts (3.249ff.).¹⁶¹

By invoking Cybele's anger as the causative element, Valerius alludes to and inverts the structure of his Apollonian model,¹⁶² in which the encounter with the Doliones framed an aetiological narrative explaining the rites performed for Rhea by the Phrygians (1.1138ff.); although her temple on Mount Dindymum already exists at A. R. 1.1123, Rhea only comes into the narrative incidentally when the Argonauts must call on her to calm the weather,¹⁶³ as a result they initiate the goddesses' local honours. In the Hellenistic poem no divine causation is given for the attack of the Argonauts on Cyzicus, other than to attribute it to the unfolding of fate.¹⁶⁴ The goddess is only fully embedded within the physical and religious landscape of Phrygia following the rites performed by the Argonauts, and the Apollonian landscape transforms into a *locus amoenus* once the goddess has been inscribed into the topography by means of the Argonauts' ritual (1.1131ff.). Valerius' epic assumes that Cybele is already an active element in the landscape; following Cyzicus' transgression, Cybele nurses her wrath

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Schenk (1991) 143-4.

¹⁶⁰ Manuwald (1999) 184. Cf. Burck (1970) 196-8.

¹⁶¹ Cf. Barich (1982) 126.

¹⁶² Cf. Zissos (1999) 289.

¹⁶³ Spaltenstein (2004) 13.

¹⁶⁴ A. R. 1.1030; Garson (1964) 269; Hershkowitz (1998a) 173. Jason alludes to the role of Fortuna at 3.293.

and plans the king's downfall (3.24-6).¹⁶⁵ Valerius manipulates Cybele's spatial emplacement as well as her position in the Argonautic narrative, setting up Cyzicus' initial transgression as an analogue for the Ovidian hunting motif where a mortal transgresses the *locus amoenus* and by doing so offends a god,¹⁶⁶ although here Valerius extends the timeframe of the episode and elides Ovidian erotic and aetiological colouring.

Divine ritual, designed to expiate the Argonauts' sin, encloses the Argonauts' visit to Phrygia within a moral framework; while in Apollonius' epic the Argonauts must propitiate Rhea, they do so in order to calm the weather (A. R. 1.1078ff.). These storms have no causal connection to the slaughter of the Doliones and the Argonauts' transgression against the proprieties of guest-friendship. In Valerius' *Argonautica* the Argonauts are prevented from leaving by a lethargic disease and depression; twice the weather conditions are favourable for departure, yet the Argonauts fail to take advantage of the clement conditions (3.362ff.). Valerius rationalises their inability to get underway by making them suffer a moral and psychological dilemma.¹⁶⁷ Further, rather than making an explicit sacrifice to Cybele in order to lift the curse upon the men, Mopsus' sacrifice is made to gods more generally, completing the inversion of Apollonius' episode. Cybele/Rhea therefore retains her centrality in the episode; Valerius, however, makes the goddess herself the *aition* for the narrative, rather than making the establishment of her rites the *telos*, as in Apollonius' version.

While Hershkowitz groups Cyzicus with tyrants such Amycus on account of his transgression,¹⁶⁸ it is also the case that Cyzicus' behaviour towards his guests is

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Verg. A. 1.4.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. also Verg. A. 7.475-539: Ascanius' enthusiasm for the hunt provokes him to kill Tyrrhus' stag, provoking war between the Italian peoples and the proto-Roman Trojans; Spaltenstein (2004) 12.

¹⁶⁷ Garson (1964) 270.

¹⁶⁸ Hershkowitz (1998a) 174.

exemplary; his impiety earns his fate,¹⁶⁹ but Valerius' use of the *locus horridus* landscape as a setting for the expiation of the Argonauts' sins allows him to heighten the sense of moral ambiguity. Valerius' epic universe is occupied by a set of morally complex figures who are frequently flagged by a Lucanian *locus horridus* which acts as a physical commentary on the events that occur; this is particularly notable in this episode, as the explicit reference to Cybele supplies a clear intertext with the idealised *locus amoenus* created by the Argonauts in Apollonius' poem, replaced here with the morally ambiguous unpleasant landscape. Yet unlike in Lucan's *Bellum Civile*, Valerius' morally complex individuals are not fully associated with their actions;¹⁷⁰ it is possible for otherwise pious individuals to do bad things and *vice versa*. Valerius' moralistic *locus horridus* looks to the more morally ambiguous *Aeneid*, and his major innovation over the Lucanian unpleasant landscape is to separate actions from actors.

Indeed, the *loca horrida* of the Cyzicus narrative, although looking to Massilia rather than Erictho's grove, share a common thematic concern with Aeson's suicide: both narratives deal with what are effectively civil wars. Just as the *locus horridus* of Aeson's suicide intertextually directs the reader's attention back to Lucan's *Bellum Civile* and the landscape of civil war (overtly, given that Pelias and Aeson are brothers), the *loca horrida* described by Mopsus and located on Mount Dindymum direct the reader's attention to fraternal and civic strife. Massilia, like the topography of Dindymum, is inhabited by individuals who should be friends with their attackers;¹⁷¹ moreover, the battle precipitated by Ascanius' killing of the stag has been viewed in some readings of the *Aeneid* itself as an example of civil war between the Trojans and their Italian allies, and the Italians who seek to resist;¹⁷² by echoing the Massilian *locus*

¹⁶⁹ Schenk (1991) 145; Poortvliet (1991) 315.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. Manuwald (1999) 262-4.

¹⁷¹ The Massilians note their alliances with the Romans at Luc. 3.307ff.

¹⁷² Moorton (1989) 123-5; Putnam (1970) 422.

horridus on Mount Dindymum, Valerius reinforces the sense that the fighting between the Doliones and the Argonauts is nothing less than a civil tragedy, a war between those who should be allies. This is reinforced by the initial meeting between the Argonauts and the Doliones, who expect to fight side by side against the Pelasgians: Valerius exploits the martial nature of the Apollonian Argonauts' visit to Cyzicus' kingdom and the assistance they render Cyzicus in his battle with the Earthborn men (1.989ff.). When the Valerian Argonauts arrive at the kingdom of Cyzicus, Valerius alludes to the assistance rendered in the earlier epic: both Jason and Cyzicus express a desire to join forces against the Pelasgians (2.655-64),¹⁷³ setting up the expectation that the Argonauts and the Doliones are to join forces to fight together. The expectation is false, however; the third book of the epic begins with the Argonauts preparing to embark and resume their journey. Yet the two sides meet in quasi-civil conflict, as the Doliones fight the "Pelasgians" in the form of the Argonauts: "Pelasgian" is a term that refers to the mythical inhabitants of Greece, and is also used in the *Argonautica* to refer to the Argonauts.¹⁷⁴ Further, Cyzicus himself refers to the Argonauts as *Emathiae manus* (2.640: "Emathian band"), evoking Lucan's spatial centring of his epic on the plains of Emathia.¹⁷⁵ Instead of pious warfare against an external enemy, the only fighting that occurs in Valerius' episode is civil conflict.

In addition to this, the *locus horridus* emphasises the sense of moral transgression and ambiguity that surrounds each of the actors in the narrative. However, Valerius does deploy the landscape in connection with figures who exhibit few shades of moral grey, and for whom there are no redeeming characteristics: one such figure is Amycus, for whom the landscape acts as a marker of his transgressive behaviour. Valerius' narrative of the Argonauts' interaction with Amycus provides a thematic

¹⁷³ Burck (1970) 178-179; cf. Poortvliet (1991) 321-2.

¹⁷⁴ OCD3 s.v. Pelasgus; cf. 4.352; 5.474; 5.682; the *Argo* is a Pelasgian ship at 5.116.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. Luc. 1.1-2: *Bella per Emathios plus quam civilia campos /...canimus*.

counterpoint to the Cyzicus narrative;¹⁷⁶ both episodes foreground the issue of appropriate guest and host behaviour and also establish a framework of moral valuation by means of the landscape.

ii) Amycus

Amycus functions in the epic as a barbaric counter to the civilising force of the Argonauts,¹⁷⁷ reflecting the conflict between the civilised Graeco-Roman society of the Argonauts and the barbarism of the uncivilised wider world;¹⁷⁸ Amycus also functions as the gatekeeper between east and west, guarding the passage from Europe to Asia (4.315ff.). His removal, therefore, is necessary in Jupiter's plan to open up the world for trade and commerce. Initially Amycus' kingdom has the appearance of a *locus amoenus* where the Argonauts encounter Dymas mourning his brother (4.133ff.); he tells of Amycus' treatment of visitors in violation of the fundamental guest-host relationship: most visitors are thrown from a cliff in sacrifice to his father, Neptune, while the strongest are required to face him in a boxing match which almost certainly ends in their death (4.109-13). Pollux becomes the Argonauts' champion, and after a drawn out contest which sees Pollux' self-control matched against Amycus' savagery, the Argonaut is victorious. The episode provides a number of innovations over its earlier models in Apollonius' epic and Theocritus' *Idyll 22*: Dymas is absent in the Greek models, as is the suggestion that Amycus only fights the best of the strangers that he encounters. In addition to this, Valerius emphasises Amycus' status as more than human: in the Theocritean and Apollonian narratives, Amycus is presented as the thuggish progeny of divinity, but has little sense of the divine about him.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶ Shreeves (1978) 81-91.

¹⁷⁷ Hershkowitz (1998a) 78-91; Shreeves (1978) 81-8; 156-8.

¹⁷⁸ Williams (1991) 65.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. Cacus at Verg. A. 8.193ff.

Hershkowitz has noted that Valerius' treatment of Amycus draws parallels with the divine competition between Jupiter and Neptune that underscores the cosmic framework of the epic. The battle between the children of the two gods provides an analogue for Jupiter's desire for humanity to spread out across the sea in the face of resistance from Neptune;¹⁸⁰ Neptune's distress at the death of his son is incorporated in the landscape by a tide of blood that washes the shoreline.¹⁸¹ Apollonius also attributes cosmic significance to the fight; however the fight between Polydeuces and Amycus in the Greek *Argonautica* recalls the Gigantomachy rather than an internal struggle between the gods: Amycus "was like the monstrous offspring of awful Typhoeus or even one of the children whom Gaia herself bore in her anger against Zeus" (A. R. 2.38).¹⁸² A distinction is maintained, however, between the human level which is inhabited by Amycus and the divine/mythological level inhabited by gods and mythical creatures. While Valerius retains the comparison between Typhoeus and Amycus, he shifts the balance of the simile, comparing Amycus directly to Typhoeus: *non aliter iam regna poli, iam capta Typhoeus / astra ferens Bacchum ante acies primamque deorum / Pallada et oppositos doluit sibi virginis angues*, 4.236-8 ("Not otherwise was Typhoeus, already declaring that the realms of heaven, the stars were taken, aggrieved that Bacchus, before the lines, and Pallas, first of the gods, and a virgin's snakes opposed him"). While this retains the connection to the Gigantomachy (although Typhoeus is not, strictly, himself one of the giants),¹⁸³ Valerius' shift of the simile's emphasis refocuses attention on the direct lineage between the gods and their children Amycus and Pollux.

¹⁸⁰ Hershkowitz (1998a) 83-5; cf. Mopsus at 1.205-17, 1.498ff.

¹⁸¹ V. Fl. 4.117-32.

¹⁸² Tr. Hunter (1993).

¹⁸³ Hardie (1993) 84-5.

Valerius' presentation of Amycus refigures him as a god-challenging monster rather than the monstrous, yet still human, thug that inhabits the narratives of Apollonius and Theocritus.¹⁸⁴ By means of the landscape Valerius develops the suggestion that Amycus is akin to the Cyclops Polyphemus, as well as Cacus:¹⁸⁵

*at procul e silvis sese gregibusque ferebat
saeuus in antra gigas, quem nec sua turba tuendo
it taciti secura metus*

(4.199-201)

But from afar, the savage giant hurried from the woods and his flocks to the cave, at whose sight not even his own people go free from silent fear.

Amycus' home is figured within the narrative as a distinct *locus horridus*, as opposed to the pleasant landscape of trees and rivers which welcomed the Argonauts as they landed in Bebrycia (4.133-44);¹⁸⁶ like Cacus' cave, Amycus' dwelling is harsh, incorporating the death and gore of Lucan's landscapes:

*litore in extremo spelunca apparuit ingens
arboribus super et dorso connecta minanti,
non quae dona deum, non quae trahat aetheris ignem,
infelix domus et sonitu tremebunda profundi.
at varii pro rupe metus: hinc trunca rotatis
bracchia rapta viris strictoque immortalia caestu*

(4.177-182)

A mighty cave was seen on the limit of the shore, covered with trees above and with a threatening ridge, which attracted no gifts of the gods or the fire of the sky, an unhappy home that trembled with the noise of the deep. But various terrors were before the rock: truncated arms ripped from men sent wheeling, which were strapped into boxing-gloves.

Yet Valerius innovates further; not only does the topography express the violence of Amycus' transgressive behaviour, but the man himself is transformed into a manifestation of the *locus horridus*, disconnecting Amycus from humanity and normalised, human relations:

*mortalia nusquam
signa manent; instar scopuli qui montibus altis
summus abit longeque iugo stat solus ab omni.*

(4.201-3)

¹⁸⁴ Hershkowitz (1998a) 83.

¹⁸⁵ Spaltenstein (2002) 252-3; Hershkowitz (1998a) 82; Pollini (1986) 21-3; Shreeves (1978) 85-6. Cf. Hardie (1986) 110-8.

¹⁸⁶ Cf. Spaltenstein (2004) 238-9.

No signs of mortal man remain; as though he were a peak which towers above high mountains and stands alone, far away from the rest of the ridge.

Amycus' barbarity is inscribed into the landscape, and in turn, the harshness of that landscape is carved onto his own physical features. Furthermore, the landscape of Bebrycia is complicit with this depravity and takes joy in the deaths of Amycus' victims: *extremum nati prospexit in oras / et quondam laetos domini certamine campos*, 4.114-6 ("[Neptune] for the last time looked on his son's domain and on the fields that once rejoiced in their master's contest"); both the landscape and its inhabitant are symbols of transgression, and both function as a figurative embodiment of the barbarity that must be overcome by the Argonauts in order for Jupiter's plan to unfold.

Valerius' *locus horridus* continues to be a site for human sacrifice; yet in addition to Amycus' impious sacrifices to his father, this also casts ambiguous overtones over the civilising project that is being enacted through the journey of the Argonauts. Valerius creates a sense of moral ambiguity as Amycus fights Pollux;¹⁸⁷ while it is possible to establish a good/evil dichotomy between the Olympians and the Giants,¹⁸⁸ such straightforward dualism is not possible when recasting the boxing match as an analogue for the battle between Jupiter and Neptune; Neptune, although opposed to Jupiter in his defence of the oceans, is not an evil or malevolent figure, but is the brother of Jupiter and an Olympian god that receives veneration from the Romans. Amycus' behaviour even receives a degree of sanction from his father; however, Neptune makes it clear that no matter how much he wishes to protect his son, he is no match for the power of Jupiter (4.118-30). Amycus is neutralised as part of Jupiter's plan, and Neptune does not resist. As a result, the killing of Amycus is a necessary sacrifice, inverting Amycus' own impious sacrifices.

¹⁸⁷ Hershkowitz (1998a) 84

¹⁸⁸ Cf. Apollonius' use of the Typhoeus simile.

Valerius follows the structure of the fight as presented in Apollonius' poem, where the death of Amycus is structured around a simile that links the Bebrycian king to an individual about to sacrifice a bull; the simile is turned, however, when Amycus himself becomes the sacrificial victim.¹⁸⁹

Amykos stretched himself up on his toes like a man going to slaughter an ox, and crashed his heavy fist down on his opponent; Polydeukes, however, withstood the assault by tilting his head to one side, and the blow just struck his shoulder. He then stepped close to his opponent by swinging his leg forward, and with a sudden assault struck him above the ear, shattering the bones inside his head.

(A. R. 2.90-6)¹⁹⁰

Despite following his model closely for the movement of the fight, Valerius omits this simile, asserting independence from the Apollonian text;¹⁹¹ Valerius appears to resist reinforcing the overtones of human sacrifice present in the *locus horridus*. Yet human sacrifice remains a thematic concern as a result of Valerius' earlier deployment of the landscape. Moreover, with his earlier suggestion of Amycus' practice of disposing of travellers as human sacrifices to his father (4.109-3), Valerius foregrounds the barbaric practice of human sacrifice as a marker of Amycus' depraved personality. Yet Pollux's final blow with his right arm (4.307-11) recalls Vergil's depiction of the single punch of Entellus that kills the bull won as a result of his boxing match with Dares, and offered as a sacrifice to Eryx (Verg. A. 5.477-84).¹⁹² By omitting the simile, Valerius prevents Pollux from being explicitly tainted as one who carries out a human sacrifice; such a sacrifice from one of the Argonauts would be inappropriate within the context of a voyage that symbolises Jupiter's civilising plan for the cosmos. However, as a result of the emphasis on human sacrifice earlier in the narrative, this is foregrounded as an issue, and Pollux's killing of Amycus becomes, to a certain extent, a sacrifice to Jupiter that is equivalent to the sacrifices made by Amycus to his father, Neptune. The omission itself

¹⁸⁹ Hunter (1989) 559.

¹⁹⁰ Tr. Hunter (1993).

¹⁹¹ Garson (1965) 115-6; cf. Fitch (1976) 120.

¹⁹² Eryx is invoked by Valerius at 4.322; cf. Spaltenstein (2004) 287. Cf. Hunter (1989) 559; Spaltenstein (2004) 269.

becomes a signal that draws attention to the thematic significance of human sacrifice. In addition to this, a further omission also implies that the death of Amycus is to be seen as a form of sacrifice: following his defeat of Dares, Entellus offers sacrifice in the form of a bull; in the Apollonian *Argonautica* the Argonauts make a sacrifice to the gods. However, Valerius omits any reference to meat being prepared for the gods even though the Argonauts celebrate the victory with a feast; rather, the celebrations focus almost entirely on Pollux. Although wine is twice offered to Jupiter (4.340-343), he does not receive any sacrificial animal, in contrast with Valerius' models; unless, of course, Amycus has already provided the sacrificial offering. Pious sacrifice in the *Aeneid* is underscored by the Lucanian insinuation of human sacrifice into the *locus horridus* landscape.

Although the landscape of the episode serves predominantly to focus on the barbarity and impiety of Amycus, a note of ambivalence is retained in the treatment of the Argonauts, and also in their divinely inspired mission; this too finds expression through the suggestion of human sacrifice that accompanies the deployment of the landscape. The Cyzicus and Amycus episodes function as counterparts, highlighting the ambiguity of the poem's moral system. Although Valerius is less ambiguous in his treatment of Amycus, portraying the king as a god-challenging monster, the moral superiority of the Argonauts is undermined. This moral ambiguity finds further expression in Valerius' presentation of the Argonauts' encounter with Medea in the grove of the Golden Fleece.

3.3: Medea in the grove of the triple-formed goddess

Ambiguities find expression throughout Valerius' epic across a range of landscapes and characters; this reflects the cosmic ambivalence enunciated by Jupiter in the first book

as well as the moral ambiguities that proliferate in the behaviour of both positive and negative characters in the poem.¹⁹³ It is therefore unsurprising that in the second half of the poem the *locus horridus*, as the landscape of transgression, should become associated with Medea: even more so than Lucan's Erictho, Medea is a paradigmatic example of the transgressive female and an abundance of ancient literary and artistic representations testify to this.¹⁹⁴ Representations of Medea frequently foreground the contradictory elements of her character, and Valerius puts these dichotomous aspects of her personality at the centre of his portrayal:¹⁹⁵ Medea is a vulnerable, shy and inexperienced maiden who is nevertheless a sorceress of great and potentially malevolent power;¹⁹⁶ moreover, she will go on to use that power to commit horrifying crimes against her parents, brother, husband, and children.¹⁹⁷ Having established his representations of topography as a means of reflecting both the moral ambiguity of his epic universe as well as the psychological states of his characters,¹⁹⁸ Valerius deploys the *locus amoenus* and the *locus horridus* landscapes as a medium for articulating Medea's potential for *nefas*;¹⁹⁹ even before she meets Jason, Medea is *impia virgo* (4.13) and *horrenda virgo* (5.220).²⁰⁰ After she has assisted him by transgressing against her family Medea is *virgo nocens* (8.426). Between these states Medea is subject to

¹⁹³ Above, p. 89.

¹⁹⁴ Johnston (1997) 3-6.

¹⁹⁵ Ferenczi (1998) 338.

¹⁹⁶ I.e. *Ov. Met.* 7.1-158 represents the naïve Medea; following this she is "Medea the witch", Newlands (1997) 181-92.

¹⁹⁷ Hershkowitz (1998a) 181; Ferenczi (1998) 337; Auhagen (2004) 92-3; Wijsman (1996) 185; Garson (1965) 109; Hull (1975) 1-4, 20; Davis (1990) 56; Shreeves (1978) 186; cf. Newlands (1997) 178-80 on Medea in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

¹⁹⁸ Above, p. 105.

¹⁹⁹ Characterised as "die Bereitschaft zum *nefas*", Tschiedel (1991) 218.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.* 214-5.

psychological changes provoked by *amor* in conflict with *pudor*,²⁰¹ which leave her powerless in her struggle against her passion.²⁰²

Medea's initial meeting with Jason takes place in an intertextually loaded *locus amoenus* suggestive of welcome and innocence (5.329ff.), and which recalls the Phaeacian landscape of Nausicaa in the *Odyssey*.²⁰³ At the moment of the Argonauts' landing on the banks of the Phasis, the landscape is characterised as a *locus amoenus*:²⁰⁴

*Ac dum prima gravi ductor subit ostia pulsu
populeos flexus tumulumque virentia supra
flumina cognati medio videt aggere Phrivi.*

(5.184-6)

And while the leader first enters the river-mouth to the heavy beat, he sees a ring of poplars and in the middle of the embankment, the tomb of his kinsman Phrixus, that rises up over the green river.

The pleasance of the landscape is reiterated when the Argonauts encounter Medea as she seeks the waters to purify herself following a nightmare (5.329-62), and their arrival is marked with good omens;²⁰⁵ Colchis therefore appears to welcome the Argonauts, suggestively implying Medea's innocence and naivety.²⁰⁶ Moreover, Medea is compared to Proserpina (5.343-9), suggesting the dual nature of Proserpina as a beautiful maiden in the *locus amoenus* as well as a goddess of the underworld.²⁰⁷ The simile also suggests the possibility of an Ovidian rape in the pleasance with Medea and Jason cast in the roles of Persephone and Pluto respectively;²⁰⁸ this does not happen, but instead contributes to the disturbing undertone of the Argonauts' arrival in Colchis.²⁰⁹ This consolidates the ambiguity of the epic's moral framework, and further disquieting

²⁰¹ Garson (1965) 108; Hershkowitz (1998a) 170.

²⁰² Rosner-Siegel (1982) 234. Cf. Ovid *Ep.* 12.35-8; 92. Medea's *amor* also sets up a psychological conflict between *pudor* and *furor*; Hershkowitz (1998b) 32.

²⁰³ Hom. *Od.* 5.474-93, 6.85-148. Wijsman (1996) 182; Stover (2003) 126-8; Garson (1969) 363; Hershkowitz (1998a) 96.

²⁰⁴ Cf. connections between Arcadia and the Phasis at 5.205; the banks of the Phasis are *virides ripas* at 5.216.

²⁰⁵ Without the assistance of a crew, the *Argo* turns and faces in a homeward direction, 5.210-6.

²⁰⁶ Cf. 5.391: Medea's speech is *trepidam*. Cf. Hom. *Od.* 6.139, 186; Spaltenstein (2004) 489.

²⁰⁷ Barich (1982) 79.

²⁰⁸ Wijsman (1996) 172-4; Spaltenstein (2004) 477; cf. Barich (1982) 79-80.

²⁰⁹ Cf. Ferenczi (1998) 343 who suggests that the simile denotes a pivotal moment in Medea's life.

subtexts are enacted through intertextual relationships; particularly, there is an intertextual play between the Nausicaa *topos* as it is recalled by Valerius and also refracted through other versions of the same *topos*.

Principally, this is a consequence of Valerius' use of simile and the role that Diana plays in the narrative as a figurative element: although it is to Proserpina in the *locus amoenus* that Medea is compared, she is nonetheless partnered with Diana (5.343-7); a few lines later she is explicitly compared to Diana by Jason as he flatters her (5.378-90); and further, it has been established within the text that Medea has been consecrated as a priestess of Diana of the underworld (*inferna Diana*, 5.238), one of the personae of Hecate in her guise as a multiform goddess.²¹⁰ Suggestively, Nausicaa is made subject to a simile at *Od.* 6.102ff. comparing her to Artemis, and Valerius uses this modification of the *topos* to further reinforce his allusion to the *Odyssey*; there are, however, intertextual consequences: the network of references also recalls Vergil's adoption of the Nausicaa *topos* for Aeneas' arrival in Carthage, where Dido too is made subject to a comparison with Diana, *Aen.* 1.498ff.²¹¹ In doing so, Valerius alludes to Dido's meeting with Aeneas and the consequences that followed from that tragic encounter;²¹² indeed, linking Medea with Dido also foregrounds the role of fate and the divine in Medea's story, casting a shadow over Venus' and Juno's involvement in the narrative as well as fate's propensity for discarding women who are not essential to its proper progress.

However, this Colchian *locus amoenus*, a scene of relative tranquillity, does not represent the totality of the area's topography, nor does it represent the absolute landscape of Medea's mind; embedded within Valerius' depiction of the *locus amoenus*

²¹⁰ Spaltenstein (2004) 450; TLL *onom.*3.133.53.

²¹¹ Cf. Austin (1971) 166-7.

²¹² Cf. Verg. *A.* 1.325ff.: Aeneas' meeting with Venus; Stover (2003) 131 on further intertextual connections resulting from the Diana simile.

is a nightmare vision of strange and terrifying landscapes of transgression that express

Medea's latent capacity for *nefas*:

*namque soporatos tacitis in sedibus artus
dum premit alta quies nullaeque in virgine curae,
visa pavens castis Hecates excedere lucis,
dumque pii petit ora patris, stetit arduus inter
pontus et ingenti circum stupefacta profundo
fratre tamen conante sequi. mox stare paventes
viderat intenta pueros nece seque trementem
spargere caede manus et lumina rumpere fletu.*

(5.333-40)

For while deep quiet pressed down her sleeping limbs as she lay on her silent bower, and no cares beset the maiden, she dreamed, struck by terror, to be stepping from Hecate's holy grove, and when she sought her faithful father's presence, the adverse sea stood between them and she was amazed at the vast depth around, yet her brother tried to follow. Then she had seen her children standing, terrified at her intent to kill them, and she had seen herself under trembling, staining her hands with their death and her eyes bursting with tears.

Explicitly rendered as a place of fear, the grove of Hecate foreshadows Medea's future meeting with Jason in that place, and, although it is not yet overtly rendered as a *locus horridus*,²¹³ this grove expresses the liminal situation of Medea between *pietas* and *nefas*; while it is a familiar place of safety for her, Hecate's grove has an implicit connection with the *locus horridus* as the point of worship for a goddess who is herself loaded with the potential for violence and savagery. Valerius extends his use of landscape, using these mental landscapes to further alienate Medea from the *locus amoenus*: whereas the Argonauts have arrived into the pleasance after a sea-journey, Medea is separated from her Colchian home by the expanse of the sea; during her nightmare, the dream landscape continues to metamorphose into the Corinthian landscape in which she sacrifices her children.²¹⁴ Therefore the movement of this passage prefigures not only Medea's spatial progress from Asia to Europe, as well as her topographical movement from a grove in which she performs legitimate sacrifices to Hecate to a site upon which she will enact a human sacrifice, but Valerius also maps the changing topography with Medea's psychological transformation from virgin to witch.

²¹³ Cf. 7.400ff; Barich (1982) 77-8.

²¹⁴ Spaltenstein (2004) 475-6 for speculation concerning possible Senecan influence on this passage.

Following Medea's dream vision of the *locus horridus*, she immediately attempts to purify herself and recover her innocence by visiting the *locus amoenus*: *his turbata minis fluvios ripamque petebat / Phasidis aequali Scythidum comitante caterva*, 5.341-2 ("Disturbed by these threatening signs she sought the streams and banks of the Phasis amid a group of Scythian girls her age"). Valerius' Medea is not the crazed, passionate barbarian of *Heroides* 12 and Seneca's tragedy,²¹⁵ rather, she reflects more closely the bipolar figure of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*,²¹⁶ although for Valerius, the majority of Medea's transgressions remain outside the (extant) text. Medea's future actions dominate Valerius' poem.²¹⁷ However, Medea's known future as a witch is not strictly consonant with her portrayal as a shy and naïve maiden in book 5;²¹⁸ Medea, the monster of the *locus horridus* is not quite the Medea who steps into the *locus amoenus* in revulsion at her nightmare and attempts to purify herself, even if the potential already exists within her. Rather, some form of psychological metamorphosis must occur in order for Medea to fulfil her potential.²¹⁹ This transformation occurs following an acute depiction of the struggle in Medea's mind between *amor* and *pudor* and reflects the influence of Juno and Venus, despite Medea's attempt to resist.²²⁰

Fundamentally, the *Argonautica* is structured around the transgressions of its two main protagonists, Jason and Medea;²²¹ consequently, despite the initially auspicious meeting of the two in the *locus amoenus* by the Phasis, it is the nightmare

²¹⁵ Cf. Ov. *Ep.* 12.103-12; note Medea's heightened psychological state at *Ep.* 12.171-4; Sen. *Med.* 382ff; Sørensen (1984) 269; Grewe (1998) 189-90.

²¹⁶ Cf. Hull (1975) 6-25; Stover (2003) 131 fn. 26; Ovid *Met.* 7.7-99.

²¹⁷ I.e. Medea's dream at 5.333-340; also, an ecphrastic depiction of Colchian history and immediate future, 5.407-54; Barchiesi (2001) 137. Cf. 1.546-8, 4.13ff, 6.500-2. Hershkowitz (1998a) 28-9; 181. Garson (1965) 108.

²¹⁸ Ferenczi (1998) 337-8; Tschiedel (1991) 215.

²¹⁹ Ferenczi (1998) 343. Cf. Sen. *Med.* 171:

NVT: *Medea,*

MED: *Fiam.*

and 910:

MED: *Medea nunc sum; crevit ingenium malis.*

²²⁰ 6.455-476, 6.575-603, 7.193-406; Eigler (1991) 167-72; Auhagen (2004) 92; Ferenczi (1998) 341-2; Hull (1975) 8.

²²¹ Cf. Barich (1982) 72.

grove of Hecate that will characterise their relationship and that will witness their commitment to one another. It is ironic, therefore, that Medea initially meets Jason when she goes to the *locus amoenus* in order to regain her innocence and to obliterate the influence of Hecate's grove. As Valerius' narrator interjects, this will be in vain:²²² Medea must adhere to a path that brings her to her literary past in the form of Euripidean and Senecan tragedy; in addition to this, her path has already been decided according to Jupiter and fate. Medea may try to resist and to remain pure, but as a tragic heroine, she is subject to the decisions of the gods and a fate that she cannot avert,²²³ as well as a literary past that she cannot change.

Medea's psychological transformation remains connected to the landscape in the sixth book. Following Juno's intervention, Medea is compared to a lily:

*lilia per vernos lucent velut alba colores
praecipue, quis vita brevis totusque parumper
floret honor, fuscis et iam Notus imminet alis*

(6.492-4)

As white lilies conspicuously gleam through the colours of spring, whose life is short and whose entire glory flowers briefly, and already the South wind draws near on dark wings.

The simile juxtaposes the lilies' inevitable decay against their beauty;²²⁴ building upon the Proserpina simile's dualism, the comparison between Medea and the flowers evokes a sense of pathos, but also disjunction: Medea's future becomes an unavoidable occurrence somehow, as with death and decay, in tune with the processes of the cosmos. However, just as the temporal positioning of the Proserpina simile is critical,²²⁵ this simile is temporally situated before the lily begins to decay.²²⁶ These events are inevitable, but the transformation is still to come. Following the simile, Hecate assumes a more sympathetic role, expressing her dismay at Medea's future; again, her grove

²²² 5.398: *sacra inrita*.

²²³ Eigler (1991) 170-1; Ferenczi (1998) 344-6; Tschiedel (1991) 216; Grewe (1998) 187.

²²⁴ Barich (1982) 85; Spaltenstein (2005) 145; Wijnsman (2000) 193-4; Baier (2001) 218-9.

²²⁵ 5.343-9: Proserpina has not yet been carried off; cf. Fucecchi (1996) 128-31.

²²⁶ Ferenczi (1998) 343.

assumes significance as a place of safety and refuge in contrast to Greece: *hanc residens altis Hecate Perseia lucis / flebat et has imo referebat pectore voces: / 'deseris heu nostrum nemus aequalesque catervas, / a misera, ut Graias haud sponte vageris ad urbes'*, 6.495-8 (“her did Persean Hecate mourn, dwelling in her high grove and these words did she speak from the depth of her heart: ‘Alas, you leave our grove and your companions’ bands, wretched girl, to wander to the cities of the Greeks despite yourself”). Subsequently, Medea encounters Jason in Hecate’s grove, and during this meeting she makes a promise to help him overcome the tests set by her father; in return, he pledges his love and loyalty to her.

Medea’s commitment to Jason marks a pivotal moment of choice for Medea.²²⁷ Although subject to the influence of the gods,²²⁸ her psychological state continues to heighten, and this is reflected in the development of the Colchian landscape in book 7. Once Medea has made her decision, she goes into the landscape in order to gather her materials (7.349-70);²²⁹ this includes a plant that never decays, and Valerius reverses the lily simile as Medea now goes into the landscape to pick it, thereby causing its destruction (7.361-3). This is accompanied by an ominous sense of foreboding as Medea’s psychological transformation begins to align her with Lucan’s Erictho. Assisted by Hecate, Medea picks the plants that take nutrition from Prometheus’ pain.²³⁰

*mox famulae monstrata seges, quae lampade Phoebes
sub decima iuga feta metit saevitque per omnes
reliquias saniemque dei.*

(7.366-8)

Then she showed the plant to her handmaid, who, under the tenth shining of the moon-goddess Phoebé, reaps the mountain harvest and rages throughout all of the remains and gore of the god.

²²⁷ Tschiedel (1991) 223. Cf. Luc. 6.525ff.

²²⁸ Cf. Feeney (1991) 336; Eigler (1991) 171; cf. Tschiedel (1991) 216-7.

²²⁹ Cf. Sen. *Med.* 705ff.; Stadler (1993) 137-9.

²³⁰ Spaltenstein (2005) 306-8.

Prometheus groans to see Medea picking herbs from the base of the Caucasus, and Medea herself appears susceptible to the sense of danger and transgression that surrounds her actions; her transformation is not yet complete, and so far this has been only a glimpse of Medea's potential. Medea is *tremens* as she goes into the *nox opaca*, preparing for acts that go *contra sua regna* (7.371-72). Medea is aware that her actions are morally suspect, and this is reflected in the nocturnal landscapes of the town and surrounding countryside which are characterised as silent and fearful; Medea shudders in the silent town (*horretque domos Medea silentes*, 7.381), and Venus must continually encourage her to proceed (7.392-4). Although not specifically controlled by Medea, the night lengthens, a characteristic example of a witch controlling nature (7.393);²³¹ the maiden feels psychological anguish on a recurring basis, as she is repeatedly subject to the competing impulses of *amor* and *pudor* which she articulates in a speech (characterised as *voces inanes*) to Circe/Venus (7.382-8). Medea's progression through the landscape is accompanied by heightened tension and this is reflected in the environment which becomes increasingly frightening and ominous. Not only is Medea close to emotional frenzy, but she also begins to act in a manner characteristic of more malign witches: she begins to utter magical spells, causing nature to retreat; Medea's fear is transposed onto Venus:

*et iamiam magico per opaca silentia Colchis
 coeperat ire sono montanaque condere vultus
 numina cumque suis averti fontibus amnes.
 iam stabulis gregibusque pavor strepitusque sepulchris
 inciderat, stupet ipsi gravi nox tardior umbra.
 iamque tremens longe sequitur Venus.*

(7.389-94)

And now the Colchian had begun to go through the dark stillness with the sound of magic and the mountain spirits had begun to hide their faces and the rivers to turn away with their sources. Now fear was in stalls and flocks, and a rumbling noise had struck the tombs, and night itself, horror-struck, slowed its heavy shadow. And now Venus, frightened, follows far behind.

²³¹ Cf. Luc. 6.461-506, 624; Sen. *Med.* 752ff.

As Medea progresses through the landscape, nature, in shock, is transformed into a *locus horridus*; this is in accordance with Medea’s own psychological state and generates a further sense of foreboding surrounding the transgressions that lie in Medea’s future.

Medea’s destination is the grove of Hecate, and she returns to the site that began the nightmare recording her future path from Colchis to Corinth. It is once again described in an abbreviated fashion; however, the emphasis is again on shock and the terror felt by Medea: *utque sub altis / pervenere trabes divaeque triformis in umbram / hic subito ante oculos nondum speratus Iason / emicuit videntque prior conterrita virgo*, 7.394-7 (“and when they came under the high timbers and the shade of the triformed-goddess, suddenly before their eyes emerged Jason, not yet looked for, and the terrified virgin saw him first”). Schematically, the grove conforms to both *locus amoenus* and *locus horridus*, featuring trees and shade; however, within the ominous context, the shade takes on a more menacing aspect. Again there is a potential for violence as Jason unexpectedly confronts the maiden, but this is again diverted. Further, Valerius adapts a landscape simile from Apollonius which accentuates both the eeriness of the landscape and conveys the moral ambiguity of Medea’s actions.²³²

*obvius ut sera cum se sub nocte magistris
impingit pecorique pavor qualesve profundum
per chaos occurrunt caecae sine vocibus umbrae,
haud secus in mediis noctis nemoris<que> tenebris
inciderant ambo attoniti iuxtaque subibant
abietibus tacitis aut immotis cyparissis
adsimiles, rapidus nondum quas miscuit Auster.*

(7.400-6)

Just as, in the depths of night, fear comes across cattleherds and cattle, or just as when blind, voiceless ghosts meet in the depths of Hell, so both of them under the midnight shadows of the grove met together, awestruck, and they approached close to one another, resembling silent firs or motionless cypresses, which the rapid South wind has not yet mingled.

²³² A. R. 3.966-71; Spaltenstein (2005) 317.

Missing from the Apollonian original is the foregrounded sense of shock and awe; indeed the Hellenistic epic uses the simile to suggest the love between the two that has brought them to this position; Medea has been accompanied by her maidservants, not Aphrodite, and, rather than a battle between *amor* and *pudor*, she has been overcome with love for Jason:

The pair then faced each other, silent, unable to speak, like oaks or tall firs, which at first when there is no wind stand quiet and firmly rooted on the mountains, but afterwards stir in the wind and rustle together ceaselessly. Just so were this pair destined to have much to say under the inspiration of Love's breezes.

(3.966-971)²³³

Crucially, Apollonius' Jason recognises that Medea is under divine influence, unlike Valerius' hero. Further, Apollonius' Jason then goes on to flatter Medea, whereas Valerius' Jason immediately begins to seek assistance; as such, the Valerian passage is more fraught and intense, lacking the sexual undercurrent.²³⁴ Apollonius' and Valerius' deployment of the same simile can be categorised as forms of the *locus amoenus* and *locus horridus* respectively; and both similes are loaded with expectation. Where Apollonius' Jason and Medea are shocked into stillness and then move excitedly, Valerius' version depicts the pair gripped with panic and then frozen into stillness. Where Apollonius suggests that the pair stand on the brink of a love affair, Valerius manipulates the comparison so as to suggest the destruction to be wrought by the forthcoming destructive storm. This is reinforced by the allusive quality of Valerius' simile which echoes Vergil's *in sola sub nocte per umbram*,²³⁵ as Aeneas ventures into the Underworld;²³⁶ not only this, but *sera sub nocte* is a direct echo from Vergil's depiction of the Trojans passing Circe's island, which, in contrast to the silence of the Valerian passage, is characterised by the loud noise made by frenzied animals.²³⁷ The

²³³ Tr. Hunter (1993).

²³⁴ Spaltenstein (2005) 318.

²³⁵ Stadler (1993) 160.

²³⁶ Verg. A. 6.268.

²³⁷ Verg. A. 7.16. Cf. Dido at A. 4.527.

dynamics of the landscape are altered by Valerius' replacement of Apollonius' oaks with the funereal cypresses and the violence with which he characterises the winds. Medea's meeting with Jason is the moment at which everything changes; as Valerius inverts Apollonius' simile, so Medea is inverted from shy maiden with the potential for *nefas* to a witch actively seeking to cause harm.²³⁸ At this moment in the grove Medea's *amor* becomes *furor*,²³⁹ and the ambiguous Hecate becomes supplanted by the Fury, another denizen of the Underworld (7.462).²⁴⁰ As intimidated by the psychologically and morally charged landscape, Medea's psychological transformation may not be complete, but it is certainly underway.

It is worth noting that Valerius' designation of Hecate's grove as belonging to the *diva triformis* (7.395) alludes to the Medea narrative of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. *Triformis* as an epithet for Hecate is relatively rare;²⁴¹ it refers to a number of functions for Hecate which foreground a complex, multiformed version of the goddess that sums up her triple position as Luna in the sky, Diana on earth and Hecate in the Underworld.²⁴² As such, it also encompasses Diana of the Crossways, or Trivia, who is both a goddess of merging paths as well as a powerful goddess of witchcraft.²⁴³ It is appropriate for Valerius to deploy the epithet at this point in his *Argonautica*: crossroads are not just spaces in which paths merge, they are also spaces of divergence; they imply choice, but they also imply ambiguity and an absence of linearity; a crossroad stops a path from going from A to B, for it can now go to C as well. Further, Diana/Hecate/Luna's persona is not clearly delineated, and this further reflects the cosmic ambiguity of the poem. Medea herself stands at a crossroads and, even if under

²³⁸ Cf. Grewe (1998) 186.

²³⁹ Cf. 4.13: *I, Furias Veneremque move*; Jupiter unleashes Venus (*amor*) and the Furies (*furor*).

²⁴⁰ Hershkowitz (1998b) 34.

²⁴¹ Ov. *Met.* 7.94, 177; Hor. *Carm.* 3.22.4; Sen. *Med.* 7; *Phaed.* 412; Sil. 1.119.

²⁴² Cf. V. Fl. 1.781; Verg. *A.* 4.511, *tergemina Hecate*. Cf. Luc. 6.700: *Hecates pars ultima*.

²⁴³ Spaltenstein (2002) 287; cf. Williams (1969) 118; Quinn (1980) 281-2. Trivia's statue would be placed where three roads meet; cf. Ov. *Fast.* 1.141-2; Bömer (1958) 24.

the influence of the gods, the choice she makes at this point will determine the path of her future.²⁴⁴ Hecate in one form or another (as a priestess of Diana of the Underworld, 5.238; compared to Diana in a simile 5.378-90; as Proserpina, partnered with Diana, 5.343-7; the nightmare beginning in Hecate's grove, 5.333-40, etc.) has stood over Medea as the statue of Trivia would have stood over crossroads. Regardless of the influence of other gods in the poem, the complementary forms of the *diva triformis*, specifically the virgin goddess, Diana, and Hecate, the goddess of the underworld and of witchcraft, have loomed large over Medea throughout the narrative: in a sense, Medea's psychological transformation also carries her on a trajectory from Diana to Hecate, just as they are reflected in her journey from *locus amoenus* to *locus horridus*.

In the *Metamorphoses* Ovid uses the epithet *triformis* twice in his depiction of Medea's affair with Jason: initially it refers to the grove of Hecate at the corresponding moment in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, although in this case Jason swears by the goddess.²⁴⁵ Ovid's second deployment of the term *diva triformis* appears in quick succession:²⁴⁶ Medea agrees to help rejuvenate Aeson, if the "triple formed goddess" permits. By alluding to the Ovidian narrative, Valerius simultaneously asserts his narrative's affinity with the version presented in the *Metamorphoses* while foregrounding the significant narrative disjunction that separates them: in both poems, Medea and Jason meet in the same grove, at the same time, and have roughly followed the same path to get there, including a heightened awareness of Medea's psychological struggle.²⁴⁷ Yet Valerius' Medea cannot rejuvenate Aeson: he has already committed suicide at the end of book 1.²⁴⁸ Not only does this delineate a narrative course that must

²⁴⁴ If, of course, she actually has a choice; see Eigler (1991) 171.

²⁴⁵ Ov. *Met.* 7.94-7; Stadler (1993) 156; Ovid refers to the grove as belonging to Hecate at *Met.* 7.74.

²⁴⁶ Ov. *Met.* 7.177; A third and final use is at *Met.* 15.859 and is in relation to cosmic structures.

²⁴⁷ Cf. Ov. *Met.* 7.7-99; Auhagen (2004) 101.

²⁴⁸ Cf. Ov. *Ep.* 12.79 which features an oath by Medea involving the three formed goddess, this time as Diana: *triplicis vultus Dianae*. Ovid is here establishing a sinister note of revenge; Bessone (1997) 144.

omit the rejuvenation of Aeson, but it also jeopardises further elements of the Medea myth: without Aeson, Pelias' daughters cannot be inspired to ask for his restoration to youth. With the epithet *triformis*, Valerius subtly signals his awareness of the Medea tradition as his choice as an Argonautic poet; moreover, by destabilising the narrative he reflexively signals a space for his narrative that exists outside previous texts, foregrounding a metaliterary sensibility that allows for the possibility of literary transgression and textual variety.²⁴⁹

A further ominous intertext exists for the phrase *diva triformis*: Horace uses the phrase as an epithet for Diana in a hymn marking the dedication of a pine tree (Hor. *Carm.* 3.22.4), making explicit reference to Diana's role as a goddess of childbirth; a "natural assumption is that a child has been born to one of the women on H.'s estate and H. ... is making an offering to Diana for preserving the mother and child from death ... and promising an annual sacrifice if she protects the child".²⁵⁰ This intertext with Horace's depiction of this function of the *diva triformis* forces the reader of both Ovid and Valerius to confront the failure of the Diana aspect of the *diva triformis* to protect Medea's children.

Valerius' allusive technique unsettles the narrative by directing his readers to other variants of the myth; yet it also demonstrates the inescapable and tragic future which awaits Medea; as Trivia, the *diva triformis* implies many routes, but for Medea the destination will always be the same, forecast from the beginning of the poem within Jupiter's model of fate as well as by the intertextual foreshadowing that precedes Medea's appearance in the text. In the climax to the episode in the grove of Hecate Medea's *pudor* is finally overcome and under the eye of the Fury she enacts her first

²⁴⁹ Cf. Zissos (1999) 294; see above, p. 106. Cf. O'Hara (2007) 38-41 on games played with variants of the myth by Ovid and Catullus.

²⁵⁰ Quinn (1980) 282; Williams (1969) 118.

transgression against her family;²⁵¹ it is here that she abandons *pudor* to begin her journey towards the extreme witch who orchestrates the slaughter of her own children, sealing her own path:²⁵² *Inde ubi facta nocens et non revocabilis umquam / cessit ab ore pudor propiorque implevit Erinys*, 7.461-2 (“Then, when she was made guilty and shame had gone forever from her cheeks, and the nearby Fury mastered her”). Jason too lays the foundation for his own transgressions by making extravagant promises to Medea which Valerius’ readership knows he will not keep, and which unwittingly forecast the future destruction of his family: having already called her *coniunx* (7.497) he goes on to promise everlasting faithfulness to Medea, a promise overheard by the Fury who in turn promises retribution (7.501-10). Within the ominous landscape of the *locus horridus*, Valerius allows his protagonists to spell out their future and reinforces the tragedy that they cannot escape no matter which version of the myth is being recounted.

Valerius’ *Argonautica* foregrounds a complicated moral system in which transgression and ambiguity are established as recurrent themes, physically reflected through the landscapes of the *locus amoenus* and *locus horridus*. Moral ambiguities proliferate throughout the epic; Jason’s mother, the witch Alcimede, is positioned within a *locus horridus* landscape reminiscent of Erichtho’s Thessalian grove of *nefas*, foregrounding the lack of clear moral boundaries. Alcimede functions in the epic as a venerable counterpart to Medea’s youthful maiden; both command great power; both are in some way linked to Hecate as the triple-formed goddess, whose own ambiguity reflects this thematic strand in the poem;²⁵³ and, despite being vulnerable to outside

²⁵¹ Cf. 1.817: Aeson and Alcimede commit suicide watched over by the *Furiarium maxima*, and leaving Promachus to a violent death.

²⁵² Cf. Eigler (1991) 167-8.

²⁵³ Cf. 1.781.

forces, they both provide assistance to their male partners and offer them the opportunity to demonstrate their heroism.²⁵⁴ Ultimately, both are characterised as occupying a liminal moral space; Alcimede's actions are on the boundaries of transgressive behaviour, bringing to the epic a curious mix of piety and impiety. Valerius does not place Alcimede and Medea in contrast in order to juxtapose Scythian barbarism with Greek civilisation;²⁵⁵ rather, the affinity between the two problematises any attempt to define them as representing moral poles and represents a further aspect of Valerius' programme of humanising his epic protagonists. However, the *locus horridus* landscape also underscores Medea's association with witchcraft, and in particular, suggests her final transformation into an Erichthian figure, defined by her *nefas*.

In their reflexivity, the landscapes of the *Argonautica* not only invoke their notable textual predecessors, but also issue a challenge to pre-existing variants of the Medea myth, as well as to the epic paradigm offered by Vergil's *Aeneid*. The *locus amoenus* foregrounds Valerius' literary transgressions; and, as modified by Lucan and Erichtho, the *locus horridus* signifies not only the transgressions of the characters who occupy it, but also functions to counter the ideologically Vergilian outlook enunciated by Jupiter as he sets the *Argo* on its way. Thematically, transgression in the *Argonautica* runs in apposition to the *locus horridus*, activated by the topography and by the Lucanian themes which it evokes: shades of human sacrifice, fundamental to Lucan's conception of the *locus horridus* recur throughout Valerius' own depictions of the same landscape *topos*, introducing a note of moral ambivalence that resonates throughout his poem. Valerius exploits the overbearing resonance of Erichtho within this landscape, engaging with her witchcraft and her ability to manipulate space in order to complicate the relationship between Alcimede and Medea. This, however, is not to undermine these

²⁵⁴ Cf. 1.730ff; 1.762-6. Medea also identifies herself with Alcimede at 7.198-9; Stadler (1993) 84.

²⁵⁵ *Contra* Shreeves (1978) 188.

figures or to depict them as exulting in *nefas*: rather, Valerius uses Erictho as a connection between the two witches in order to suggest their multifaceted and complicated humanity; consequently, this contributes to a presentation of Medea as more than a cipher for revenge and excess.²⁵⁶ However, by continuing to deploy landscapes representative of cosmic ambivalence, Valerius maintains an unsettling tone: while he may complicate the picture of Medea's transgression at Colchis and the transgressions that will follow, he does not expiate her guilt and turn her solely into a victim.

²⁵⁶ Cf. Hull (1975) 20.

4: On a slippery slope: redefining epic landscape in the *Thebaid*

Statius' *Thebaid* depicts the fraternal conflict between the children of Oedipus, Polynices and Eteocles, as they contend for the rulership of Thebes; the poem explicitly engages with the themes of civil war, foregrounding familial and civil discord in *loca horrida* which directly engage with Lucan's landscapes of civil war. Having contrived a turn-based system of monarchy, Polynices leaves Thebes only to be denied rule of the city when he returns; thereafter, he takes his dispute to Argos where he recruits an army that includes the famous "Seven against Thebes" in order to take the throne by force. Initial motivation for the action of the poem comes from the blinded Oedipus cursing his sons and the city of Thebes (1.46-87): the curse is granted by Tisiphone and endorsed by Jupiter who appropriates the following events as part of a cosmic plan that is focussed upon punishing humanity for its crimes (1.214-27). The poem concludes with the Olympians absenting themselves, and Creon, having assumed the throne in place of the now deceased brothers, refusing to grant funerary rights to the Argive army. There follows a battle with Theseus, who has been petitioned by the women of Argos at the Athenian altar of Clementia to ensure that the dead receive proper burial.¹

The poem consistently refigures elements of Vergil's *Aeneid*; however, as with Valerius' *Argonautica*, Lucan's refiguration of poetic and spatial horizons exerts a pervasive influence upon the landscapes and themes of the *Thebaid*. Statius' *Thebaid* has an overt concern with civil war:² in this case, these are the *fraternae acies* (1.1) of Polynices and Eteocles. Following Lucan's depiction of Roman civil war, violence and *nefas* are inscribed into the topography of Statius' poem; *locus amoenus* and *horridus* landscapes evoke a sense of psychological, moral and cosmic ambiguity set against an

¹ Although Polynices' force is composed of armies from various cities, they are predominantly referred to by Statius as the Argives; I follow this designation of the armies allied against Thebes.

² Cf. Ahl (1986) 2814; Brown (1994) 5; Pollmann (2004) 28-31; McNelis (2007) 2-5; on Vergil, Cairns (1989) 92-3; Hardie (1993) 20-1.

overarching, positivistic Vergilian framework in which *pietas* and *furor* are directly opposed.³ Statius develops Lucan's rendition of hell on Earth, blurring the distinctions between the Olympians and the Underworld and giving prominence to the excesses of *furor*, realised allegorically and metaphorically through the actions of the Furies, whose independent activity lies unbounded by the Olympians;⁴ consequently, Polynices and Eteocles find themselves divided and brought into destructive alignment by their impious fraternal hatred.⁵ Statius retains the divine apparatus of traditional Roman epic;⁶ where Lucan's gods do not care to involve themselves in the *Bellum Civile*, those of the *Thebaid* constantly intervene, only to attain mixed results: rather than appearing as Vergilian gods of reason and justice, the Olympians in the *Thebaid* are rendered as Ovidian beings capable of great and arbitrary acts of violence.⁷ Frequently, the Olympians appear to be aligned with the rule of the Underworld and the gods of *nefas*; moreover, both the gods of Olympus and those of the Underworld appear to be subordinated to the Furies' invidious machinations.⁸ Statius deploys landscapes in the *Thebaid* in order to intensify the concordance between the Olympians and the Underworld: Statius conflates the *locus amoenus* and *horridus*, transforming geographical space so that it encompasses both heaven and hell upon Earth; however, divine and human *nefas* result in the dominance of the *locus horridus*, resulting in Lucanian landscapes redolent of chaos which give impetus to the Furies as they operate with greater independence than their counterpart Allecto in the *Aeneid*.

³ Hardie (1993) 58ff. Cf. Boyle (1993b) 84; Cairns (1989) 68-77, 82-4; Feeney (1991) 162ff.; Kennedy (1997) 150-1. Cf. Hershkowitz (1998b) 112ff. on the exploitation of *furor* and hell by the Olympians in the *Aeneid*.

⁴ Pollmann (2001) 13; Hershkowitz (1998b) 247ff.; cf. Fantham (1997) 204; Feeney (1991) 345, 364ff.; Dominik (1994) 18-9.

⁵ See above, p. 74. Hardie (1993) 58-87; cf. Feeney (1991) 347-51, 376-7; Ganiban (2007) 30-2, 113ff.; McNelis (2007) 36; on Thebes as an ideal locus for the transgression of boundaries, Henderson (1998) 223-4, after Zeitlin (1990) 130-67; Cf. Fantham (1997) 211.

⁶ Although the Olympians cease involvement at 11.134-5, when Jupiter deems the warfare to be too impious to be witnessed; Braund (1996) 15; Feeney (1991) 356, 364ff.

⁷ Dominik (1994) 8. Cf. Keith (2002) 394-5.

⁸ Cf. Feeney (1991) 345, 377.

The blurring of boundaries, between *locus amoenus* and *horridus* as well as between the divinities of heaven and hell, reflects a persistent thematic concern in the *Thebaid* with boundaries. The *Thebaid*, in common with other Latin epic poems, is in many ways constructed around a series of dualities and dichotomies (such as the conflict between Polynices and Eteocles,⁹ as well as the apparent conflict between the *nefas* of Thebes and the civilising effect of Theseus as the end of the poem).¹⁰ Statius' collapse of the boundaries between pleasant and unpleasant landscapes functions as a metaphor for the wider, cosmic collapse of the boundaries between heaven and hell; this iterates Statius' thematic interest in moral ambiguity.¹¹

It has been persuasively argued that the *Thebaid* engages with its epic predecessors in order to depict Thebes as a mirror image to the positive *telos* of the city of Rome; Pollmann has suggested that the *Thebaid* is an epic of ‘“anti-piety”’,¹² ‘“destruction and peril”’,¹³ set in direct contrast to Vergil's epic of pious Aeneas' success in establishing the Trojans in Italy. This is achieved not only through the implicit parallels between Rome and Thebes, with shared mythological backgrounds in fraternal strife,¹⁴ but also through the poetic juxtaposition of Vergilian episodes in the *Thebaid*. One such example of this technique is the self-contained Hoplesus and Dymas episode,¹⁵ ‘“which does not have any consequences for the development of the main action and which introduces a moral alternative which is opposite to the otherwise dominant view of the narrative”’.¹⁶ This functions as a counterpart to Vergil's Nisus and Euryalus narrative,¹⁷

⁹ Brown (1994) 5ff.

¹⁰ Vessey (1973) 307ff.; Braund (1996) 8-15; Pollmann (2004) 37-43; cf. McNelis (2007) 160ff.; Ganiban (2007) 5, 34.

¹¹ McNelis (2007) 128-30; Feeney (1991) 347; Hill (1990) 108; cf. Dominik (1994) 35-6; Ganiban (2007) 38.

¹² Pollmann (2001) 16.

¹³ *Ibid.* 27.

¹⁴ Ahl (1986) 2812-4; Dominik (1990) 74-5; Henderson (1993) 165; Newlands (2004) 136; Pollmann (2004) 11-7; 28-31. Cf. Vessey (1973) 63-4.

¹⁵ 10.347-448.

¹⁶ Cf. Hom. *Od.* 8.266-369; Pollmann (2001) 25.

reflecting the original dualism of the Vergilian model (which ended negatively, in contrast to the *Aeneid*'s overall framework of positive teleology). Statius' Hopfeus and Dymas episode inverts this by ending positively within the negative structure of his *Thebaid*. For an epic in which stress is continually laid on the importance of funerary arrangements, Dymas' use of his own body to guarantee Hopfeus a tomb is portrayed as successful self-sacrifice; yet this comes within an epic in which frustrated attempts at appropriate burial arrangements become emblematic of social and political disharmony. The episode is therefore to be taken as running counter to the grain of the epic's overall movement, and the positive conclusion of the episode is ultimately meaningless within the overall negativity of the *Thebaid*.¹⁸ The Statian episode is in marked contrast to that of the *Aeneid*: the ultimate *telos* of the *Thebaid* is the destruction of Thebes rather than the foundation of Rome, and where the *Aeneid* points to the glories of the Augustan *aurea saecula* (Verg. A. 6.792-3), Thebes instead offers a negative parallel demonstrating the political and moral destruction of Rome under the Principate.¹⁹ Euryalus and Nisus sacrifice themselves for nothing, but they live on in Vergil's text for their part in establishing the Roman empire.²⁰ Hopfeus and Dymas, on the other hand "cannot...be linked...with the glory and perpetuity of the Roman empire", despite the more positive conclusion of their adventure; they can, however, be linked with the "perpetual reality of the literary world",²¹ where the two are explicitly linked with the poetic fame of the *Aeneid*'s Nisus and Euryalus (10.445-8).

Further, Statius' poetics set up polarities within the Latin epic canon; just as Thebes is an anti- or not-Rome,²² Statius uses a spatial metaphor to distinguish between his

¹⁷ Verg. A. 9.176-449.

¹⁸ Pollmann (2001) 23-4.

¹⁹ Cf. Dominik (1994) 130ff.

²⁰ Pollmann (2001) 27.

²¹ *Ibid.* 28.

²² Ganiban (2007) 43. Cf. Pollmann (2001) 16; McNelis (2007) 5.

Thebaid and Vergil's epic, making his poem a not-*Aeneid* by asking the poem to refrain from making an incursion into the poetic space occupied by Vergil's poem:²³ although epic poetry is a form of poetic *aristeia* as the poet strives along with his heroes for glory in what is the highest of the ancient genres,²⁴ Statius makes the poem the subject of an apostrophe that disclaims any desire to occupy the position of pre-eminence and lays down boundaries for the poem's relationship with the *Aeneid*: *vive, precor; nec tu divinam Aeneida tempta, / sed longe sequere et vestigia semper adora*, 12.816-7 ("live, I pray; and do not rival the divine *Aeneid*, but always adoring, follow far in her footsteps").²⁵ Yet this too is an instance of boundaries becoming ambiguous; Thebes may literally be a not-Rome spatially separated from the imperial city, but figuratively the city can be understood as standing for a particular political and moral vision of Rome that inverts the positive version of the city enunciated in the *Aeneid* to confront it with a negative vision of the self.²⁶ Similarly, Statius' vocal and vehement statement that whatever the *Thebaid* is, it is not the *Aeneid*, can be read as an implicit challenge upon the *Aeneid*'s position within Roman culture;²⁷ this is evident in the context of further remarks by Statius in which he states that the *Thebaid* has begun to supplant the *Aeneid* as a school text and has found favour with the current occupant of the imperial throne just as the *Aeneid* found favour with Augustus (and just as the *Metamorphoses*, another poem that ends with a statement concerning poetic fame, may not have done).²⁸ Far from enforcing a boundary between these texts, Statius' apostrophe encompasses his poem within the same poetic landscape as his predecessor,²⁹ enclosed by the same

²³ Cf. Hardie (1990b) 225-6.

²⁴ Boyle (1993a) 4-5; cf. Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.85ff. ; although this is also qualified by the rhetorical *topos* of modest self-reference, cf. Pollmann (2004) 288; cf. Hardie (1993) 110.

²⁵ Pollmann (2004) 288; Vessey (1973) 4. Cf. *Ov. Met.* 15.871-9.

²⁶ Cf. McNelis (2007) 5; Pollmann (2001) 15-6.

²⁷ Quint (1993) 132-4; Ganiban (2007) 2-3; Braund (1996) 5; Pagán (2000) 445.

²⁸ *Stat. Theb.* 12.812-5.

²⁹ Cf. Ahl (1986) 2808, 2821.

literary and spatial horizons, albeit with a more overtly pessimistic outlook: as the *locus horridus* and the *locus amoenus* contaminate one another with the result that they simultaneously occupy the same geographical space, Statius moves the *Thebaid* to occupy the ground previously held by the *Aeneid*. In doing so, the *Thebaid* engages with the polarised conflict between the Trojans and Italians in order to expose the civil warfare and *fraternae acies* that exist at the very foundation of Rome itself.³⁰

Landscape in the *Thebaid* reflects the poem's negative political and social outlook and this derives further from an engagement with the representation of topography in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Keith has suggested that treatment of landscape in Latin epic reflects social and political aspects of Roman rule,³¹ and Newlands has described the manner in which change in the landscapes of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is characterised by "hope and consolation" despite the frequency of violence;³² yet the violent change wreaked upon the landscape of the *Thebaid* brings about no positive change and reinforces a sense of the ubiquitous evil of human brutality.³³ Newlands focuses on three *loca amoena* to demonstrate this point: the grove of Diana; the episode depicting the Argive army at Nemea; and the battle of Hippomedon against Crenaeus in the river Ismenos, contending that the *locus amoenus* in these episodes engages with the work of Ovid to demonstrate a world in which the Olympian gods have been rendered impotent,³⁴ and in which the "damage inflicted upon the state by civil discord is figured graphically in the suffering, violated landscape, in the dissolution of the Ovidian *locus amoenus*".³⁵

³⁰ Brown (1994) 5ff.

³¹ Keith (2000) 36-64.

³² Cf. Newlands (2004) 153.

³³ *Ibid.* 152-4. Cf. Ahl (1986) 2905; also Segal (1969) 71-85; Parry (1964) 282.

³⁴ Newlands (2004) 141.

³⁵ *Ibid.* 154.

Ultimately, damage inflicted upon *loca amoena* creates *loca horrida* in their place, reflecting the slide in the poem towards *nefas* and *furor*. Diana's grove, unmistakably a *locus amoenus* of distinctive beauty and artifice in the *Metamorphoses*,³⁶ is rendered in the *Thebaid* as a darker landscape which loses its Ovidian deceptiveness. Although a place for Diana to rest in safety in the *Metamorphoses*,³⁷ Statius' grove suggests that the goddess is now powerless to prevent human entrance;³⁸ Diana also lacks her huntress attendants. The goddess sleeps armed and surrounded by spears, emphasising her martial nature, yet also suggesting the susceptibility of her grove to violence and the need for the goddess to protect herself:³⁹

*silva capax aevi validaque incurva senecta,
aeternum intonsae frontis, stat pervia nullis
solibus; haud illam brumae minuere, Notusve
ius habet aut Getica Boreas inpactus ab Ursa.
subter operta quies, vacuusque silentia servat
horror et exclusae pallet male lucis imago.
nec caret umbra deo: nemori Latonia cultrix
additur; haec picae cedrique et robore in omni
effictam sanctis occultat silva tenebris.
huius inaspectae luco stridere sagittae
nocturnique canum gemitus, ubi limina patru
effugit inque novae melior redit ora Dianae*

(*Theb.* 4.419-30)

There stands a wood, enduring time and bent by formidable old age, with leaves forever uncut, penetrated by no suns; winters did not diminish it, nor the South wind have power over it, nor the North wind coming down from the Getic Bear. Underneath is secret silence, and an empty terror protects the quiet and a facsimile of the excluded light casts a gloomy pallor. Neither does the shade lack a god: Latonia is attached to the grove as its inhabitant; this grove hides in its sacred gloom her image carved in pine, cedar and every tree. Her arrows whistle unseen in the grove and the howls of her dogs by night, when she escapes the boundaries of her uncle and returns improved to the face of a new Diana.

As with other instances of the *locus horridus*, the grove of Diana invokes the schematic model for the *locus amoenus*: the grove is shady and numinous, offering an escape from the hot sun: yet in addition to emphasising the age of the grove over the freshness of the *locus amoenus*, Statius also places emphasis on the elements lacking from the grove that

³⁶ Cf. Brown (1994) 14.

³⁷ Both Statius' and Ovid's groves are places for the goddess to sleep; Ov. *Met.* 3.163-4; Stat. *Theb.* 4.431-3.

³⁸ Newlands (2004) 140-1.

³⁹ *Ibid.* 139.

would make it a *locus amoenus*, such as the lack of any breeze; similarly, the centrepiece pool of the *Metamorphoses* is missing and the grove is definitively established as impenetrable to sun and wind, forming a contrast with the Ovidian grove which is susceptible to physical penetration by Actaeon.⁴⁰ Artifice is present in the grove, not as beautifully sculpted nature, but as iconographic representations of the goddess herself, who is thereby rendered as part of the terrifying *locus horridus*. This is appropriate given Diana's capacity for inspiring dread and destruction, as well as her savage and violent response to interlopers in her grove such as Actaeon in the *Metamorphoses*; however, aesthetically this is the very antithesis of the *locus amoenus* from Ovid's poem.⁴¹

Diana's grove in the *Thebaid* functions not only as home to the divinity, but is also the location for a necromantic ritual performed by Tiresias on behalf of Eteocles. Prior to Statius' depiction of the grove, portents have signalled the battle that is to come;⁴² following this, Eteocles seeks Tiresias to discover the meaning of the portents (4.406ff.). Tiresias articulates the primacy of necromancy, debunking other forms of prophecy such as augury and Delphic prophecy (4.409-14), and reiterating the power of necromancy by attributing its efficacy to the fact that it breaks the boundaries between life and death (4.413-4). Consequently, this reiterates Lucan's account of Sextus' rejection of oracular prophecy and augury;⁴³ it is Erictho's manner of interacting with the supernatural that is ascendant in the *Thebaid*. Moreover, even though Diana is a named Olympian goddess, the topography of the grove recalls the "sacred horror" of Lucan's Massilian landscape, particularly by means of the carved representations of the goddess which recall the carved icons of the unknown barbarian gods of the Massilian

⁴⁰ Cf. Lucanian "negative enumeration"; Martindale (1980) 374.

⁴¹ Cf. Newlands (2004) 140.

⁴² Cf. 4.377-405.

⁴³ Luc. 6.423-30. Cf. Vessey (1973) 237.

grove.⁴⁴ The grove itself, dark, impenetrable and numinous, lies next to the plain of Mars, a landscape *molliā sanguine*, 4.437 (“blood-softened”), *vivoque placent sola pinguia tabo*, 4.444 (“soils fat with living gore are pleasing [to Tiresias]”); this field bears some resemblance to the field of Pharsalus, scoured by Erictho in her search for a body to use in her own necromancy. Diana’s grove, therefore, is redolent of the civil war *loca horrida* that populate the topography of the *Bellum Civile*; this is, of course, the site of Cadmus’ original crop of the earth-born men, whose own *fraternae acies* gave birth to the cycle of civil war at Thebes, and the shades of these figures continue to haunt the area (4.438-42).⁴⁵ It is a suitable place for Tiresias’ necromancy,⁴⁶ utilising the topographical symbolism of the grove as well as its intertextual resonance in order to foreground the violent character of this savage Olympian and, more generally, of the poem’s subject.

Moreover, by establishing that this grove belongs to Diana, Statius not only signals the relevance of Ovid’s *locus amoenus*, but also invokes the more sinister aspect of the goddess as a denizen of the Underworld: *ubi limina patruī / effugit inque novae melior redit ora Dianae* (4.429-30) invokes the relationship of Diana with Dis, and while the reference is to the transformation of Hecate into Diana on her return from the Underworld (“a new Diana”), it nonetheless prioritises the persona of Diana as a savage and strange goddess of the Underworld; indeed, Hecate is embedded within the ritual landscape (as are the Furies, Dis and Ceres) when Tiresias consecrates several hearths (4.455-7). Both the hellish topography and its divine occupant therefore encapsulate the collapsing boundaries and resultant tensions that exist between the Olympian gods and the forces of the Underworld in Statius’ poem;⁴⁷ moreover, the Ovidian intertext

⁴⁴ Above, p. 49; Newlands (2004) 139; cf. Masters (1992) 25ff.; Leigh (1999) 171-3.

⁴⁵ Cf. Luc. 6.395-412: Thessaly is the birthplace of warfare.

⁴⁶ Cf. Brown (1994) 13-4.

⁴⁷ Cf. Feeney (1991) 347.

foregrounds the transformation of *locus amoenus* to *horridus* and reinforces the savage character of Olympian Diana's behaviour in the *Metamorphoses*,⁴⁸ while Lucan's Erictho remains in the background.

Underlying the relationship between the infernal gods and the Olympians is the free-ranging ubiquity of the Fury Tisiphone, invoked at several points in the necromantic narrative that follows the depiction of the grove (i.e. 4.455-7, 486, 633, 643). Reference to the Furies sustains the atmosphere of *nefas* that pervades the *Thebaid*. Lucan's *Bellum Civile* represents the transformation of the Earth into a hell dominated by the gods of chaos and destruction in which the Olympians either fail or are unable to check the slide into *nefas*;⁴⁹ in the *Thebaid*, Jupiter maintains a rhetoric of order which claims to have motivated the war on behalf of justice and his cosmic plan, yet he too will ultimately abrogate his responsibility and turn over conduct of the war to the Furies and the gods of the Underworld.⁵⁰

It is during Tiresias' necromancy in the grove that the ghost of Laius claims that Thebes will "win" the war; however, Laius avoids the question of which brother will triumph: "*certa est Victoria Thebis, / ne trepida, nec regna ferox germanus habebit, sed Furiae geminumque nefas miserosque per ensis, / ei mihi! crudelis vincit pater*", 4.641-4 (" 'The Victory of Thebes is foregone, do not be afraid; neither shall your fierce brother have the reign, but the Furies and a doubled wickedness and, through wretched swords, ah me! the cruel father is triumphant' ").⁵¹ Oedipus' curse is fulfilled by the

⁴⁸ Cf. Dominik (1990) on Jupiter's savage character in the *Thebaid*, 1, 4, 7-9, 20, *passim*.

⁴⁹ Ganiban (2007) 36-8.

⁵⁰ 11.120-35: "*auferte oculos!*"; the Furies themselves turn over conduct of the war to humanity, after they inspire a brutality that exceeds their own, 11.537-40. Cf. Hardie (1993) 79; Ganiban (2007) 110ff.; Feeney (1991) 344-351; *contra* Vessey (1973) 231-2, 263-4 who sees a confluence of interest between the Olympians and their infernal counterparts. Cf. Dominik (1994) 33-6, 39-40, who views the Furies and the Underworld gods as fulfilling the savage will of Jupiter. Jupiter claims overall responsibility for the events of the *Thebaid* at 1.197-247; cf. Vessey (1973) 82-91; Hill (1990) 116; Feeney (1991) 345-64; Dominik (1994) 26ff.

⁵¹ Cf. Vessey (1973) 234; Dominik (1994) 72-3.

Fury Tisiphone, whose *furor sine fine*⁵² dominates the poem.⁵³ Tisiphone's victory of excess is associated with both the Olympians as well as the gods of the Underworld, making every actor in the poem complicit as she gratuitously exceeds all boundaries and norms. In the *Thebaid* the three spheres, human, Olympian and Underworld are contiguous, and the boundaries between them are fluid; thus, Diana's grove is a liminal space that exists as a conduit between the spheres and that achieves emblematic status for Statius' approach to the cosmic landscape and his poetic predecessors.⁵⁴ The reminder that Hecate and Diana are aspects of the same Olympian goddess serves to emphasise the ambiguity of the gods throughout the poem and undermines claims to order and control made by Jupiter on behalf of his wider cosmic plan: indeed, Jupiter's own hellish persona is revealed through the poem's references to Pluto as an Underworld equivalent to Jupiter and other Olympians.⁵⁵ While the two divine brothers clash in a reflection of the poem's human *fraternalis acies*,⁵⁶ their goals are frequently in alignment, eliding the distinctions between heaven and hell: and the Furies, in a manner that recall Erictho and Lucan's unknown gods of chaos, appear to have free reign to sow chaos wherever it suits them, although nominally this is in line with the goals of both Jupiter and Pluto.

Diana's grove is a liminal space, a *locus horridus* which intensifies the sense of moral transgression and ambiguity; moreover, it acts as an intertextual point of contact between Statius' necromancy and that of Lucan's *Bellum Civile*. Moreover, the topography of the grove also mediates a relationship between Statius' Diana and the

⁵² Hershkovitz (1998b) 247; with apologies to Vergil and Debra Hershkovitz (who entitles a chapter 'Furor Without Limits').

⁵³ Hershkovitz (1995) 58-9; Hershkovitz (1998b) 261.

⁵⁴ Cf. the topographically similar *locus horridus* at Taenarus (1.94-6; also 2.32-88), where Tisiphone and Mercury cross the boundaries between upper and lower worlds (although Taenarus has a traditional reputation as an access-point to the Underworld; cf. Sen. *Her. F.* 663ff.; *Oed.* 171; Vessey (1973) 232).

⁵⁵ Stat. *Theb.* 2.49; 8.82-3; 11.410ff.; Dominik (1994) 35; Ganiban (2007) 118-23.

⁵⁶ Cf. Dominik (2007) 523, who draws contemporary parallels to the relationships between imperial brothers.

recurring figure of Hecate in Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica*:⁵⁷ Hecate is a primal motivational force within the *Argonautica*, persistently involved in the poem's preoccupation with the crimes of intra-familial strife. Yet her presence within the *Argonautica* is deeply ambiguous, functioning as patron goddess to both the morally praiseworthy Alcimedea as well as to Medea. Hecate is specifically invoked at several points in Tiresias' necromantic ceremony;⁵⁸ moreover, Tiresias makes reference to his necromantic predecessors in a moment which recalls Erichtho's threat to the gods of the Underworld: *cassusne sacerdos / audior? an, rabido iubeat si Thessala cantu, / ibitis et Scythicis quotiens medicata venenis / Colchis aget, trepido pallebunt Tartara motu,* 4.503-6, ("Am I, the priest, heard with no effect? Or can it really be that, if a Thessalian witch with her rabid chant commands, you will come, or whenever a Colchian drugged with Scythian potions drives, Tartarus will turn pallid with shuddering fear?").

Allusions to two of the most notorious witches of Latin epic and classical mythology are established within the space of Diana's *locus horridus*: Erichtho, the Thessalian witch, and Medea, the maiden of Colchis who employed Scythian herbs in her magical concoctions. Both of these witches feature prominently in similar landscapes and narratives in the *Bellum Civile* or Valerius' *Argonautica*, and Medea is a common mythological reference in texts such as the *Aeneid*, as well as making appearances in the Hellenistic *Argonautica* of Apollonius Rhodius, numerous works by Ovid, and the tragedies of Euripides and Seneca. Yet this overlooks another important intertext for Tiresias' necromancy: Alcimedea, the Thessalian witch who ends book one of the *Argonautica* with a necromancy that occurs in another liminal *locus horridus*.⁵⁹ Alcimedea is an ambiguous figure in the *Argonautica*; while she is clearly a model for

⁵⁷ Note that Tiresias enjoys a close relationship with Hecate, 4.540-3.

⁵⁸ Stat. *Theb.* 4.515; 541.

⁵⁹ Above, p. 92.

pious behaviour, she is nonetheless a member of the *gens nefanda* (*Arg.* 1.779),⁶⁰ whose patron is the goddess Hecate. Unlike her kinswoman Erictho, however, Alcimedede cannot escape the all-consuming nature of civil war: she is caught up with her husband in Pelias' desire to destroy Jason, just as Medea is caught up in the violence between her family and Jason, resulting in familial betrayal and bloodshed. Moreover, Statius' deployment of the Fury also has a model in Valerius' depiction of Medea's psychological transformation from *amor* to *furor*, as Medea's transformation also includes her submission to the will of the Fury.⁶¹ In the witches Medea and Alcimedede, therefore, Valerius' *Argonautica* foregrounds the intra-familial strife that informs the civil war narrative of Statius' *Thebaid*; further, Alcimedede provides an example of a morally exemplary figure who is regardless caught up in a world of *nefas* and dissolution; Tiresias may be, as Vessey maintains, a morally positive figure:⁶² but an underlying note of disquiet exists in his connection to the spaces of the Underworld and ability to manipulate its inhabitants.

Further, in the *Argonautica* Alcimedede represents a fusion of civilisation and barbarism: the spatial movement of the *Argo* fulfils Jupiter's plan to open up the world to trade and civilisation;⁶³ yet Alcimedede's status as a witch aligns her with Medea and the barbarians of Scythia. Roman epic is frequently predicated upon a positivist understanding of history that is based upon the geographical transfer of power from east (Asia and Greece) to west (Rome);⁶⁴ Valerius' *Argonautica* simultaneously problematises this (with the *Argo*'s counter-movement to the east, Alcimedede's presence in the west and the brutality of Pelias) whilst affirming it (the Fleece is recovered from

⁶⁰ Cf. Stat. *Theb.* 3.140-1: *Thessalis...cui gentile nefas hominem revocare canendo.*

⁶¹ V. Fl. *Arg.* 7.461-6; Medea's transformation also takes place within Hecate's grove, depicted as a *locus horridus*. Above, p. 134.

⁶² Vessey (1973) 254.

⁶³ Cf. Zissos (2005) 504-5.

⁶⁴ Cf. Verg. *A.* 1.256-96; 4.229-31; Zetzl (1997) 190.

the east and brought west; Jupiter's statements). Even the *Bellum Civile* showcases a form of spatial movement from west to east.⁶⁵ Statius' epic differs from these poems in that the geographical movement of the poem is spatially centred upon and limited to Greece,⁶⁶ and Jupiter never articulates a divine plan that fits the Theban war into a positivistic progress to determine the ultimate wielders of earthly power; however, intertextual resonances with the *Argonautica* serve as reminders that barbarity and civilisation can be coterminous elements within a single state or individual, such as Alcimedede; as a result, the essential ambiguity of Thebes is represented within the metaphorical space(s) that links and separates the witches Erictho/Medea/Alcimedede, or their patroness(es) Diana/Hecate, as well as the physical space between and within the *locus amoenus/horridus*.

4.1: A displeasure to behold: Greek landscapes in the *Thebaid*

From the first book of the *Thebaid* Statius foregrounds the *locus horridus* and the influence of the Underworld upon the Greek landscape; the landscapes of the poem foreground moral ambivalence and graphically illustrate the infernal *furor of fraternae acies*.⁶⁷ The poem begins with Oedipus' curse on his children and prayer to Tisiphone,⁶⁸ in which he emphasises her close relationship with his family, before shifting from Thebes to the Underworld landscape which she inhabits, and from where she will initiate the action of the poem in a cruel parody of Juno's motivational impetus for the *Aeneid*.⁶⁹ The Underworld conforms with traditional representations, as the Fury sits

⁶⁵ See above, p. 39.

⁶⁶ Indeed, it has been suggested that as part of the motif of *mora* or delay in the *Thebaid*, the poem frustrates geographical as well as teleological movement; see Brown (1994) 4.

⁶⁷ Cf. Dominik (1994) 63; Ganiban (2007) 13.

⁶⁸ Feeney (1991) 345-6.

⁶⁹ Cf. Hershkowitz (1998b) 261.

beside the *inamoenus Cocytos* (1.89-90) upon *tristibus ripis*, 1.93 (“gloomy banks”).⁷⁰

Staius’ Tisiphone passes between the human and infernal spheres,⁷¹ and this is a familiar journey to her (*notum iter*, 1.101);⁷² however, on this occasion Tisiphone herself causes changes to the fabric of the landscape:⁷³

*ut stetit, abrupta qua plurimus arce Cithaeron
occurrit caelo, fera sibila crine virenti
congeminat, signum terris, unde omnis Aethaei
ora maris late Pelopeaque regna resultant.
audit et medius caeli Parnassos et asper
Eurotas, dubiamque iugo fragor inpulit Oeten
in latus, et geminis vix fluctibus obstetit Isthmos.*

(1.114-20)

When she stood, having stopped short where mighty Cithaeron with precipitous peak runs into heaven, with green hair she multiplies her fierce hisses, a sign for the earth, whence the entire coast of the Aethaeian sea and the kingdom of Pelops echo wide. Parnassus, halfway to the sky, heard it, and rough Eurotas, and the noise buffeted Oeta’s unsteady range sideways, and the Isthmus hardly withstood it with its waves on both sides.

Although the landscape is revealed to be relatively unscathed by Tisiphone’s passage, this resistance is marginal. By breaking the barrier between Earth and Underworld Tisiphone initiates a process which replicates Hades in the human world,⁷⁴ and creates a version of Greek topography which emulates Staius’ depiction of Oedipus’ physical and psychological confinement:⁷⁵ Oedipus’ psyche is a darkened space of restriction occupied only by his desire for revenge. Staius’ *locus horridus* retains its role as a physical manifestation of psychological horror,⁷⁶ linked by Oedipus’ motivational

⁷⁰ Above, p. 31.

⁷¹ Although note that in this case, Tisiphone responds to Oedipus’ curse; she does not receive license from one of the Olympians to wreak havoc (whatever Jupiter may claim later in the poem; cf. Allecto and Juno in the *Aeneid*), but she also does not act solely on her own initiative. Significantly, the Fury responds faster than Jupiter, 1.92-3.

⁷² Feeney (1991) 343-4; it is also a familiar literary journey, as Staius recalls Ovid’s depiction of Tisiphone in the *Metamorphoses*, Keith (2002) 395-6; Newlands (2004) 138.

⁷³ Cf. 1.106: Staius makes reference to the ability of Thessalian witches (such as Erictho) to transform landscape.

⁷⁴ Feeney (1991) 347-9. Cf. Ov. *Met.* 4.486-8.

⁷⁵ 1.49-52.

⁷⁶ Above, p. 64.

impetus to the civil discord and *fraternae acies* of Polynices and Eteocles, particularly as it is described by an unnamed Theban citizen.⁷⁷

The council of the gods also engages with the topography of the poem (1.197-311): the chamber in which the council takes place has a vantage of all earthly landscape (1.199-201), and natural elements of landscape such as rivers are in attendance.⁷⁸ Finally the *locus horridus* impinges upon the council itself: firstly, Jupiter swears an oath on the Styx and upon his brother Dis' realm (*horrendos...latices*, 1.290), refocusing attention on the motivational force of the Underworld; secondly, Jupiter orders Mercury to retrieve Laius from the Underworld in order to use him to provoke warfare on Earth. Yet Jupiter, for all his commands and apparent power, is in fact constrained by the laws of the Underworld in a manner which involves interaction with landscape in both the upper and lower worlds; Laius can be recalled because of an infraction against the laws of the Underworld has meant that he has not fully crossed the boundary into the Underworld: *superas senior se adtollat ad auras / Laius, extinctum nati quem vulnere nondum / ulterior Lethes accepit ripa profundi / lege Erebi*, 1.295-8 ("may old Laius climb to the upper sphere; Laius, whom, killed by the cut of his son, Lethe's far bank has not yet received by deep Erebus' law"). Functioning as an analogue for Tisiphone's journey from the Underworld to the Earth, Mercury's journey into the Underworld resumes in the second book of the poem.

Thereafter the action of book 1 shifts to depict Polynices crossing a landscape in which the pleasance has been subordinated to the *locus horridus*, and the landscape matches the disturbed psychological state of Polynices;⁷⁹ again, Statius alludes to the

⁷⁷ 1.164-96.

⁷⁸ 1.206.

⁷⁹ 1.316-9.

potential presence of the Fury, reiterating the relationship between the human world and the Underworld.⁸⁰

*spes anxia mentem
extrahit et longo consumit gaudia voto.
tunc sedet Inachias urbes Danaeiaeque arva
et caligantes abrupto sole Mycenae
ferre iter inpavidum, seu praevia ducit Erinyes,
seu fors illa viae, sive hac inmota vocabat
Atropos. Ogygiis ululata furoribus antra
deserit et pingues Baccheo sanguine colles.
inde plagam, qua molle sedens in plana Cithaeron
porrigitur lassumque inclinat ad aequora montem,
praeterit.*

(1.322-32)

Uneasy hope drags out his soul and boundless with want consumes his joy. Then he purposes to bear his way fearlessly to the cities of Inachus and the fields of Danaë and Mycenae made dark by the halted sun, whether he is led by a guiding Fury, or whether is it the luck of the road, or whether unrelenting Atropos was calling him that way. He exits the grottoes, howling with Ogygian *furor* and hills fat with Bacchic gore. From there he passes the plain where Cithaeron stretches out, lying gently on the flat and inclines his tired slope towards the sea.

Not only does the landscape physically represent Polynices' fractured psychology, but Statius uses geography to mark out a mythological topography of violence in Greece,⁸¹ which includes familial crimes including Atreus' murder and preparation of Thyestes' sons as a meal in Mycenae (325), and the strife that occurred between Danaë, her father, and Perseus (324);⁸² there is also a reference to the murder of Pentheus at Thebes by a group of Bacchanals (including his mother) who had been inspired to frenzy.⁸³ Despite the promise of respite that suggests that the evening will bring a return of the cool stillness of the *locus amoenus*,⁸⁴ this is frustrated as the skies are filled with stormy weather (1.342-63). Moreover, the Greek landscape is ravaged by the weather in a land-based version of Aeneas' trial by sea-storm in the first book of the *Aeneid*,⁸⁵ notably, there is no divine involvement other than a few indirect references to the wind gods

⁸⁰ Although cf. Feeney (1991) 349.

⁸¹ Cf. 1.1ff.: Statius contemplates the many points at which he could begin his tale.

⁸² Cf. also Scylla's betrayal of her father, 1.333.

⁸³ 1.328: *Ogygiis furoribus*. Cf. Caviglia (1973) 124.

⁸⁴ 1.336-8.

⁸⁵ Cf. 1.370-5: a simile comparing Polynices to a mariner. Cf. Verg. A. 81-156.

Auster and Boreas (who appear to act independently of the Olympians⁸⁶). Significantly, the landscapes affected by the storm include Arcadia (1.356), an archetypal *locus amoenus*, as well as Nemea (1.355), which features later as the most significant pleasured in the poem;⁸⁷ the storm, like so much else in the poem, is characterised by excess and broken limits, as rivers flood (1.358-60) and the winds range across the landscape (1.361-3).

Rocks “fleeing” from the mountainside suggest the violence of the storm against the landscape;⁸⁸ and Polynices is terrified by the *opaca nemorum* which are home to wild beasts (1.369-82). Yet Polynices’ passage across the landscape is equally violent: *non segnus amens / incertusque viae per nigra silentia vastum / haurit iter*, 1.367-9 (“disturbed and uncertain of the way through the silent darkness, not lazily did he devour the way”). Even the potential *locus amoenus* of Juno’s grove outside Argos is subverted: its pools are black marshes, and it has been exposed to great heat (1.382-89). Yet despite the *locus horridus* outside the city, Polynices finds Argos unmarred by the dynastic squabbles of Thebes (1.390-1); rather than two sons, Adrastus has two daughters who are destined to be married to Polynices and to another traveller, Tydeus, who will initially fight with Polynices at Argos before aligning himself with the Theban.⁸⁹ King Adrastus explains the origin of the Apolline rituals the Argives are celebrating: this aetiological narrative states the arbitrary nature of divine power in the *Thebaid*, and functions as a counterpart to Evander’s narration of Hercules’ battle with Cacus.⁹⁰ Yet where Hercules removes the monstrous Cacus from a *locus horridus* on the site of Rome,⁹¹ Statius’ aetiology is fractured and disturbing: Apollo appears to

⁸⁶ Cf. Verg. A. 1.50-80: Juno asks Aeolus to create a storm.

⁸⁷ See below, p. 165.

⁸⁸ 1.364: *modo saxa iugis fugientia ruptis*.

⁸⁹ 1.401-46.

⁹⁰ Heuvel (1932) 243; Caviglia (1973) 149. Ganiban (2007) 13ff.

⁹¹ Above, p. 32. Cf. V. Fl. 4.133ff., above, p. 122.

capriciously remove the chthonic Python from a *locus amoenus* by the Castalian spring at Delphi;⁹² moreover, his actions in raping the daughter of Crotopus, taking excessive vengeance following her death, and working with a Fury to create the agent of that revenge,⁹³ appear arbitrary and unreasonable, despite Adrastus' praise of the god as just (1.661-2, 694-720).⁹⁴ Coroebus offers himself to Apollo in order to expiate his murder of the monster sent to take revenge on the Argive king Crotopus; this forms a direct contrast to Apollo's own excessive behaviour.⁹⁵ Where Hercules counteracts the destructive force of Cacus' *locus horridus* in order to facilitate the foundation of Rome, Apollo's destructive actions do nothing to benefit the Argives.

In the first book of the *Thebaid* Statius deploys the *locus horridus* as an unremitting and pervasive motif that metaphorically contextualises the *furor* of *fraternalis acies*. However, as Ahl points out, this is not a simple antithesis that contests heaven against hell, although these realms do rival one another;⁹⁶ rather, Statius' epic landscapes suggest that the upper and lower worlds are merging within earthly space, with the resulting moral ambiguity becoming most pronounced on the part of the Olympian gods who are no longer able to assert moral superiority or motivational primacy. Rather than understanding the three realms as relentlessly competing with one another to opposing ends, landscape articulates the sense that this competition reveals an underlying commonality and co-operation between heaven and hell.⁹⁷

Statius reiterates the transgression of boundaries in the second book as the Underworld continues to contaminate the landscapes of Greece through the aesthetically and morally dubious *locus horridus*; Statius resumes Mercury's journey to the

⁹² Stat. *Theb.* 1.563-9.

⁹³ 1.596-600.

⁹⁴ McNelis (2007) 27-44; Ganiban (2007) 9-23; Dominik (1994) 63ff.

⁹⁵ Feeney (1991) 357. Cf. McNelis (2007) 36.

⁹⁶ Ahl (1986) 350.

⁹⁷ Feeney (1991) 351; Dominik (1994) 36; cf. McNelis (2007) 36. Cf. 1.326-8.

Underworld and Laius is recalled from the dead to give a prophecy to a sleeping Eteocles. Again there is some elision of the distinction between the human world and the Underworld as Mercury leaves Hades, bringing Laius with him, but also with the concomitant effect of allowing the *locus horridus* to merge with the human world:

*undique pigrae
ire vetant nubes et turbidus implicat aer,
nec zephyri rapuere gradum, sed foeda silentis
aura poli. Styx inde novem circumflua campis,
hinc obiecta vias torrentum incendia cludunt.
...tum steriles luci possessaque manibus arva
et ferrugineum nemus adstupet, ipsaque Tellus
miratur patuisse retro*

(2.2-6; 12-14)

From each side languorous clouds close his way and turbulent air envelopes him, no winds accelerated his path, but the foul air of the silent sphere. On one side, Styx flows around nine fields, on the other, blocking and burning torrents bar his path ... Then the sterile groves and fields possessed by the dead and the sombre-hued woods are amazed, and earth herself marvels to have opened in backwards.

Statius' contamination of the upper world with the *locus horridus* of the Underworld is recognised by the Earth itself, which cannot believe that it is opening to allow the surface to merge with Hades (in a moment foreshadowing Amphiarus' violent incursion into the Underworld in book eight). Statius further consolidates extension of the Underworld into the upper world as Mercury passes between the realms into an earthly *locus horridus*. This landscape, however, once again blurs the distinction between *locus amoenus* and *horridus*, explicitly evoking the pleasance schema and suggesting that this could be at peace: *est locus – Inachiae dixerunt Taenara gentes - , / qua formidatum Maleae spumantis in auras / it caput et nullos admittit culmine visus. / stat sublimis apex ventosque imbresque serenus / despicit et tantum fessis insiditur astris* 2.32-6 ("There is a place – the peoples of Inachus called it Taenarus – where the dreaded tip of the foaming promontory of Malea rises into the sky and its peak admits no gaze. The top stands high and peacefully overlooks winds and rain, and the weary stars alone rest upon it"). The exit of Mercury and Laius from the Underworld takes

place at the same location as Tisiphone's passage into the human world in the first book,⁹⁸ and Statius goes on to elaborate on the flimsy barrier between this world and the infernal:

*hoc, ut fama, loco pallentis devius umbras
trames agit nigrique Iovis vacua atria ditat
mortibus. Arcadii perhibent si vera coloni,
stridor ibi et gemitus poenarum, atroque tumultu
fervet ager; saepe Eumenidum vocesque manusque
in medium sonuere diem, Letique triformis
ianitor agricolas campis auditus abegit.*

(2.48-54)

At this place, as is said, a hidden road drives pallid shades and enriches the huge halls of black Jove with deaths. If the farmers of Arcadia tell truthfully, there is screaming and groans of punishment here, and the land seethes with cruel tumult; often have the voices and blows of the Furies sounded until the middle of the day, and the triple-headed janitor of death is heard by countrymen, and drives them from the fields.

Recurring themes of the poem are picked up when an unnamed resident of the Underworld calls to Laius that he is fortunate in being taken for necromantic purposes,⁹⁹ whether it be a call issued by Jupiter (2.20), a Fury (2.20-1) or a Thessalian witch (2.21-2).¹⁰⁰ Although this individual recognises that Jupiter's power may lie behind Laius' recall, the infernal power of the Underworld, expressed through the Fury and the common *nefas* of the Thessalian *gens nefanda*,¹⁰¹ also resonates in this moment of boundary violation. While the intervention emulates a necromantic ceremony, it in fact subverts the traditional method of recalling the dead to life for prophetic purposes; Mercury neither uses nor requires any extra ceremony, and he does not act at the request of a witch or other sorcerer.

Moreover, the intervention of this deceased unknown individual recalls the first book's anonymous Theban who is characterised as permanently politically restless (1.164-97); the unnamed figure claims that Laius' summons is a happy event, but

⁹⁸ Above, p. 156.

⁹⁹ Cf. 1.171ff.; Mulder (1954) 44; Heuvel (1932) 124; cf. Caviglia (1973) 110.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Dominik (1994) 70; cf. 1.326-8.

¹⁰¹ Val. Fl. 1.779.

Statius undermines this individual by claiming that he always took joy in sadness and was unhappy in the face of positive events (2.18). A further claim is made: this unnamed individual suggests that Laius will be privileged to once again see *locus amoenus* landscapes (2.23-4). Laius will not see any of these landscapes, and the idea that he may is a challenge to the forms of landscapes to which the dead are commonly recalled in Latin epic: Erichtho's soldier is resurrected in her gloomy grove, and Cretheus appears to Alcimedea in an equally squalid *locus horridus*. Indeed, as discussed above, Laius' next participatory event in the poem is to appear in a necromantic ceremony in Diana's grove: the unnamed individual anticipates the *locus amoenus* of *Metamorphoses* 3, but instead Laius will appear in nothing but *loca horrida*.¹⁰² Consequently, Mercury, and by extension the rest of the Olympians, are aligned with Furies and Thessalian witches, as well as with the arbitrary violence of the Theban brothers' arrangement for rulership; *nefas* and *furor* are the province of the gods as much as of the humans they seek to punish.

One further extension of the *locus horridus* into the early books of the *Thebaid* is worth brief consideration: into his narrative of Tydeus' battle against Eteocles' fifty Theban warriors and its aftermath, Statius weaves a number of recurring themes. The landscape crossed by Tydeus as he leaves his audience with Eteocles is a foreboding *locus horridus* that anticipates the impending ambush,¹⁰³ an act of impiety that ignores Tydeus' inviolable state as an ambassador and further establishes Eteocles' *nefas*. Tydeus has crossed a damaged mythological landscape to reach Thebes (2.375-81), but the site of the ambush is the area formerly inhabited by the Sphinx:¹⁰⁴

*monstrat silva nefas, horrent vicina iuveni
gramina, damnatis avidum pecus abstinet herbis.*

¹⁰² See above, p. 149. Laius must even bear to see Phocis: *pollutamque suo despectat Phocida busto*, 2.64.

¹⁰³ Cf. Trinquier (1999) 260.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Verg. A. 3.262 (with reference to the Harpies); 8.235 (at Cacus' cave). Cf. Luc. 6.627ff.; Mulder (1954) 287-8.

*non Dryadum placet umbra choris, non commoda sacris
Faunorum, diraeque etiam fugere volucres
prodigiale nemus.*

(2.519-23)

The forest shows the *nefas*; cattle fear the near fields, the greedy livestock abstains from the damned grass. The shade does not please the choir of the Dryads, nor is it agreeable to the Fauns' rites, and even the foul birds have fled the prodigious grove.

Although not explicitly linked to the Underworld's creep into the human world, it retains the memory of *nefas*, and the refusal of birds to fly over the landscape recalls the gate of Avernus in the *Aeneid*.¹⁰⁵ Having slaughtered 49 of his assailants, Tydeus leaves Maeon alive to report the massacre to Eteocles (2.690ff.), and while the action moves back to Thebes, the influence of the *locus horridus* remains: in a manner that recalls the suicide of Alcimedea and Cretheus,¹⁰⁶ Maeon seeks to evade the wrath of his king by suicide, allowing him access to a more positive Underworld, the realm of Elysium (3.53-113). Following this, the Theban mothers return to the site of the massacre in order to recover and burn the bodies of their sons, foreshadowing the final involvement of the Argive women as they attempt to ensure burial for their children; significantly Ide, one of the mothers, in her distress is made the subject of a simile comparing her to a Thessalian witch:

*Thessalis haud aliter bello gavisae recenti,
cui gentile nefas hominem renovare canendo,
multifida attollens antiqua lumina cedro
nocte subit campos versatque in sanguine functum
vulgus et explorat manes, cui plurima busto
inperet ad superos.*

(3.140-5)

In no other way does a Thessalian witch, rejoicing in a recent war and whose hereditary *nefas* is to resurrect a human being with spells, and bearing a splintered light of ancient cedar, visit the fields by night and turn over the many dead in their blood and search the deceased; to see which body she should command to the upper sphere.

The allusion to Erictho and the field of Pharsalia is unmistakable,¹⁰⁷ contextualised by Ide's activity in searching the field of dead,¹⁰⁸ reinforcing the sense of *nefas* and also

¹⁰⁵ Verg. A. 6.237-42.

¹⁰⁶ Above, p. 93.

¹⁰⁷ Luc. 6.624ff. Above, p. 66.

the foreboding sense of civil discord (enhanced by the fact that Ide seeks two sons who lie gruesomely attached together by the same weapon, 3.147-9). Although they are both the victims of Tydeus, their deaths serve as a reminder of the fraternal violence that underpins the epic; and further, Ide will burn the brothers in concord on the same pyre, foreshadowing and inverting the final battle of Polynices and Eteocles as they burn together (3.165-8).¹⁰⁹ Moreover, this act of piety by Ide, following her description as a Thessalian witch, also recalls Erichtho's final act of piety towards the resurrected soldier, whom she guarantees access to the Underworld. Nonetheless, the Thessalian race is once again the *gens nefanda* as Statius reflects Valerius Flaccus' ambiguous representation of Alcimede in the *Argonautica*.

4.2: Fire: the Nemean episode

Laius may be confined to the *locus horridus*, but Statius does not omit the *locus amoenus* from his poem; indeed, three books of the *Thebaid* have the pleasant landscape of Nemea as their primary narrative setting, although a fundamental element of these books is the Lemnian digression. The Nemean episode represents in microcosm the action of the epic universe in the *Thebaid*;¹¹⁰ as such, parts of the Nemean episode strengthen the parallel between the vindictive Olympians as well as mounting a challenge on the Stoic doctrines of *ekpyrosis* and *diakosmesis* in a similar manner to Lucan's *Bellum Civile*.¹¹¹ Neither Lucan nor Statius demonstrate a world that is being reconfigured in a fashion that brings greater order to the cosmos. Acting as a microcosmic counterpart to the *Thebaid* as a whole, the Nemean episode has its origin in divine causation as the god Liber attempts to delay Polynices' army from reaching

¹⁰⁸ Stat. *Theb.* 3.137-9; cf. 12.22ff.

¹⁰⁹ 3.165-8; cf. 12.429-64.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Vessey (1973) 176; Dominik (1994) 58-9.

¹¹¹ Above, p. 41.

Thebes; “*me globus iste meamque exscindere gentem / apparat...nectam fraude moras*”, 4.670-7 (“ ‘This company plans to destroy me and my people...I shall weave delay with deceit’ ”).¹¹² Liber instructs the rivers of the plain to dry and deprive the Argive army of water supplies (4.680-98), excepting the river Langia to which Polynices and his troops are directed when they encounter Hypsipyle within the grove at Nemea (4.746ff). Listening to her story of the Lemnian women delays the Argives (5.28-504), as does the death of Opheltes and the vengeance enacted upon the serpent that killed him (5.505-754). Following this the funeral and games held in Opheltes’ honour retard the progress of the army (and the epic) further (book 6). Liber initiates all this in order to give himself time to approach Jupiter as a suppliant and to beg for the fate of his city (4.677; 7.145-226). In effect, Liber is sacrificing the Nemean landscape in order to give himself an opportunity to save Thebes; he intends that the *ekpyrosis* of the Nemean grove will be followed by a form of *diakosmesis* that allows for order at the city of Thebes, and this parallels Jupiter’s sacrifice of Argos and Thebes with the purpose of restoring order to the cosmos (1.224-7). Liber is the cause of chaos and disorder at Nemea,¹¹³ and on one level this represents his failure, as a minor deity, to perceive Jupiter’s rhetoric concerning the wider cosmic plan of destruction and renewal.¹¹⁴ However, Liber’s intervention parallels Jupiter’s actions as an arbitrary demonstration of bias: Jupiter’s choice of Argos and Thebes as cities to be destroyed in punishment for humanity’s sins inverts the desires of Juno and Liber to preserve those cities,¹¹⁵ and Liber’s destruction of the Nemean grove exposes the specious favouritism that dominates the actions of the Olympians in the poem. Indeed, while Liber attempts

¹¹² Cf. 1.197-247: Jupiter claims to have set the events of the poem in motion.

¹¹³ 4.711-29: Liber dries the plain; 4.804-30: the Argives destroy the Langia’s banks. Cf. Newlands (2004) 141-6.

¹¹⁴ Jupiter himself alludes to the inability of the lesser gods to perceive his cosmic plans at 7.195ff.

¹¹⁵ Cf. Dominik (1994) 9: “the past crimes catalogued by Jupiter were either perpetuated unknowingly by various human figures, were instigated largely by the gods, or have already been avenged”.

to emulate Jupiter in bringing about *ekpyrosis* for the purpose of ensuring order local to Thebes, he fails to understand that Jupiter's desire is to bring about an end to the corruption on earth and ensure the resolution of cosmic order.¹¹⁶

As part of his delaying tactic, Liber allows the Langia to retain its water: *una tamen tacitas sed iussu numinis undas / haec quoque secreta nutrit Langia sub umbra*, 4.723-724 ("Only Langia feeds the silent waters, also by order of the god, under secret shade").¹¹⁷ Otherwise, Nemea is left completely dry;

*protinus Inachios haurit sitis ignea campos:
diffugere undae, squalent fontesque lacusque,
et cava ferventi durescunt flumina limo.*

(4.699-701)

Immediately, the burning thirst drains the Inachian fields: the waters disappear, the springs and lakes become cracked from dryness, and riverbeds become hard with burning mud.

But this is not to be the end of destruction at Nemea; Langia may appear to have been spared, but in fact it too will face violence as a result of Liber's command. Newlands has shown that the *locus amoenus* at the Langia becomes a victim trampled underfoot:¹¹⁸ *fremunt undae, longusque a fontibus amnis / diripitur; modo lene virens et gurgite puro / perspicuus nunc sordet aquis egestus ab imis / alveus*; 4.823-6 ("The waves roar, and the long [stream] is ripped from the river source; once a gentle green and transparent in its pure stream, now it is dirty in its waters, pouring forth from the deep riverbed"). The Nemean landscape, in addition to being the site of violence with regard to Opheltes, shares with the boy the status of victim; as Newlands points out, "the land suffers along with its victim", at the feet of the Argives, and "Nemea changes

¹¹⁶ Jupiter claims that the punishment to be meted out to Thebes and Argos is to be the final punishment for sinful humanity at 1.214-8, and within his speech he refers to incidents such as that of Phaethon (1.221), which were resolved by Jupiter restoring order to the earth (Ovid *Met.* 301-408). Liber's purpose is solely to prevent the destruction of Thebes (4.670-8).

¹¹⁷ Other Nemean rivers are listed at 4.711-5, and Statius claims that they have all run dry.

¹¹⁸ Newlands (2004) 141-6.

from a beautiful refuge to a site of meaningless death and pollution”.¹¹⁹ However, like the narrative of Hopleus and Dymas, the Nemean episode will not directly affect the outcome of the poem as a whole; the Argives are delayed but not prevented from reaching Thebes.

The Argive incursion into the *locus amoenus* is described with terms familiar from epic battle scenes,¹²⁰ and the Argive victory over the river is marked by confusion and excess:

*incubere vadis passim discrimine nullo
turba simul primique, nequit discernere mixtos
aequa sitis, frenata suis in curribus inrant
armenta, et pleni dominis armisque feruntur
quadripedes; hos turbo rapax, hos lubrica fallunt
saxa ...
iam crassus caenoque et pulvere sordens,
quamquam expleta sitis, bibitur tamen.*

(4.816-21; 827-8)

Everywhere and at the same time, the crowd and the officers plunge in, without discrimination; equal thirst is unable to separate the mixed group. Bridled horses enter in their own chariots, and chargers full of riders and weapons are carried along; some fall because of the whirling, sweeping water, some from the slippery stones... Now, thick and dirty with mud and dust, it is still drunk, even though their thirst is fulfilled.

Following this, an anonymous Argive king gives thanks to Nemea and to the river, despite the destruction wrought by the army (4.831-50). This does not mark the end of the violence within the Nemean grove; Opheltis is still to meet his end (5.534-44), as is the serpent which kills him (5.562-87), and the Argives will perpetrate further violence upon the grove when they cut down the trees for the child's funeral pyre (6.84-117). The violence visited upon the grove is not divine, but human;¹²¹ nonetheless, it is a result of the intervention in the march of the Argives by the divine figure of Liber. At the end of the episode, the Argives leave Nemea without any sense that the landscape has either been or is about to be restored to its original or an improved state.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.* 144-6. Cf. Segal (1969) 79; Hinds (2002) 132.

¹²⁰ Vessey (1973) 286-92.

¹²¹ Newlands (2004) 144.

Nemea's initial destruction by heat and drought, as instigated by Liber, offers some interesting parallels with the mythological narrative of Phaethon,¹²² especially as told by Ovid in the *Metamorphoses*, although in his adaptation of the Ovidian passage Statius also draws upon Lucan's retelling of the myth in the second book of his *Bellum Civile*.¹²³ In the cases of both the Phaethon and Nemean narratives a landscape is destroyed by heat, and the rivers within the landscape dry out: *nec sortita loco distantes flumina ripas / tuta manent*, Ovid, *Met.* 2.241-2 ("nor are the rivers remaining preserved, whose lot were wide banks").¹²⁴ Both Ovid and Statius focus on the reactions of the river Nymphs to the destruction wrought by excessive heat. In Ovid, the Nymphs react with dismay and become distraught: *tum nymphae passis fontesque lacusque / deflevire comis*, Ovid, *Met.* 2.238-9 ("Then the nymphs, with their dishevelled hair, mourned the springs and lakes").¹²⁵ Statius' Nymphs, on the other hand, are complicit with Liber in causing Nemea to become arid: *dixerat; ast illis tenuis percurrere visus / ora situs, viridisque comis exhorruit umor*, Stat. *Theb.* 4.697-8 ("He had spoken; then a thin mould seemed to spread on their faces, and the moisture trembled from their green hair"). Statius inverts the role of victim and aggressor, making Ovid's divine victims accomplices to Liber, and they take an active role in effecting the withdrawal of water from the landscape; further, Apollo provides further Olympian assistance, in contrast to his attempts to resist Phaethon's journey in the *Metamorphoses*. Statius' nymphs effectively have the most significant role in the episode after Liber. For all the emphasis on the effect of Apollo's heat on the landscape (*sitis ignea* 4.699, *ferventi limo* 4.701) and on the Argive warriors (as a result of the heat they carry *ardentes clipeos* 4.730), it

¹²² On the significance of the Phaethon myth to the *Thebaid* and its intertextual relationships, Pollmann (2004) 55-7, 185. Polynices has been compared to Phaethon at *Theb.* 6.320-5. Pollmann comments that the references to Phaethon form "part of a recurrent allegorical application of the Phaethon myth to Polynices' moral and political hubris", 185.

¹²³ Luc. 2.399-438.

¹²⁴ Cf. Luc. 2.410-5; see above, p. 44.

¹²⁵ Cf. *Thebaid* 4.700: *fontesque lacusque* are drying out.

is the nymphs who are primarily responsible for draining the Nemean *locus amoenus*; Apollo assists in case the Nymphs' resolve falters: *adiuvat ipse / Phoebus adhuc summo, cesset ni vestra voluntas, / limite*, 4.689-91 ("Phoebus himself helps, still at the summit of his road, lest your own [i.e. the nymphs'] will fail"). While Apollo's role is in keeping with his violent representation in Adrastus' aetiological narrative, the sun-god is given a subsidiary role, exemplifying the absence of the major Olympians from the episode: no Jupiter is to come and renew the Nemean landscape and not even Liber will come forward to heal the plain and undo his damage. Effectively, at Nemea, there will be *ekpyrosis*, but no *diakosmesis*. Indeed, even Liber's promise to the Nymphs that he will protect them from the violence of the Fauns (made at 4.693-6 in return for their assistance) is rather hollow, for the actions he initiates climax with the Nymphs not at risk from Fauns, but from humans who are themselves aggressors against the landscape.¹²⁶ Indeed the Nymphs may evade direct attacks in the rest of the epic, but they will be surrounded by human violence visited upon their loved ones and companions. Immediately following the description of the funeral pyre for Opheltes, Statius describes the Nymphs desperately hanging on to the oak trees; *nec amplexae dimittunt robora Nymphae*, 6.113 ("nor do the Nymphs loosen the trees from their embrace"). Statius manipulates the roles assigned to the actors in the Nemean episode; where it is human beings and lesser deities such as nymphs that are often the victims of gods within the complicitly duplicitous *locus amoenus* of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, humans, nymphs and gods all become aggressors against the landscape.¹²⁷

Ovid's depiction of the Phaethon episode has been described as depicting a "universal disorder" reflecting cosmogonic themes;¹²⁸ in the *Metamorphoses*, the action of Jupiter is required to resolve chaos and restore Earth to her natural balance (Ovid

¹²⁶ Cf. Newlands (2004) 146.

¹²⁷ Cf. *Ibid.* 144-6.

¹²⁸ Myers (1994) 44.

Met. 2.304-13; 401-8). By recalling the myth of Phaethon,¹²⁹ and by doing so in a manner that invokes Ovid’s depiction of the nymphs’ reaction to Phaethon’s misadventures, Statius is able to comment on the roles of divine, quasi-divine and human actors in such cosmological disasters, and his assessment is not encouraging. Figures that in the *Metamorphoses* are victims of aggression within the landscape become in the *Thebaid* the perpetrators of violence upon the landscape, and those who should be responsible for preventing or repairing damage are remiss in their duties, reflecting the *Thebaid*’s wider cosmological outlook. Jupiter has previously tied Phaethon to the projected punishment of Thebes and Argos as part of his wider attempts at taking action against the wayward human race; during his speech in *Thebaid* 1 Jupiter appears to claim that Phaethon’s destruction of the earth and the flood of Deucalion (Ov. *Met.* 1.177-415) were ordained by him in order to punish guilty humans:¹³⁰

*“terrarum delicta nec exsaturabile Diris
ingenium mortale queror. quonam usque nocentum
exigar in poenas? taedet saevire corusco
fulmine, iam pridem Cyclopum operosa fatiscunt
bracchia et Aeoliis desunt incudibus ignes.
atque adeo tuleram falso rectore solutos
Solis equos, caelumque rotis errantibus uri,
et Phaethontea mundum squalere favilla.
nil actum, neque tu valida quod cuspide late
ire per inlicitum pelago, germane, dedisti.”*

(1.214-23)

¹²⁹ Some manuscripts and editions of the text include a line that appears to further reinforce this parallel with the Phaethon episode: *rapta ruit Phaethontis equos, magnumque laborem*. In his OCT Garrod follows the oldest surviving manuscript, P, and places this line with the reference to the Langia, forming: *una tamen tacita sed iussu numinis unda / rapta ruit Phaethontis equos, magnumque laborem, / haec quoque secreta nutrit Langia sub umbra*, 4.716-8. However, the grammarian Priscius does not record the line when he quotes the passage, *GL.* 2.72.22-4. Reynolds (1983) 395 notes that this line disrupts the sense of the passage; given that this reading is present only in P and a single descendent of the lost manuscript ω , I am omitting it from my discussion, and suggest that perhaps the line is an interpolation designed to further clarify Statius’ reference to the Phaethon episode. Cf. Klotz (1905) 346-53, 369-72. In some texts, the line is included as part of a passage of seven lines (4.716-22); however, this is generally regarded as a medieval interpolation.

¹³⁰ It is worth noting here that Jupiter refers to two episodes of *ekpyrosis* and *diakosmesis* from the first two books of the *Metamorphoses*. The Ovidian parallel is further reinforced by Statius’ recall of Ovid’s Phaethon by the adjective *Phaethontea* (*Phaethonteos* at *Met.* 4.246; *Phaethonta* used by Statius at 12.413) as well as the parallel between Statius’ *nunc geminas punire domos, quis sanguinis auctor / ipse ego, descendo*, 1.224-5, and Ovid’s *nunc mihi qua totum Nereus circumsonat orbem, / perdendum est mortale genus*, 1.187-8, as Jupiter in both cases decides to punish the human race. See Heuvel (1932) 141-4.

“I complain of the failings of the earth and the mortal mind that no Fury can satisfy. How much longer will I be driven to punish the guilty? It wearies to rage with the flashing thunderbolt, already the busy arms of the Cyclopes have long been exhausted and fire has been absent from the Aeolian anvils. And indeed, I had endured the release of the horses of the Sun under a false master, that the sky was burnt while the wagon wheels wandered, and that the world became filthy with the ashes of Phaethon. Nothing was achieved, not even that you, brother, used your strong spear to let the sea go wide across forbidden places.”

However, having failed to rein in humanity with fire and flood, Jupiter claims to have become exasperated with a race that refuses to learn its lesson; a race so wicked that they are too much even for the Furies (anticipating Tisiphone and Megaera releasing control of warfare later in the poem).¹³¹ Jupiter implies here that the events of the *Thebaid* are to be an extreme and final measure to deal with humanity’s sinfulness, all other means having been exhausted. Statius’ Jupiter takes responsibility for the death of Phaethon and for the damage done by Phaethon to the world (standing in place of the *locus amoenus*), and associates himself with further acts of brutality; similarly, he undermines the Ovidian version of events that show Jupiter bringing about *diakosmesis*, the renewal of the world.¹³² Additionally, this highlights Ovid’s own emphasis on the instability inherent in metamorphosis and in the process of resolving order from chaos.¹³³ Jupiter seemed to create order following Phaethon’s destruction of the earth (*Ov. Met.* 2.401-8), but has instead simply recreated the conditions for further metamorphosis or violence; Jupiter’s own first act in the *Metamorphoses* following the restoration of the earth is the rape of Callisto (*Ovid Met.* 2.401-95),¹³⁴ and the poem continues to depict scenes of violence. This violence is frequently arbitrary and often perpetrated by the Olympians.

Lucan deployed the Phaethon narrative and developed Ovid’s version of it in order to undermine the role of the gods in bringing order to the universe and to

¹³¹ Cf. Hershkowitz (1998b) 262-3.

¹³² Cf. *Luc.* 2.399-415.

¹³³ Tarrant (2002) 51; Feldherr (2002) 176-7; Graf (2002) 120-1.

¹³⁴ Sharrock (2002) 96-7.

rationalise nature's role as both healer and destroyer;¹³⁵ Statius follows Lucan in undermining the action of the gods, demonstrating that they are either unable or unwilling to ensure order. Consequently, the Nemean episode therefore parallels the *Thebaid* as a whole; just as Jupiter claims to put the action of the *Thebaid* into motion in order to bring about *ekpyrosis* that will punish the Thebans and Argives at the same time as establishing the conditions for *diakosmesis* and order on earth (1.214-47), Liber believes that his action will allow him sufficient time to ensure the maintenance of order at Thebes. Thus Statius draws on the promise of order succeeding destruction given by Jupiter in the *Metamorphoses*, only to frustrate that promise with a Lucanian emphasis on further disorder.

Liber himself is an unwitting (but not unwilling?) participant in the wider cosmological scheme;¹³⁶ as a result it can be suggested that his lack of knowledge concerning Jupiter's stated plan is in fact analogous to Jupiter's own apparent lack of knowledge of Tisiphone's early actions in the poem. Liber ensures that the Argives are delayed but does not prevent them from carrying on their journey. Although he is aware that he can only delay the Argives for a short time, Liber does not realise that the march of the Argives is subjected to external influences such as the Furies and *furor*, Jupiter and *fatum*; Liber is also unaware of the extent to which the gods can be affected by these things. He therefore approaches Jupiter as a suppliant in book 7 to try and dissuade him from destroying Thebes. However Liber is informed that the destruction of the city does not result from Juno's anger as he suspects (7.145-226),¹³⁷ but because

¹³⁵ See above, p. 46.

¹³⁶ Cf. Vessey (1973) 166.

¹³⁷ And might do, given Juno's vindictive pursuit of the Trojans in the *Aeneid*; as Ganiban (2007) notes, Liber suspects the involvement of the *wrong* Juno, 96-106, 114-6. Liber believes that the Argive expedition has been launched at the behest of Juno in revenge for Jupiter's infidelity with Semele (4.670-8). Cf. Feeney (1991) 343, 350 on Tisiphone's appropriation of Juno's role. Note also that Statius' Tisiphone is modelled upon that of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*; however, in the *Met.* Tisiphone is instructed to inspire war at Thebes in response to Jupiter's infidelity, *Met.* 4.420-511; Keith (2002) 395.

“*inmoto deducimur orbe / Fatorum*”, 7.197-198 (“ ‘We are led by the undisturbed wheel of the Fates’ ”).¹³⁸ Yet Liber considers that his actions on initiating the Nemean episode were just; he acts to gain time to counter what he believes are the actions of Juno by appealing directly to her husband. At that point, Liber did not understand himself to be trying to act contrary to the decrees of the Fates; indeed, Jupiter also allows himself a moment of dry humour in acknowledging that the lesser gods will always find room to complain at his and Fate’s actions; “*nunc regia Iuno queretur*”, 7.221 (“ ‘Now the Queen Juno will complain’ ”).¹³⁹ Acting as a parallel for Jupiter in the localised setting of Nemea, Liber appears to be acting in accordance with a plan that will result in order as it is usually expressed through the processes of *ekpyrosis* and *diakosmesis*. His destruction of the Nemean plain is to allow for the restoration of the wider landscape, just as Jupiter’s destruction of the Argives and the Thebans is intended to restore balance and order to the cosmos, and Liber plays a role in Jupiter’s overall plan. However, like Jupiter, Liber is not as much in control as he likes to think; his choice to favour Thebes over Nemea results in a violent and arbitrary action.¹⁴⁰ In highlighting the failure of both Jupiter and Liber to bring about harmony following *ekpyrosis* Statius implies that the attempt to punish Thebes will itself come to nothing; even following the actions of the Seven against Thebes, there will still be a need for divine punishment, and Statius himself alludes to the ongoing narrative of Thebes as he ends his work (12.797-809).¹⁴¹ Indeed, Statius suggests that the gods will not be concerned to ensure peace after the adventure of the Thebans; both Jupiter and Statius

¹³⁸ Dominik (1994) 25ff. on Jupiter’s relationship with the Fates.

¹³⁹ Indeed, Jupiter has predicted Liber/Bacchus’ attempt to protect Thebes at 1.285-9 in reply to Juno’s attempt to protect Argos: “*equidem hau rebar te mente secunda / laturam, quodcumque tuos, licet aequus, in Argos / consulerem, neque me, detur si copia, fallit / multa super Thebis Bacchum ausuramque Dionen / dicere, sed nostri reverentia ponderis obstat.*”

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Dominik (1994) 12-5, on Jupiter’s arbitrary selection of Argos, and Juno’s equally arbitrary defence of the city.

¹⁴¹ Hardie (1997) 155-6; Pollmann (2004) 25-7.

are well aware of the events that are to follow the burial of the Argive dead and the ongoing troubles that will affect the city, including the attack on Thebes by the *Epigoni*;¹⁴² in parallel with the events of the whole poem, Statius' narrative of the Argives at Nemea is left open; no god will end the episode with a positive *telos*.

Rather than follow a divine plan of conflagration and renewal, Statius' poem challenges these concepts by showing the plans of the gods ending in chaos and destruction. This is especially evident in the Nemean episode's re-reading of Ovid's Phaethon narrative, which further highlights the discordance between the gods' rhetoric of order and their actual impact upon the cosmos. The Phaethon episode has already functioned as a site of interrogation for Stoic cosmology in Lucan's *Bellum Civile*,¹⁴³ and Statius develops this to suggest not only that conflagration, like the mythological narrative, is ongoing, but that renewal is both rare and unguided when it does occur. Lucan attributes to the Po itself the role of both destroyer and renewer; Statius, on the other hand, allows the gods and fate to retain some control of the destructive element of *ekpyrosis*. However, the restorative element is simply not mentioned as the epic moves from one episode to another without referring to renewal. The implication is that the gods are remiss in ensuring that the landscape is restored to its previous healthy state.

4.3: Space invaders: Amphiaraus in the Underworld

By the seventh book of the *Thebaid*, all attempts at delay have been frustrated and the battle has been joined in earnest. Within his battle narrative Statius graphically illustrates the malign influence of the Underworld and highlights the poem's thematic concern with the dissolution of boundaries as the seer Amphiaraus breaks through the

¹⁴² Referred to by Jupiter at 7.218-21.

¹⁴³ Above, p. 41.

surface of the earth and crosses into Pluto's realm. Significantly, Amphiaraus' physical penetration of the Underworld replicates the clash between the spheres that is manifest in the civil war *locus horridus* and *locus amoenus* landscapes on Earth, particularly those earthly landscapes that have been infected by the passage of the Fury Tisiphone as she passes in the opposite direction. Moreover, the *loca horrida* that characterise the majority of the Underworld reflect the psychological response to *nefas* and the breaking of boundaries,¹⁴⁴ while the response of the Underworld divinities suggests the dangers of impetuosity and *furor*. Moreover, Statius' Underworld undermines the polarisation of the Elysian *locus amoenus* and the *locus horridus* of Tartarus in order to further emphasise the coterminous and ambiguous nature of heaven and hell in the *Thebaid*.

At this stage in the conflict the Olympian gods continue to intervene on behalf of their favoured heroes; and, knowing that his favourite, Amphiaraus, is owed to the Underworld, Apollo takes steps to spare the prophet a painful death and allow him to retain his dignity,¹⁴⁵ in what will be the god's final involvement with humanity in the poem (7.690-8).¹⁴⁶ Although reliant on Mars to help protect the prophet (7.694-8) and capable of assisting Amphiaraus with only *decus inane*, 7.692 ("empty glory"), Apollo acts as chariot driver, inspiring Amphiaraus to greater deeds of glory. Apollo's purpose is to protect Amphiaraus from the form of death and lack of burial that awaits the other seven heroes: however, the seer's fate is inescapable, and he has been "promised to Elysium".¹⁴⁷ In a reversal of Tisiphone's and Mercury's forceful passage from the

¹⁴⁴ Cf. McNelis (2007) 127-30 on Statius' breaking of poetic boundaries at this point, with specific reference to Callimachean aesthetics. Cf. Sen. *Oed.* 868-70; Segal (1983) 179-80.

¹⁴⁵ Indeed, Apollo links this to the poem's ongoing concern with (non-)burial, 7.776-7: "*certe non perpersure Creontis / imperia aut vetito nudus iaciture sepulcro*",

¹⁴⁶ Feeney (1991) 371-5.

¹⁴⁷ 7.775-6: "*vade, diu populis promissa voluptas / Elysiis*".

Underworld into the Earth, the Earth opens to swallow Amphiaraus, wreaking havoc on the surface of the Earth and plunging the prophet into the Underworld:¹⁴⁸

*iamque recessurae paulatim horrescere terrae
summaque terga quati graviorque effervere pulvis
coeperat; inferno mugit iam murmure campus.
bella putant trepidi bellique hunc esse fragorem,
hortanturque gradus; alius tremor arma virosque
mirantesque inclinat equos; iam frondea nutant
culmina, iam muri, ripisque Ismenos apertis
effugit ...
ecce alte praeceps humus ore profundo
dissilit, inque vicem timuerunt sidera et umbrae.
illum ingens haurit specus et transpire parantis
mergit equos; non arma manu, non frena remisit:
sicut erat, rectos defert in Tartara currus
respexitque cadens caelum campumque coire
ingemuit, donec levior distantia rursus
miscuit arva tremor lucemque exclusit Averno.*

(7.794-801; 818-23)

And now Earth, about to recede, began slowly to shiver and the outer surface to shake up and the heavier dust to rise up; now, the plain roars with an infernal noise. Fearful, the warriors think it is battle, and that this is the noise of war, and they hasten their steps; a different tremor unfoots arms and men and incredulous horses. Now the leafy heights sway, now the walls, and Ismenos flees exposing its banks ... See, the ground becomes a precipice and breaks open in a deep chasm, and stars and shades are fearful in turn. A huge cavern devours him and plunges the horses as they prepare to pass over; he did not lose his arms from his hand, nor the reins; just as he was he took the chariot upright into Tartarus and, falling, he looked back at the sky, and groaned to see the plain coming together, until a lighter tremor brought again together the divided plain and shut the light from Avernus.

Yet this violation of the boundary between Earth and the Underworld does not have Apollo's intended consequences. Contrasting Apollo's intentions for Amphiaraus' burial alive, Dis' initial reaction to Amphiaraus' arrival in the Underworld is decidedly unwelcoming; when Statius resumes the narrative in book 8, he brings the same chaos to the Underworld as has been wreaked upon the Earth. Amphiaraus' presence in the Underworld violates the laws of Dis, Proserpina, and even the Furies; further, the Parcae themselves are shocked, contrasting with Apollo's claim that his actions are in keeping with Amphiaraus' fate (8.1-13). Amphiaraus' entry into the Underworld causes

¹⁴⁸ Amphiaraus' fate has been presaged by a reference to his horses' fear of the earth (7.690-2). Cf. Smolenaars (1994) 376-393.

confusion and disruption among Pluto and the other Underworld divinities (8.21ff.), and the *locus horridus* landscape of Hell itself reflects this shock:

*tunc regemunt pigrique lacus ustaeque paludes,
umbrieraeque fremit sulcator pallidus undae
dissiluisse novo penitus telluris hiatu
Tartara et admissos non per sua flumina manes.*

(8.17-20)

Then, the stagnant waters and scorched swamps groan and the pallid plougher of the shade-carrying water roars that Tartarus has broken open to its depths at a new gap in the Earth and shades are admitted not by means of his river.

Signifying the dissolution of cosmic and spatial boundaries between earthly and Underworld *loca horrida*, Amphiaraus' penetration of the Underworld is regarded as an attack made by the Olympians upon Pluto's realm, and the Lord of the Underworld promises to respond with enthusiasm, plunging the cosmos further into divine *fraternae acies* (8.34-83).¹⁴⁹ Pluto's diatribe culminates with an instruction to Tisiphone to cause *nefas* on Earth more terrible than has ever been seen before (8.65ff.).¹⁵⁰ In their deployment of the Fury and their perception of conflict between the Olympians and the Underworld, Pluto and Jupiter collaborate in rendering hell upon the Earth.¹⁵¹ Consequently, Thebes and the Earth become a space of conflict as Heaven and the Underworld collide and collapse into one another; Pluto himself refers to the collapse of boundaries that results from his engagement in battle against his brother on Earth ("*pereant aedum discrimina rerum*", 8.37, "Let all boundaries of things perish!"), although this does come after a perceptive question which asks "*quae superum labes inimicum impegit Averno / aethera?*", 8.34-5 ("What catastrophe of the Olympians forces an enemy heaven on Avernus?"). Amphiaraus' penetration of the Underworld allows Statius the opportunity to exploit the ambiguity of the use of the *infern* by the

¹⁴⁹ Ganiban (2007) 118-9.

¹⁵⁰ Vessey (1973) 263; this anticipates Jupiter's command to the Olympians to avert their gaze at 11.120-35.

¹⁵¹ Cf. Feeney (1991) 351; cf. Vessey (1973) 264.

superi in the *Aeneid*;¹⁵² Statius' Olympians believe that they emulate their Vergilian counterparts by exercising control over Hell and show little compunction over releasing the Furies to do their bidding. Yet the independence of the Underworld powers and the inability of Apollo to correctly predict the reaction of Dis (ironic, given Apollo's position as a god of prophecy and the function of Amphiaraus as a seer¹⁵³) each suggest that the Olympians do not have the control they believe that they have inherited from their Vergilian forebears.¹⁵⁴ Moreover, despite the power of divine beings to transition between Earth, heaven and the Underworld, Vergil's *loca horrida* and *amoena* remain demarcated;¹⁵⁵ yet Statius' landscapes collapse into one another as the boundaries between them are broken. Consequently, the dissolution of boundaries will be further illustrated upon earth at Thebes, with a special emphasis on the *locus amoenus* surrounding the river Ismenos as it becomes a *locus horridus* given over to the Furies' *nefas* and *furor*.

It is worth noting the psychological implications of Amphiaraus' incursion, not only for the seer himself but for the inhabitants of the Underworld. As noted above, the violence of this boundary violation elicits strong reactions from the Underworld divinities; Pluto's shock manifests itself in a diatribe that also includes condemnation of every other incursion into his domain that has been sanctioned by the Olympians, lending a metapoetic air to the narrative (8.47ff.). In contrast, the dead are referred to as *securi*, in reference to both Elysium and Tartarus (8.14-16). While this may not seem overly unusual, especially as the peace of the Elysian fields is commonly stressed in

¹⁵² Particularly the use of the Fury Allecto by Juno; Ganiban (2007) 121; cf. Hardie (1993) 58; Hershkowitz (1998b) 112ff.

¹⁵³ Cf. Feeney (1991) 371-3.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. McNelis (2007) 130.

¹⁵⁵ For instance, the entrance to the Underworld, Tartarus and Elysium remain separated: Verg. A. 6.237-41, 282-316, 548ff.; 6.638-9

Latin epic from Vergil's *Aeneid* onwards,¹⁵⁶ it stands in contrast to the common portrayal of the Underworld as a place in which Tartarus is overcome by *turba ruens*;¹⁵⁷ rather, Tartarus too appears to be a place of relative calm, and the differences between the two spheres, accentuated in previous Latin epic, appears to be elided. By this point, everywhere is a *locus horridus*. Furthermore, Amphiaraus' own reaction to his descent into Tartarus is a model of calm, contrasting with the gods he disturbs; even as the Earth opens, Amphiaraus concentrates on keeping his chariot under control (7.819-23), and his response to Pluto's tirade echoes the placatory tone taken by Coroebus' plea before Apollo in Adrastus' aetiological tale in book 1 (8.90-122). Indeed, Amphiaraus' descent into the Underworld is reminiscent of the sacrifices in *loca horrida* presented in Lucan and Valerius Flaccus: evoking the association established in his epic predecessors between the *locus horridus* and the practice of human sacrifice, Amphiaraus appears to be offered by Apollo to the Parcae.¹⁵⁸ Yet this sacrifice does not succeed in appeasing any god, and the wrath of Pluto unleashes Tisiphone before Amphiaraus has the chance to calm the god and make him ashamed of his previous emotion (8.123-7); again, this suggests an arbitrary and overly emotional response to events that is common to the Olympian divinities as well as those of the Underworld.

Finally, Apollo himself mourns for his seer, using his inability to protect Amphiaraus as a reason to withdraw from the action of the epic. Already, Apollo is dismayed when he assists Amphiaraus in battle at Thebes, and later in the poem Apollo will describe his sorrow to his sister Diana, blaming himself for his inability to save his favourite in an episode which prompts Feeney to think of the "sun-god going into eclipse".¹⁵⁹ Similarly Amphiaraus too displays some indignation at his separation from

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Verg. A. 637ff.; above, p. 18.

¹⁵⁷ V. Fl. *Arg.* 1.849; cf. Luc. 6.781: *impiaque infernam ruperunt arma quietem.*

¹⁵⁸ 7.774-5.

¹⁵⁹ 9.653-662; Feeney (1991) 373.

the human and divine spheres: appearing in a prophetic vision in book 10 he cries “*meos ... redde deos*”, 10.207-8 (“ ‘Return to me my gods!’ ”). This stands in contrast to Vessey’s claim that Amphiaraus’ fate is a reward for his pious behaviour in the epic;¹⁶⁰ rather, both Amphiaraus and Apollo remain unsettled. Amphiaraus does not receive any form of burial, and his passage into the Underworld unsettles him, his patron, and also the cosmos. Statius’ concern with burials and boundaries also find expression at the river Ismenos, and its transformation from pleasance to *locus horridus*.

4.4: Flood: the river Ismenos

Like the Nemean landscape, the *locus amoenus* at the river Ismenos is also associated with the forces of cosmic destruction and renewal, and this landscape also develops the *Thebaid*’s thematic concern with boundary violation further, placing emphasis on the arbitrary nature of limits and margins. Newlands has written of the landscape of the river Ismenos as developing a sense of Ovidian ambiguity;¹⁶¹ rivers nourish life (having been Crenaeus’ postnatal home, 9.319-31 and the Ismenos describes himself as *altrix unda* (“nurturing water”) 9.439-40); rivers are boundaries, but they can exceed their own limits; further, rivers can be destructive, and Statius turns the Ismenos into the site of Crenaeus’ violent death. Similarly, Hippomedon’s battle against the Ismenos parallels the movement of the poem as a whole: this is a “symbolic topography in which the moral and physical evil of civil war is dramatically displayed in the sully and swelling of formerly pure and peaceful waters, and in the anger – and impotence – of the landscape’s gods”.¹⁶² Again, the Ismenos episode problematises the role of the gods, who fail or are unable to restore the landscape after the cataclysm. It is an episode that

¹⁶⁰ Vessey (1973) 268.

¹⁶¹ Newlands (2004) 146-52. Cf. Dewar (1991) 134-5; Newlands (2004) 147 on the relationship between this passage and the river fight of Achilles in *Iliad* 21. Cf. Jupiter’s speech at 1.214-23.

¹⁶² Newlands (2004) 147.

ends in chaos rather than with the imposition of order, and with rotting death rather than renewal. Moreover, the chaos and bloodshed of the river plain becomes emblematic for the epic's closing books, characterising the chaos and bloodshed of the war.¹⁶³

Following Hippomedon's slaughter of Theban soldiers in the river and his killing of Crenaeus (9.225-350), Crenaeus' mother Ismenis arrives at the Ismenos to find his body; a task she fulfils with some difficulty (9.356-9), as she searches in vain amongst the detritus of the battle, a chaotic mixture of blood and weaponry (9.366-70). The River Ismenos is the grandfather of Crenaeus, and the Nymph makes a complaint and demands vengeance (9.376-98). Like Liber, Ismenos does not recognise the fated nature of the events, and rails against Jupiter, to no effect (9.421-45),¹⁶⁴ finally resolving to flood and take his own revenge, an action which is also intended to purge the river of the gore of war (once again reiterating the epic's consistent concern with the proper disposal of the dead):¹⁶⁵

*aspice, quas fluvio caedes, quae funera portem
 continuus telis alioque adoptus acervo.
 omne vadum belli series tenet, omnis anhelat
 unda nefas, subterque animae supraque recentes
 errant et geminas iungunt caligine ripas.*

(9.429-33)

Look, what bodies, what burials, I carry in my stream, continuous with weapons and covered with another heap. The chain of war holds all of my shallows, all my water breathes evil, the souls of freshly slaughtered warriors wander above and below, they join both my banks in darkness.

Ismenos creates a flood in order to purge the filth from the river; waters rush upon Hippomedon and the hero and the river engage in battle (9.446-539). Like so much else in the battle narratives in the *Thebaid*, the battle is characterised by excess.¹⁶⁶ Statius refers to this as an unequal fight: *stat pugna inpar amnisque virique, / indignante deo*, 9.469-70 ("The uneven fight between river and man stands still, making the god

¹⁶³ 10.5-7; 12.11-12, 22-49.

¹⁶⁴ Dewar (1991) 134; Ismenos also emulates Pluto's complaint against the Olympians here.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Hom. *Il.* 21.64-380.

¹⁶⁶ Vessey (1973) 295.

indignant”), and while this demonstrates Hippomedon’s heroism, it also highlights the folly of the hero’s *furor*:¹⁶⁷ there is no way that he can win this fight. Hippomedon’s folly is exacerbated by his taunting of the god, particularly Ismenos’ status as a follower of Bacchus, something that Ismenos believes should entitle him to some degree of veneration and protection (9.434-7; 476-80).¹⁶⁸ This sends Ismenos into further paroxysms of rage: *nec saevit dictis, trunca sed pectora quercu / ter quater oppositi, quantum ira deusque valebat, / inpulit adsurgens*, 9.483-5 (“Not with words he rages, but rising with an oak trunk, he attacks his opposition’s chest three, four times, with all the force of anger and god”). Like Achilles in book 21 of the *Iliad*, Hippomedon attempts to pull himself from the river by means of a nearby tree which collapses, dropping the hero back into the water (Hom. *Il.* 21.242ff.; Stat. *Theb.* 492-503). And while the elm of the *Iliad* clogs up the stream, Statius provides greater detail and in doing so highlights the disorderly and chaotic nature of the stream: *huc undae coeunt, et ineluctabile caeno / verticibusque cavis sidit crescitque barathrum*, 9.502-3 (“Here the waters mix, and an inescapable chasm with filth and empty whirls falls and rises”). In the *Iliad* Achilles continues trying to escape the river, appealing to the gods. Poseidon and Hera respond directly, and by saving him initiate a sustained period of active conflict between the divinities. In contrast, Hippomedon appeals to the gods to be given an honourable death and understands that he has been defeated (9.505-10). While he gets no direct response, Juno takes up his cause and intercedes on his behalf, citing the abandonment of the other heroes, including Amphiaraus (9.510ff.). Yet in a sense this represents another failure of an Olympian to assist: Hippomedon’s appeal is to Mars,

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Capaneus’ attempt to challenge Jupiter in book 10.

¹⁶⁸ Further, this connects the “flood” narrative to the “fire” narrative of Nemea, caused by Bacchus in the form of Liber.

not Juno (9.506-10),¹⁶⁹ and in typical fashion the Olympian response is underwhelming,¹⁷⁰ as Jupiter merely nods (9.519-21), and the river subsides.¹⁷¹

Hippomedon is still in at the deep end: left to face a group of Theban warriors, he is swiftly cut down. Yet the contrast with the *Iliad* is instructive: in that epic, the gods were active and there was a sustained period of internecine strife between them. This strife is not replicated in the *Thebaid*, but the paucity of action continues to undermine their rhetoric of power and control, while the intertext also serves as a reminder of the Olympians' proneness to internal warfare. Moreover, just as other divine action in the poem goes awry, Ismenos' objection to having the detritus of battle in his waters ultimately backfires: as Hippomedon is set upon, his body is ravaged by weaponry, further polluting the waters:

*tunc vulnera manant,
quique sub amne diu stupuit cruor aere nudo
solvitur et tenues venarum laxat hiatus,
incertique labant undarum frigore gressus.*

(9.528-531)

Then, his wounds run; the blood, all this time kept under the river, is released into the naked air and opens the thin gaps of his veins, and his steps falter, uncertain from the cold of the water.

Statius emphasises the horror of the scene;¹⁷² his wounds run, rather than just the blood, with the effect that Hippomedon comes across as nothing but a wound himself, polluting the environment.

In contrast to the *Iliad*, the Olympians take no physical action in the narrative: where Homer's Hephaestus stems Scamander's floodwaters while burning up Achilles' victims, Statius' gods leave the river polluted.¹⁷³ "So [Hera] spoke, and Hephaistos

¹⁶⁹ Although as Juno points out, she is Hippomedon's patron deity: perhaps he makes a mistake in addressing his complaint, or is simply an ingrate?

¹⁷⁰ Although note that when faced with directly defending his own, Jupiter is more than capable of unleashing direct force, such as when Capaneus (as a proxy for Pluto) challenges heaven in book 10.

¹⁷¹ This is also underwhelming in comparison with Jupiter's nods in the *Aeneid*; Verg. A. 9.106 = A. 10.115: *adnuit, et totum nutu tremefecit Olympum.*

¹⁷² Dewar (1991) 158.

¹⁷³ Hom. *Il.* 21.342-367.

created a monstrous fire. First the fire blazed in the plain and burnt the many bodies killed by Achilles which were heaped there in great numbers. And all the plain was dried up and the glittering water held back ... Hephaistos burnt up the dead bodies – and then he turned his glaring flames to the river”.¹⁷⁴ In the *Thebaid*, the waters subside, leaving the dead in Ismenos’ waters: *Ismenos raptis tumet Hippomedontis opimis*, 10.27 (“Ismenos boasts with Hippomedon’s victory spoils”).¹⁷⁵ Ismenos remains cluttered with gore and the detritus of battle, transformed from *locus amoenus* to *locus horridus*, and casting a pall over the remainder of the epic’s landscapes; as Argia and Antigone go to retrieve Polynices’ body in defiance of Creon’s orders to leave it where it lies, Statius comments on the continuing pollution of the river: *haud procul Ismeni monstrabant murmura ripas, / qua turbatus adhuc et sanguine decolor ibat*, 12.409-410 (“nearby, noises indicated Ismenos’ banks, where he still ran in disorder and discoloured with blood”). Argia and Antigone are the only characters other than Theseus who understand their pious responsibilities to the dead in the *Thebaid*;¹⁷⁶ and it is they who attempt to bring about true *ekpyrosis* with the disposal of Polynices’ and Eteocles’ bodies in the same funeral pyre (12.429ff.). Statius highlights the absence of purifying fire by alluding to Ovid’s cosmogonic Phaethon narrative by means of a simile linking the women to the Heliades; indeed, although the women clean Polynices’ body, they pollute the Ismenos further, subjecting the former *locus amoenus* to further debasement: *sic Hyperionium tepido Phaethonta sorores / fumantem lavere Pado...ut sanies purgata vado membrisque reversus / mortis honos, ignem miserae post ultima quaerunt / oscula*, 12.413-418 (“So his sisters washed smoking Phaethon, Hyperion’s son, in the heated Padus [Po]... when the gore had been washed in the water and honour of death had been brought back to his limbs, after final kisses the wretched women looked for fire”). When

¹⁷⁴ Hom. *Il.* 21.341-9; Tr. Hammond (1987).

¹⁷⁵ See Pollmann (2004) 184.

¹⁷⁶ Cf. Lucan’s *Erichtho*; above, p. 73.

the women light the pyre to fulfil their duty, they realise that the pyre was already occupied with the corpse of Eteocles, and the resulting discordance in the flames prompts Antigone to proclaim that “*nil actum bello*”, 12.442 (“ ‘The war has achieved nothing’ ”). However, this is not to be the end of war, nor of death at Thebes; Theseus will approach and engage Creon in order to ensure that funeral arrangements are made for the rest of the Argive army, and beyond the epic there is to be further bloodshed involving the *Epigoni*. Antigone and Argia may also have attempted to bring about the *ekpyrosis* that the gods failed to; however, they too will fail to bring about *diakosmesis* as the cycle of warfare remains ongoing without culminating in renewal.¹⁷⁷

Statius’ sustained engagement with Ovid’s Phaethon narrative reiterates Lucan’s thematic concern with perpetual dissolution as expressed in the *locus amoenus* at the Po; and Antigone’s complaint reiterates Jupiter’s “*nil actum*” as he complained of the failure of Phaethon’s fire to reign in humanity’s wickedness.¹⁷⁸ The failure of the gods to act, set against Argia and Antigone’s inability to successfully complete a conciliatory act of piety, continues to demonstrate the ongoing nature of violence at Thebes and the failure of divine or civil authority to restore order. Ismenos’ stream represents not only the excess of the Theban battle: it also marks the poetic violence that has sustained the poem since book 8.¹⁷⁹ As with Lucan’s Po, a river subjected to Phaethonic heat and destruction,¹⁸⁰ the Ismenos refigures the surrounding landscape, foregrounding the excesses of civil war and challenging the positive potential of Vergilian martial epic;¹⁸¹ further, as with the Po, Statius’ Ismenos and the Greek landscapes of the *Thebaid*

¹⁷⁷ Cf. Hershkowitz (1998b) 293ff.; Henderson (1993) 186 on the *furor* of Antigone and Argia.

¹⁷⁸ Stat. *Theb.* 1.222. Cf. Luc. 5.287: *nil actum est bellis*, as Caesar’s soldiers issue a threat to mutiny that foregrounds their knowledge of civil war’s *scelus*, and also threatens violence within the Caesarian faction.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. McNelis (2007) 124ff.

¹⁸⁰ Above, p. 41.

¹⁸¹ Cf. Call. *Ap.* 105-13; cf. Jones (2005) 54-6.

articulate a sense of continuing dissolution and chaos which undermines conceptualisations of order and stability. As the distinctions between Heaven, Hell and Earth are collapsed, so too are those between the *locus amoenus* and *locus horridus*, both of which become sites of moral transgression and civil conflict. All that remains is the bloodied plain of Thebes and polluted river Ismenos, with no promise of order or resolution to come;¹⁸² moreover, this is a cycle that is doomed to continue, no matter that Statius' text is sealed by a *sphragis* marking its limits. Statius' poem foregrounds a *locus horridus* which has become the default poetic and moral topography, signifying moral and political degeneracy and the distorting effect of civil war upon the perception of space in Latin epic; and Statius' Thebes represents the continuing cycle of civil discord that inverts the Augustan rhetoric of order which sees Rome as the *telos* of history. Moreover, the poem demonstrates the continuing impulse of Roman epic poets to perpetuate the *locus horridus* in a discourse of civil war; a discourse which re-opens old wounds; and which re-explores, re-tells and remakes civil war in verse.

¹⁸² Ahl (1986) 2898-9; Hardie (1997) 155-6.

5: Laying the groundwork: Silius Italicus, Hannibal and civil war.

Criticism has not been kind to Silius Italicus' *Punica*: although praised by Martial,¹ Pliny's remark that the poem was written *maiore cura quam ingenio* has been more pervasive amongst scholars and critics.² Predominantly, the critical perception has been that the *Punica* represents a mundane celebration of Roman power, an inferior and prolix "hymn to the goddess Rome"³ whose seventeen books represent a monotonous and uninspired reading of Vergil's *Aeneid* that fails to read beyond that poem's pro-Augustan level. More recent assessments of the *Punica* have begun to demand that the poem be viewed both on its own terms as a historical epic in a Roman tradition stretching back to Ennius, as well as on a wider intertextual level. In the former sense, Silius can be understood to be a competent practitioner of a mode of literature for which we have little comparative evidence against which to judge his ability to innovate; moreover, the poem is unique in being a versified adaptation of a prose historical source,⁴ in this case the third decade of Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita*.⁵ Consequently, the unique status of the work gives rise not only to conflicting assessments of its aesthetic value, but also to disparate appraisals of its themes and ideological stance.⁶ Silius poetically structures his work around the Roman defeat at Cannae,⁷ and the filtration of Livy through his epic models infuses the landscapes of the poem with a moral potential absent from the equivalent topographical descriptions in the prose history. Silius transposes Livy's moralising tone onto his representations of the landscapes of Carthage

¹ Mart. 4.14; 7.63; 8.66.

² Plin. *Ep.* 3.7.5.

³ Vessey (1982a) 95; Feeney (1991) 311.

⁴ Anticipating the Biblical epics of Late Antiquity.

⁵ Marks (2005b) 531-2.

⁶ I.e. Feeney (1991) 302, 311, who judges the poem to be unabashedly pro-Roman; Vessey (1982a) 95; cf. ambiguous readings by Marks (2005b) 530-6; Ahl, Davies and Pomeroy (1986) 2519.

⁷ Ahl, Davies and Pomeroy (1986) 2505-10.

and Italy,⁸ extending the topographical symbolism of space from the internal conflicts of the *Bellum Civile* and the *Thebaid* to the external conflict between Rome and Carthage. Silius' use of landscape to establish a link between the Second Punic War and the Roman Civil War promotes the tensions between heroised martial *gloria* and the submission of service to the state inherent in idealised depictions of Roman *virtus*; and the appropriation of the Lucanian landscapes of civil war associates civil discord with these tensions and establishes a problematic causality relating external and internal Roman warfare.

Recent examinations of the poem have asserted the importance of non-Vergilian and non-Livian intertextual resonances in the *Punica*, particularly with reference to an Ovidian *Punica* which Silius plays off against Vergil "in a dynamic interaction that ... utilises their contrasting poetics to add vigour, variety, and a thematic complexity to his own belated epic".⁹ Silius' Ovidian intertexts are apparent in his engagement with the *loca amoena* landscapes of the *Metamorphoses* and the *Fasti* which engender a level of narrative ambiguity and complexity that undermines an unequivocal endorsement of Vergilian teleology as a paradigm for Latin epic.¹⁰ In addition to functioning as a moral barometer for the action of the epic, Silius' landscapes resist the *Punica*'s overarching, teleological movement towards Rome's imperial destiny;¹¹ the poem challenges its own attempt to complete a Roman epic cycle that spans from Vergil's fall of Troy down to his own imperial times.¹² Silius' poem insinuates itself into the Roman mytho-historical

⁸ Cf. Walsh (1961) 82-109.

⁹ Wilson (2004) 226; Bru ere (1958) 475.

¹⁰ Marks (2005b) 529.

¹¹ Wilson (1993) 222.

¹² Cf. Hardie (1993) ; Wilson (2004) 238; cf. Ahl, Davies and Pomeroy (1986) 2501, who suggest that the *Punica* falls between the *Aeneid* and the *Bellum Civile* both chronologically and ideologically; Marks (2005b) 529; Dominik (2003) 471.

narrative of cosmos and *imperium*, finding its origins in Juno's Vergilian antagonism towards Rome and Jupiter's desire to prove the city's superiority.¹³

Silius' *Punica* links Rome's mythical origins to the imperial present, completing the Roman cycle's documentation of Roman expansion and placing the Second Punic War at the centre of that narrative: Silius maps the war and its aetiology onto late Republican and Imperial history by means of topographical allusions that create a loose analogy between civil war and the Second Punic War, finding the origins for internal Roman strife in the Hannibalic war, with the result that Jupiter's attempt to make the Romans prove their imperial worth paradoxically plants the seeds for the downfall of the Republic;¹⁴ thus, *locus horridus* and *amoenus* landscapes are deployed in order to problematise the relationship of this, external, war, to the internal civil wars of the late Republic. Yet Silius' transformation of Italian pleasantries into *loca horrida* such as the battlefield at Cannae also represents the Romans at their lowest, but most noble, ebb;¹⁵ a trough for their fortunes, but a peak for their innate Romanness and a spur to their sense of superiority.

Silius' depiction of the Second Punic War and its aetiology examines the relationship between origins and endings, between *causae* and consequences.¹⁶ The *Punica* exposes the tension that exists between celebrative aspects of the Vergilian exploitation of aetiological myth and the rather more variable Roman historical narrative;¹⁷ in particular, in the *Punica* Silius establishes a causal link between Roman martial glory against an external enemy and the perceived vices that underlay the

¹³ 3.163-7, 571ff.; Feeney (1991) 306; Pomeroy (1990) 126; Ahl, Davies and Pomeroy (1986) 2553. Luxurious Capua provides an analogue for Rome's degeneracy (11.29-54); cf. Luc. 1.158-82, Spaltenstein (1990) 107. Cf. Liv. 23.2.1; notably, Capua's behaviour is not *fas* (11.28).

¹⁴ Cf. McGuire (1997) 135; Ahl, Davies and Pomeroy (1986) 2508ff., 2551ff.; Vessey (1982b) 333-4; Pomeroy (1990) 123; Feeney (1991) 302; Hardie (1997) 162. Cf. Sal. *Cat.* 10.1; *contra* Santini (1991) 8; Billerbeck (1986a) 342-5.

¹⁵ Ahl, Davies and Pomeroy (1986) 2505-10.

¹⁶ 1.17; cf. Wilson (1993) 219; Pomeroy (1990) 135.

¹⁷ Santini (1991) 7-9.

disintegration of the Republic and precipitated the internal Roman civil war. Consequently, the dualism of Roman *fides* and Carthaginian *perfidia*¹⁸ collapses in the wake of Roman victory. Moreover, the characterisation of Hannibal and his combination of Roman-style military virtues with his Carthaginian *perfidia*¹⁹ offers a literary echo and chronological prefiguration of Lucan's degraded Romans. Silius' Hannibal is placed within *loca horrida* that recall the landscapes associated with Caesar the anti-hero of the *Bellum Civile*; further, Silius' characterisation of Hannibal in the *Punica* as depraved²⁰ sets him up as a counter to Scipio Africanus,²¹ positioning the Carthaginian as not only a negative to Scipio's positive Roman, but also setting Hannibal up as an example of the potential moral pitfalls that can result from an ardently self-interested pursuit of *gloria*,²² while Scipio's own exceptionality is implicated in the perversion of Romanness characterised by Lucan's Caesar.²³

Nonetheless the poem remains on one level a celebration of Roman martial prowess in the face of unspeakable foreign danger,²⁴ and the *locus amoenus* and *horridus* also serve to reinforce the connections between the perfidy of Carthage in the Second Punic War and the curse of Dido that motivates Hannibal's violence.²⁵ Silius' epic is unique in its depiction of warfare between Rome and an external enemy, rather than some variation of civil conflict; yet the *Punica* intertextually engages with the themes of civil war and the epics of Lucan, Valerius Flaccus and Statius, exploiting the connotations of civil war *nefas* within the *locus horridus*. Contextualised by the Roman mytho-historical narrative, this informs the Romans' descent into civil war, and the

¹⁸ Hardie (1993) 80; Ahl, Davies and Pomeroy (1986) 2510.

¹⁹ 17.402-5; cf. Liv. 21.4.3-10.

²⁰ Vessey (1974) 32.

²¹ 9.434-47.

²² 9.193-4: '*mihī magna satis, sat vero superque / bellandi merces sit gloria*'.

²³ Cf. Hardie (1993) 24-5; Ahl, Davies and Pomeroy (1986) 2542-55.

²⁴ Cf. Marks (2005b) on Silius' "balanced" view of the positive and negative aspects of the rise of Roman imperialism.

²⁵ Ahl, Davies and Pomeroy (1986) 2495; Marks (2005b) 529.

framework of the Second Punic War retains a dualistic opposition between Roman *virtus* and Carthaginian *nefas* expressed through landscape:²⁶ Hannibal and the Carthaginians are associated with the *locus horridus*; they are captivated by its violence and use violence to render Italy into a landscape of dissolution.²⁷ Hannibal's destruction of the Italian landscape metaphorically represents his attack on the Romans, emphasised in a dream vision drawn from Livy:²⁸ Mercury appears in a dream and goads Hannibal into attacking Rome, instructing him that he should not look behind him (3.163-82).²⁹ However, Hannibal is startled by the noise behind and sees a serpent crushing the Italian landscape (3.184-213). Silius' version is more emphatically violent than Livy's, and the violence of Silius' serpent panics Hannibal,³⁰ who is only reassured upon learning that he himself is the serpent that dissolves Italy into a *locus horridus* as a result of his incursion into forbidden, Roman space.³¹ Silius' modification of the narrative reflects his ongoing thematic engagement with the epic landscape as an innovative refashioning of his Livian source material.³²

Moreover, one extended aetiological narrative invokes the Italian landscape as a *locus amoenus* suggestive of Roman *virtus*: while Fabius delays, Hannibal attempts to undermine the Roman's political position by refraining from damaging Fabius' Falernian properties.³³ Silius is provoked into recalling an Ovidian-styled tale of Falernus' encounter with Bacchus and the hospitality shown by the Italian to the god.³⁴ Falernus' piety and hospitality towards Bacchus brings the reward of wine to Italy

²⁶ Hardie (1993) 80; Santini (1991) 20.

²⁷ Cf. Liv. 21.22.5-9.

²⁸ Spaltenstein (1986) 198-9; Steele (1922) 321.

²⁹ Cf. the story of Orpheus and Eurydice.

³⁰ Sil. 3.187.; cf. Liv. 21.22.7.

³¹ 3.207-13. Cf. Šubrt (1991) 228.

³² Cf. 1.283-87; Vessey (1974) 30. Serpents are ambiguous in the *Punica*, and often associated with Hannibal: cf. 13.640-6, 15.138-45; Spaltenstein (1990) 349.

³³ 7.260-7; cf. Liv. 22.23.4-5.

³⁴ Cf. Ov. *Met.* 8.610-724: Philemon and Baucis; Bruère (1958) 491; Wilson (2004) 228; Vessey (1972-73) 240.

(7.162-211); however, the digression is framed by the violence perpetrated against the Italian landscape and offers Silius an opportunity to demonstrate the moral contrast between juxtaposed Roman *virtus* and Carthaginian wickedness.³⁵ Falernus' hospitality and dutiful treatment of the god serves as a prototype for moral, Roman behaviour: Falernus' behaviour is portrayed as pious even in his drunkenness (7.199-205).³⁶ This contrasts with Hannibal's behaviour later in the epic: once the Carthaginians have been exposed to the luxuries of Capua, Hannibal and his troops become undisciplined and addicted to pleasure.³⁷ Falernus, a model for Roman behaviour, maintained his self-control following his exposure to luxury, rather than being overcome;³⁸ in this sense, the story is both a moral lesson as well as an *aition* revealing the origins of Roman greatness,³⁹ contrasting Roman and Carthaginian behaviour within the *locus amoenus*.⁴⁰ Falernus is not unique within the poem; historical and mythological figures such as Regulus and Hercules are offered as *exempla* for the Romans' service to their state,⁴¹ mediated through the efficacy of landscape as a moral measure.

Roman *virtus* is reclaimed by an engagement with the themes and metaphors of civil war.⁴² Yet it is in his appropriation of the thematic connection between the *locus horridus* and the *nefas* of Hannibal that Silius' problematisation of the link between the Second Punic War and the causes of internal civil war resides. Silius deploys the *locus horridus* landscape in order to emphasise two interlinked premises: firstly, that Hannibal parallels Lucan's Caesar as the inhuman embodiment of *furor*, an existential enemy capable of destroying the Romans (essential if Jupiter's test it to be validated). *Loca*

³⁵ Cf. Newlands (1984) 7-9; Vessey (1972-73) 241; cf. Vessey (1982a) 96-7. Silius asserts that this digression is *fas*, 7.162-3.

³⁶ Contrast Pentheus at Ov. *Met.* 3.511ff.

³⁷ 11.385-7; cf. Liv. 23.18.11-6. Cf. Bassett (1966) 260.

³⁸ Cf. 11.377-482.

³⁹ Vessey (1972-73) 241-6.

⁴⁰ Cf. 12.158-60; 13.526-8.

⁴¹ Suggesting the influence of Cicero's *De Officiis*.

⁴² Cf. Santini (1991) 37.

horrida ideologically associate Hannibal with *nefas*, construing the Carthaginian general as a proto-Caesar, an external enemy who parallels and even surpasses Lucan's internal, Roman enemy: Caesar threatens the abstract Roman ideals of the Republic, but Hannibal seeks complete destruction for the city and its values. Silius' second premise is that the Second Punic war demonstrates the Romans at their best as they face an external enemy; Roman greatness is made dependent on the existence of an external doppelganger against which Roman martial *virtus* can be directed. Otherwise, Roman force is directed inwards and *gloria* is pursued as self-interest, outweighing the needs of the state: *virtus* becomes *nefas*.⁴³ The Carthaginian menace is an exceptional, existential moment for Rome, requiring the services of an exceptional man who is capable of reconciling the paradoxes of the war: Scipio Africanus.⁴⁴ Yet the model he offers is ultimately damaging for Rome; towards the end of the Republic, "exceptional" men shall utilise their gifts for personal gain, with devastating results.⁴⁵ Silius depicts this by means of an engagement with the landscapes of civil war, but also uses landscape positively in order to demonstrate that Scipio is the right man to defeat Hannibal, despite possessing characteristics that would be disquieting in any other individual.⁴⁶

In the *Punica* it is the Romans' weakest moments that validate their eventual victory:⁴⁷ *propriusque fuere periculo, / quis superare datum*, 1.13-4 ("and they came closer to destruction, those to whom victory was given").⁴⁸ Even more than the civil war but in a different sense, this is *bella...plus quam civilia*,⁴⁹ as the Second Punic War threatens the utter destruction of the Romans. Yet this is a war (and an epic) of

⁴³ Cf. Sal. *Cat.* 10.1, *Jug.* 41.2, *Hist.* 1.11-12; Vell. 2.1.1; Plin. *Nat.* 33.150. Paul (1984) 124-5. Cf. Luc. 6.147-8: *virtus* becomes *crimen*; Fantham (1995).

⁴⁴ Cf. Ahl, Davies and Pomeroy (1986) 2542-3.

⁴⁵ Cf. McGuire (1997) 98-102, 235-6; although Marks (2005a) 113ff. argues for Scipio's "one-man rule" in the *Punica* as positive.

⁴⁶ Cf. Marks (2005a) 132.

⁴⁷ And empire: 3.582-90.

⁴⁸ Cf. Liv. 21.1.2; 21.29.4.

⁴⁹ Hardie (1993) 306 notes that this war establishes a Rome that cannot be destroyed by civil war, although cf. Dominik (2003) 495-7.

paradoxes:⁵⁰ the Romans prevail even though they are almost destroyed; they are supported by a supreme Olympian who claims to set in motion events that might destroy them; their fightback begins with a refusal to fight; and while the glory of Roman soldiers preserves the Republic, it lays the foundation for the accumulation of individual honours, leading to the power struggles of the late Republic,⁵¹ although Jupiter claims that following this war, not even internal conflict will destroy Rome.⁵² A further paradox exists in Silius' attempt to reclaim Roman martial *virtus* by appropriating the landscapes of *nefas* and constructing equivalences between the Hannibalic and the Civil wars, establishing the former as an *aition* for the latter: yet with the accumulation of these paradoxes, Silius is able to both reaffirm the Roman historical epic narrative while at the same time exploiting the tensions within his Latin epic predecessors. In so doing, he makes a sophisticated (if not consistently successful) attempt to explore the fundamental paradox of Roman epic since the *Aeneid*: the tendency for Roman epic poets to portray any warfare as an analogue for civil war.⁵³

5.1: *Acheronta movebo*: Juno and the *locus horridus*.

From early on in the *Punica*, Silius exploits the connotations of the *locus horridus* with violence, situating Hannibal and the Carthaginians within the realm of *nefas*. Juno's motivational force appears lacking when set against her activities at the beginning of the

⁵⁰ Ahl, Davies and Pomeroy (1986) 2504; Dominik (2003) 489, 497. Figures such as Hercules and Juno, as well as cities such as Saguntum, also have a paradoxical nature, Vessey (1974) 34.

⁵¹ 10.657-8: *haec tum Roma fuit. post te cui verter mores / si stabat fatis, potius, Carthago, maneres*. Cf. 3.570-629; Jupiter claims that the empire gained by the great Romans of Silius' narrative cannot be destroyed even if their descendents are degenerate, (3.587-90) before summarising the early Principate and the Flavian dynasty (592-629): a subtle connection is established between "degeneracy" and the Principate. Also 9.352-3; 15.124-7; 14.684-8; Spaltenstein (1990) 338. Cf. McGuire (1990) 41; Ahl, Davies and Pomeroy (1986) 2556-7; Dominik (2003) 495.

⁵² 3.588-90.

⁵³ See above, p. 187.

Aeneid;⁵⁴ however her presence and speech nonetheless parallel her activities at the beginning of Vergil's poem:⁵⁵ having given the historical motivation for the war (1.1-16), Silius goes on to elaborate on the mythical *aitia* of Romano-Carthaginian antipathy following Aeneas' betrayal of Dido in *Aeneid* four (1.17-37). It is within the realm of these mythological *causae* that the *ira* of Juno triggers the action of the epic,⁵⁶ leading through to the First Punic War as Juno's antipathy towards Rome increases; Silius' enumeration of the divine causes for Carthage's rising antagonism places the *Punica* firmly within the mytho-cosmic framework established by the *Aeneid*.⁵⁷ Moreover, Silius asserts that his portrayal of these events and their causes is *fas* (1.19): these are not to be the poetics of *nefas* that dominate the *Bellum Civile* and the *Thebaid*. Yet Silius' portrayal of the gods is not free from the influence of hell,⁵⁸ expressed by means of a variety of *loca horrida* mediated by an engagement with the epics of Lucan, Valerius Flaccus and Statius. Portrayals of the gods as capricious and morally ambiguous resonate throughout the *Punica*: Silius' Juno is self-contradictory, and although indebted to a Vergilian model that attributes to the goddess the poem's motivation, this is inconsistent with Vergil's portrayal of Juno as happily reconciled to Jupiter's desire for the Romans to have *imperium sine fine*;⁵⁹ there is a notable dissonance between Vergil's portrayal of her joyful capitulation to Jupiter and her characterisation throughout the *Punica*. Indeed, according to Silius' narrator, Juno's antagonism is strongest after Rome's foundation and early expansion:⁶⁰ Juno admits that

⁵⁴ Feeney (1991) 308.

⁵⁵ Santini (1991) 19-20.

⁵⁶ 1.19: *superas...mentes*; Spaltenstein (1986) 5.

⁵⁷ Marks (2005b) 529.

⁵⁸ Cf. Hardie (1993) 64.

⁵⁹ I.e. Verg. A. 12.841-2: *mentem laetata retorsit*; cf. Sil. 17.604; cf. Feeney (1991) 303; Feeney (1990) 362.

⁶⁰ 1.29-33; cf. Spaltenstein (1986) 7-8. This *aition* is in contrast to Vergil's portrayal of Juno's desire to stop Rome being founded at all.

Rome's *imperium* may pass, but only after the city has paid a price in blood (1.45ff.).⁶¹ Silius' narrator sets Juno in parallel with her Vergilian model as a motivational force for the poem while intertextually exploiting the tensions between the model offered by the conclusion of the *Aeneid* and her perceived favour towards Carthage. Juno's inconsistency manifests itself in her willingness to sacrifice any number of her "chosen" Carthaginians against an enemy she knows cannot be defeated.⁶² These tensions are embedded within the epic landscape and the topographical depictions of Carthage and Italy.

In a speech aimed at Hannibal, Juno described the landscapes of Italy as they will stand following the Carthaginian's orgy of destruction:⁶³

*'dum Romana tuae, Ticine, cadavera ripae
non capiant Simoisque mihi per Celtica rura
sanguine Pergameo Trebia et stipantibus armis
corporibusque virum retro fluat ac sua largo
stagna reformidet Thrasymennus turbida tabo,
dum Cannas, tumulum Hesperiae, campumque cruore
Ausonio mersum sublimis Iapyga cernam
teque vadi dubium coeuntibus, Aufide, ripis
per clipeos galeasque virum caesosque per artus
vix iter Hadriaci rumpentem ad litora ponti'*

(1.45-54)

'As long as your banks, Ticinus, cannot retain the Roman bodies, and Trebia, my [new] Simois, flows backwards through the fields of Gaul, blocked by Roman blood and arms and the bodies of men, and Trasimene may fear its own pools swollen by a large amount of gore, and while from high I will see Cannae, the Italian grave, and the Iapygean plain covered with Roman blood; and that you, Aufidus, your way doubtful as your banks are closed, can hardly force your way bursting to the shores of the Adriatic sea through shields and helmets and hewn parts of men'.

While the speech may be semi-detached from the narrative,⁶⁴ it nonetheless elucidates Juno's consistent antipathy towards the Romans. Juno's motivational impetus is expanded temporally and her *ira* remains at the heart of Romano-Carthaginian antagonism. This expansive approach is replicated in Silius' depiction of the *locus horridus*, which is no longer localised to a single area, signalling that Silius' poetics too

⁶¹ Cf. Verg. A. 7.293-322; Feeney (1982) 39-40.

⁶² Cf. 1.39; cf. Colish (1985) 218-284; Billerbeck (1986a) 352ff.

⁶³ Cf. Santini (1991) 67-72.

⁶⁴ Feeney (1991) 308.

are expansive and inclusive of his more overtly pessimistic predecessors, Lucan and Statius. Crucial to Juno's portrayal of the Italian landscape are the rivers overflowing with Roman corpses; this may be a reasonably common motif in Latin poetry,⁶⁵ but the convenient location of Roman military disasters by bodies of water allows Silius the opportunity to vividly portray violent excess and the pollution of landscape. Moreover, the psychological dimension of the *locus horridus* motif finds embodiment within the topography, as the horror felt by the Romans as they face defeat is transposed onto lake Trasimene, which recoils from itself (1.48-9). This is the "Italian grave", Juno's delight: hell brought to earth by her hatred of Rome through her favourite, Hannibal.

Juno's speech is not only a precursor to the violence of the Roman landscapes of defeat, but also presages landscapes that will be directly associated with Hannibal and that explicitly engage with the hellish landscapes of Erichtho and *nefas*. While most *loca horrida* exist on the margins of civilizations and at a distance from inhabited landscapes, Silius places his earliest extended depiction of the topography at the very centre of Carthage, replacing the welcoming and attractive perspective on the city's grove offered by Vergil at Aeneas' arrival:⁶⁶

*Vrbe fuit media sacrum genetricis Elissae
manibus et patria Tyriis formidine cultum,
quod taxi circum et piceae squalentibus umbris
abdiderant caelique arcebant lumine, templum...
ordine centum
stant arae caelique deis Ereboque potenti.
hic crine effuso atque Hennaee numina divae
atque Acheronta vocat Stygia cum veste sacerdos.
immugit tellus rumpitque horrenda per umbras
sibila. inaccensi flagrant altaribus ignes.
tum magico volitant cantu per inania manes
exciti, vultusque in marmore sudat Elissae.*

(1.81-4; 91-99)

In the centre of the city was a temple, sacred to the spirit of Elissa the foundress and worshipped with native awe by the Tyrians, around which were yews and pines with

⁶⁵ Spaltenstein (1986) 10, citing: Catullus 64.359; 5.806; Stat. *Theb.* 9.436. Cf. Verg. *A.* 1.100-1; Raabe (1974) 79-83.

⁶⁶ *Lucus in urbe fuit media, laetissimus umbrae*, Verg. *A.* 1.441; Feeney (1982) 60-5; cf. Vessey (1975) 392.

gloomy shade, which hid it and kept out the light of heaven...A hundred altars stood in order, sacred to the gods of heaven and the power of Erebus. Here the priestess with wild hair and Stygian dress calls the spirit of Henna's goddess and Acheron. Earth bellows in the shades and bursts into dreadful sounds. Spontaneous fires burn on the altars. Then spirits, called by magic spells, flit through empty space, and the face of Elissa sweats in marble.

A *locus horridus* dedicated to Dido replaces the temple of Juno viewed by Aeneas at his arrival in Carthage, and it is here that Hannibal's father encourages him to swear an oath against the Romans, providing the true genesis of Hannibal's enthusiastic hatred of Rome (1.100-5); this is intensified by the hellish landscape surrounding them, a physical reminder of Juno's desire to move Hell in her service (Verg. A. 7.312). By rededicating the temple at the centre of Carthage to Dido, Silius reiterates her centrality to the history of Romano-Carthaginian antagonism,⁶⁷ and uses verbal and thematic resonances with the *Aeneid* to situate the origins of his poem within the Vergilian epic context.⁶⁸ Silius' *locus horridus* evokes the *topos* as a liminal boundary between earth and the Underworld (1.96);⁶⁹ the temple is a direct access point for transfer between the spheres, complementing Juno's motivational role.⁷⁰ Not only does the interior of the temple have gruesome connotations reminiscent of the Massilian grove,⁷¹ but Silius makes it clear that this is a site in which prophecy and necromancy are both common, as well as other supernatural occurrences (1.93-2; 97-8).

Moreover, Hannibal's oath recalls the sacrifices made in previous epic iterations of the *locus horridus*; although the oath is sworn in the name of Dido's ghost (1.119), it is accompanied by the sacrifice of a *nigra hostia* to the *triformis diva* (1.119-20).⁷² The *locus horridus* also engages with Dido's suicide, activating the connotations of the *topos* with the concept of human sacrifice; indeed, the description of the grove may

⁶⁷ Marks (2005b) 529.

⁶⁸ I.e. Sil. 1.81: *Vrbe fuit media* = Verg. A. 1.441: *urbe fuit media*.

⁶⁹ Hardie (1993) 64.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* 96.

⁷¹ Above, p. 49. Cf. Luc. 3.399ff., although the statues here are not unknown, Spaltenstein (1986) 18; Santini (1999) 220-1. Cf. also the grove of Diana at Stat. *Theb.* 4.419ff; Feeney (1982) 61-2, 67-8.

⁷² Cf. Luc. 6.569ff; V. Fl. 1.730ff.

contain veiled references to the Roman belief that the Carthaginians performed ritual child sacrifice.⁷³ Further, the unnamed priestess appears to function as an African analogue for the Erichthonian Thessalian witch, sharing her powers of prophecy and predilection for violent and gory sacrifice in the service of her Underworld gods (1.101ff.).⁷⁴ Silius' reference to the Massylian priestess (1.101) functions as a further intertextual engagement linking both Lucan and Vergil; in the *Aeneid*, Dido's pretence to mask her suicidal intent includes a claim to have seen a Massylian priestess in a vision, and the talents of these witches match very closely those attributed to the *gens Thessalis*.⁷⁵ Moreover, the priestess' prophecy is presented in terms of the Roman landscapes transformed into *loca horrida*, reiterating the centrality of topography to Silius' narrative (1.125-32).

Further, as with Valerius' invocation of Hecate as the triple-formed goddess, Silius' portrayal of this episode's relation to the causal framework of the Second Punic War allows him to focus on the ambiguity and dissonance that surrounds divine participation in the poem; Hecate encompasses the tension between the Olympians and their Underworld counterparts, a tension also manipulated to great effect in Statius' *Thebaid*: in that poem, Diana and her grove encapsulate a sense of liminality and ambiguity which is suggestive of the tension between the Olympian and Underworld spheres expressed throughout the poem.⁷⁶ Silius' grove reiterates the liminal nature of the *locus horridus*, transposing this tension onto the character of Juno.

Several conclusions are evident: Silius' depiction of Italian and Carthaginian landscapes in the first book of the *Punica* are highly allusive evocations of Latin epic

⁷³ Cf. 4.763-73; Spaltenstein (1986) 17; Feeney (1982) 62-3, 74.

⁷⁴ Although note that she does not appear to indulge in necromancy at this point.

⁷⁵ Verg. A. 4.483-90: '*hinc mihi Massylae gentis monstrata sacerdos, / ... / haec se carminibus promittit solvere mentes / quas velit, ast aliis duras immittere curas, / sistere aquam fluvii et vertere sidera retro, / nocturnosque movet Manis*'; Spaltenstein (1986) 21.

⁷⁶ Cf. Hardie (1993) 81. Above, p. 148.

poetry focussing on the *topos* of the *locus horridus*. Predominantly, Silius' handling of the landscape aligns Hannibal with Erichthonian *nefas*, but Juno too is implicated as fundamental to the work of hell by her enthusiastic desire to see Italy transformed into a *locus horridus*, reflecting the moral and divine ambivalence developed in the *Argonautica* and the *Thebaid*. Silius fruitfully exploits the tensions in his portrayal of Juno in his exploration of the origins of the war by means of the analogous tensions in a *locus horridus* landscape which exists between heaven and hell. In a sense, Juno exists as a particularly Erichthonian Olympian, caring not about how many Romans and Carthaginians die, but seeking only to defile the landscape, rejoicing in death and destruction, and all the while knowing that her ultimate cause is in vain.⁷⁷

Finally, Juno's involvement in the origins of the war invokes further Underworld intertexts; Juno emulates her Vergilian invocation of Allecto, iterating Hannibal as an analogue for the Fury, called from the *locus horridus* of Carthage in order to make war against the Romans.⁷⁸ Yet there are further epic parallels: in Statius' *Thebaid* epic *furor* is motivated by Tisiphone who, having been associated with the liminal *loca horrida* of the Underworld and Thebes, appears to have run amok, causing wilful destruction across the Greek landscape.⁷⁹ Although a motivating force in the poem, Tisiphone is called to earth by the curse of Oedipus, himself embedded within a psychological and topographical *locus horridus* and seeking to take joy in bloodshed. Statius' Oedipus is therefore also a suitable analogue for Juno as she calls Hannibal to action; yet given that Feeney has noted that Juno's speech lacks direct motivational force,⁸⁰ Hannibal's parallelism with Statius' Tisiphone recalls the Fury's self-motivational power at the opening of the *Thebaid*: hell is able to move itself, and Juno's

⁷⁷ I.e. 10.337-50.

⁷⁸ Cf. Dominik (2003) 472-3. Juno calls upon a fury during the siege of Saguntum, 2.526-649; Hardie (1993) 82; McGuire (1997) 211.

⁷⁹ Above, p. 155.

⁸⁰ Feeney (1991) 308.

motivation of *furor* is practically subordinated to Hamilcar's *furor* and Hannibal's *rabies* (1.70-1). Consequently, Silius uses the marginal and ambiguous *locus horridus* as a means of signalling his awareness of the dissonance that lies behind his divine *causae* for the Second Punic War and the ambiguities inherent in divine motivation for epic action. However, this exploration of these tensions also spills over into the *locus amoenus*, and Silius' further destabilisation of the aetiologies that lie behind the conflict between Hannibal and Rome.

5.2: Calendar girl: Anna Perenna in the *Punica*

Juno is not the only goddess in the *Punica* whose allegiances are questionable:⁸¹ while the Olympian wife of Jupiter rejects the Romans who are favoured by her husband, she also persuades the river nymph Anna Perenna to assist Hannibal prior to his victory at Cannae.⁸² Anna is torn by the request: she is an Italian river nymph who, in her human incarnation received some assistance from Aeneas; but she is also the sister of Dido, tied by kinship to Hannibal. Moreover, according to Silius, Anna is deceived by Dido's ghost during the course of the aetiological narrative, prompting unfounded fear of Aeneas, Lavinia and the Trojans, and it is Juno's words that encourage Anna to assist Hannibal, despite Anna's wish to retain her venerated status among the Romans.⁸³ Silius' aetiological narrative, set within a mythological *locus amoenus* engages with Silius' thematic exploration of origins, causes and consequences.⁸⁴ Moreover, Silius' narrative also engages with the theme of permanence as Anna is transformed into a perennial goddess.

⁸¹ Santini (1991) 70.

⁸² See Appendix 1 on issues concerning the text of this episode.

⁸³ Notably, the Ides of March is Anna Perenna's feast day, adding further ominous tensions to her position in the poem; cf. Ov. *Fast.* 3.523-710; Barchiesi (1997) 123-9; cf. Newlands (1996) 321.

⁸⁴ Santini (1991) 17.

Silius' depiction of Anna's sublimation into the landscape is permeated with the threat of violence, and draws upon the familiar Ovidian model of rape in the *locus amoenus*: however, the episode is also prefaced by Juno's knowledge of the carnage that is to come at Cannae, as well as a further reference to the violence of Hannibal's thoughts and to his disturbed psychological state (8.25-7). Juno summons Anna, asking her to go to Hannibal to assuage his worries and taking a fundamental yet indirect role in inspiring the Carthaginian. The nymph complies out of a desire to meet the dying request of Dido, despite her position as a Roman goddess:⁸⁵

*Tum diva Indigetis castis contermina lucis
'haud' inquit 'tua ius nobis praecepta morari.
sit fas, sit tantum, quaeso, retinere favorem
antiquae patriae mandataque magna sororis,
quamquam inter Latios Annae stet numen honores.'*

(8.39-43)

Then the nymph, beside the sacred grove of the Indigenous God, replied: "My duty is to obey your orders without delay. I ask only that it may be allowed to retain the favour of my ancient homeland, and to carry out the great requests of my sister even though the deity of Anna stands among those honoured by the Romans.

The *Indiges* embedded with Anna in this landscape is Jupiter Indiges, a cult title equated with Aeneas,⁸⁶ foreshadowing Aeneas' involvement in the aetiological narrative that follows. Aeneas supplies a nationalistic, if inert, contrast with Anna's perfidy, but his inaction on behalf of Rome is set into unfortunate relief against Anna's loyalty to her kin as she breaks her compact with the Romans.⁸⁷ Moreover, Anna's identity crisis reflects internal Roman dissent suggestive of the potential for internal strife.⁸⁸ However, Silius' narrative of Anna's incorporation within the Italian landscape fulfils two further functions: it reiterates the centrality of the *Aeneid*, and more specifically, the suicide of Dido, to the Second Punic War. Moreover, within Silius' contextualisation of the Second Punic War as a fundamental event in the progress of Roman history towards the

⁸⁵ McGuire (1997) 128 (who characterises Anna as a "double-agent"); cf. Santini (1991) 38.

⁸⁶ Liv. 1.2.6; Spaltenstein (1986) 501. Ahl (1985) 312-5.

⁸⁷ Cf. Ahl, Davies and Pomeroy (1986) 2499.

⁸⁸ McGuire (1997) 127.

Vergilian *telos* of *imperium sine fine*, this engagement with the myth of Dido and Aeneas embeds Cannae in the flow of Roman history, transforming the battle into not just a turning point in the War, but making it a pivotal moment in Rome's progress towards empire.⁸⁹ Secondly, the narrative engages with Ovid's *Fasti* in order to suggest narrative and moral ambiguity.

Silius describes Anna fleeing from Carthage and being shipwrecked in Italy (8.59-68), where despite her fears she is welcomed by Aeneas, to whom she describes the events at Carthage following his departure and Dido's suicide (8.76-159). Despite the welcome she receives, Anna is disturbed in her sleep by the ghost of Dido warning her that Aeneas' new wife Lavinia is plotting against her and recommends that she escapes to join the nymphs of Numicius (8.164-184), advice which Anna follows (8.165-201). Embedded within the narrative are several intertexts with the works of Vergil and Ovid that place the battle of Cannae on a level of importance similar to the journey of Aeneas to Italy. Obviously, Silius engages with the literary prototype offered by the *Aeneid* (Verg. A. 4.584-705), but there is also a direct relationship with Ovid's version of Anna's story in the *Fasti*,⁹⁰ which elaborates on details left out by Silius, while the version in the *Punica* reciprocally fills in some of the gaps left by the Ovidian narrative. In contrast to the *Punica*, the *Fasti* describes Lavinia as indeed harbouring feelings of ill-will (Ov. *Fast.* 3.633-8), giving grounds to Anna's fear. Lavinia actively seeks to harm her "rival": *furialiter odit / et parat insidias*, *Fast.* 3.637-8 ("she hated with *furor*, and she prepares traps").⁹¹ Silius omits this reference to Lavinia's plot against Anna, reinforcing the sense of ambiguity surrounding Anna's flight.

⁸⁹ Cf. Liv. 22.54.10-11; Lipovsky (1979) 200; Burck (1971) 21 on the Livian *telos* of Roman victory. Cf. Ahl, Davies and Pomeroy (1986) 2505.

⁹⁰ Spaltenstein (1986) 506.

⁹¹ Cf. Barchiesi (1997) 164-6; Newlands (1996) 329.

Yet gaps in Silius' narrative tend to match the extended elements of Ovid's, suggesting that this is more than a simple case of different narrative choices being made on the part of the poet. Of course, similarities exist; both texts record Anna's departure from Carthage and the threats that drive her (Ov. *Fast.* 3.551-60; Sil. 8.157a), as well as showing Anna's boat battling against the natural forces of wind and sea (Ov. *Fast.* 3.579-600; Sil. 8.159) in an engagement with Aeneas' struggle against the elements in his effort to reach Carthage (Verg. *A.* 1.65-156). Both Ovid and Silius also refer to Anna's sojourn on an island;⁹² Silius relies on his readers' knowledge of the *Fasti* by giving only a single line report indicating that Anna's voyage was difficult; '*hinc vestris pelagi vis appulit oris*', 8.259 (" 'hence the force of the sea pushed me to your coast' "). This in contrast to Ovid's extended description of Anna's battle against the sea. These abbreviations in Silius' account leave gaps which can be filled in combination with the Ovidian version of the narrative.

However, in addition to trimming Ovid's narrative, Silius also expands some elements of Anna's interaction with the Trojans.⁹³ Silius' Anna gives a first person account of her story, rather than having the tale reported by the narrator. In doing so, Silius not only reverses Ovid's handling of the material, but also the roles allotted to Anna and Aeneas in the *Aeneid*; where in Vergil's epic it is the wanderer Aeneas who seeks refuge at the newly-established city of Carthage and who tells his story of hardship (Verg. *A.* 2.1-3.718), Silius now has the remaining Carthaginian sister brought by *vis pelagi* to Latium to relate her tale to Aeneas, newly installed as ruler of his Italian kingdom.⁹⁴ In the *Fasti*, Ovid declines to note whether or not Anna tells her story to Aeneas, and Ovid's Aeneas explicitly asks Anna not to describe the events that led to Dido's suicide, referring to his vision of Dido in the Underworld (Ov. *Fast.* 3.619-20).

⁹² Melite (Ov. *Fast.* 3.567); Cyrene (Sil. 8.158). Heitland (1896) 203, 210.

⁹³ Santini (1991) 10.

⁹⁴ Ahl (1985) 313-4.

Notably, Silius' Aeneas never makes reference to seeing Dido with Sychaeus in the Underworld, despite Anna mentioning that she saw Sychaeus in a dream prior to her sister's suicide (8.122-3). Rather, Silius' Anna relates her own involvement with the Underworld as she prepared a sacrifice to the Underworld gods in order to relieve Dido of her love-sickness (8.116-20). Initially, Aeneas does not believe that he has seen Anna, but once she has been identified, he instantly accepts her and promises her a home in his kingdom (Ov. *Fast.* 3.601-24). This is only for Anna to receive a warning from Dido of Lavinia's cruel intentions, and she escapes to the Numicius, becoming a river deity (Ov. *Fast.* 3.625-56; Sil. 8.160-201).⁹⁵ In both the *Punica* and the *Fasti*, Aeneas and his men find Anna following her metamorphosis into a river nymph; only Ovid's Anna addresses the Trojans: *ipsa loqui visa est: 'placidi sum nympha Numici: / amne perenne latens Anna Perenna vocor'*, 3.653-654 ("she herself appeared to speak: 'I am a nymph of calm Numicius: concealed in the perennial river, I am called Anna Perenna'"). Silius writes that Anna is seen sitting with the other nymphs and that she addressed the Trojans in a friendly manner (8.197-9); if his readers wish to know what was said they must rely on the *Fasti*. In both poems, Anna seems to be an apparition (*visa est*, *Fasti* 3.653 and *Pun.* 8.198) visible to the Trojans even if they cannot fully interact with her.

Unlike Ovid's narrative, Silius' version of Anna's story largely intimates violence without depicting it; threats are made, but no violence occurs. Even Anna's metamorphosis at the hands of Numicius the river god is relatively peaceful; unlike transformations in the *Metamorphoses* that involve a river, there is little sense of any act of violence against Anna, and she enters the water of the river peacefully.⁹⁶ Instead of a

⁹⁵ Numicius is traditionally associated with the deification of Aeneas: Newlands (1996) 329.

⁹⁶ Cf. Arethusa and Alpheus, Ov. *Met.* 5.572-641.

violent transformation, both Anna and Numicius consent to her sublimation into the

Italian landscape:

*tunc, ut erat tenui corpus velamine tecta,
prosilvit stratis humilique egressa fenestra
per patulos currit plantis pernicious agros,
donec harenoso, sic fama, Numicius illam
suscepit gremio vitreisque abscondidit antris.*

(8.187-91)

Then, just as she was, her body covered by a thin robe, she leapt up from bed, and, climbing out a low window, she ran across the open fields through hardy plants, until (as the story goes) the Numicius received her into his sandy bosom and hid her in his glassy grottoes.

There is no hint of a struggle, and while Anna may be frightened by her sister's prediction, her transformation is without violence. While water has an ambiguous status in the *Metamorphoses* as both guardian of the vulnerable as well as the site of violence,⁹⁷ in the *Punica* the Numicius is foremost Anna's protector. Anna's metamorphosis is neither forced by the divinity of the river, nor is it unexpected, being the conscious result of Dido's advice; Anna's metamorphosis is the result of her effort to escape the perceived threat of Lavinia and the Trojans. Consequently, the elision of violence categorises her transformation into a river deity as more positive than many equivalent violent rapes in the *locus amoenus* and in this Silius follows a model that is not entirely absent from the *Metamorphoses*.⁹⁸

By evoking the *locus amoenus* landscape, Silius activates his literary models and manipulates the expectations of violence that usually accompany aetiological metamorphosis to such an extent that even Anna herself is prepared for violence (8.73-5); and while she manages to avoid the violence that generally accompanies such narratives, Anna accepts the conventional climax of an attack in the *locus amoenus* by running to the river and allowing herself to be made part of the landscape. What is prevalent in Silius' version of the myth is suspicion, faulty memory, and

⁹⁷ Parry (1964) 279-80; Segal (1969) 53-7.

⁹⁸ Cf. Acis and Galatea, Ov. *Met.* 13.878-97.

reinterpretations of the past and present (both mythological and literary). Silius' Dido manipulates Anna, but also misleads the poem's audience; as a young woman in the *locus amoenus*, anyone familiar with the literary models would reasonably expect Anna to come to harm. Anna's vision of Dido exploits this fear in order to remove her from Trojan influence and to ensure continued antipathy between the Romans and Carthaginians, in fulfilment of her wishes in the *Aeneid* and recapitulated at *Punica* 8.41-3.

Whereas Ovid omits Anna's speech, Silius uses her discourse with the Trojans as a means of referring to the narrative of *Aeneid* 4: in both poems, Dido describes her foundation of Carthage and the vengeance she enacted upon her brother for the death of her husband (Verg. A. 4.651-62; Sil. 8.140-7);⁹⁹ both poems depict Anna rushing to Dido (Verg. A. 4.672-85; Sil. 8.152-4); and, where Vergil has the dying Dido attempt to rise three times only to fall over again, Anna is described by Silius as attempting to throw herself on the Trojan sword three times, each time falling on the body of her sister (8.155-6).¹⁰⁰ Yet rather than telling Aeneas of the curse pronounced by Dido on her death bed, Anna chooses instead to tell him that she hoped to see Sychaeus in the Underworld (8.145-7).¹⁰¹ This parallels Aeneas' failure to report his encounter with Dido in the Underworld, despite having the opportunity to do so; rather, Silius' readers are able to fill in the gaps with their knowledge of the *Aeneid* and the *Fasti*, but his characters are guarded about the information they reveal to one another, remembering selectively and fostering an atmosphere of mutual suspicion.

Consequently, Silius' narrative implies that Anna's meeting with the Trojans is a crucial element in the development of antagonistic relations between Carthage and

⁹⁹ Cf. Santini (1991) 48-59.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Verg. A. 4.690-2; Spaltenstein (1986) 509.

¹⁰¹ Dido is reported as referring to herself as *Aeneae coniux*, *Veneris nurus*, 8.143.

Rome.¹⁰² Moreover, Silius' engagement with the *Fasti* and the *Aeneid* casts doubt on Aeneas' conduct.¹⁰³ attention has been drawn to Ovid's Anna narrative as representative of many of the tensions running through the *Fasti*, and scholars have found it difficult to reconcile the seemingly frivolous and subversive presentation of Aeneas with either the official Augustan portrayal of the hero or the *Fasti*'s relationship with the state as expressed through the Roman calendar.¹⁰⁴ Ovid's aetiology implicitly challenges the state endorsed representation of Aeneas, and by means of an engagement with Ovid's subversive narrative and Vergil's portrayal of the abandonment of Dido,¹⁰⁵ Silius also constructs an iconoclastic portrait of Aeneas.¹⁰⁶ Silius' problematisation of the Roman hero resonates within the morally charged landscape of the *locus amoenus* and combines with the portrayal of Anna as unreliable and deceptive. Silius makes Anna a clear parallel for Aeneas, explicitly identifying the pair as geographically close to each other within the contemporary landscape of the Punic War as fellow Roman gods (8.39-40); Aeneas and Anna are constructed as morally ambiguous figures and the insertion of Aeneas/Jupiter Indiges into the *locus amoenus* reinforces the ambiguous portrayal of the Olympian gods who allow the Romans to suffer.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, given that these are two figures to whom is allotted the responsibility of safeguarding the Romans and the Italian landscape, Silius replicates both the contemporary narrative situation as well as the contemporary chronological situation: at the battle of Cannae, the Roman commanders are unable to agree on strategy, and "prove to be subverting Rome's interests and helping Carthage" as a result of their confusion.¹⁰⁸ The doubts cast upon the Roman

¹⁰² Santini (1991) 17.

¹⁰³ McKeown (1984) 171; cf. Newlands (1995) 61.

¹⁰⁴ Galinsky (2005) 2; also Wallace-Hadrill (2005) 58-62; McKeown (1984) 169-87; also Newlands (1995) 49; Newlands (2002b) 204; Newlands (1996) 325-7; Habinek (2002) 57.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Hardie (1997) 321-2; Keith (2000) 112-9.

¹⁰⁶ Ahl, Davies and Pomeroy (1986) 2519, 2496-9.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Santini (1991) 38.

¹⁰⁸ McGuire (1997) 129.

gods are suggestive of an increasing Roman propensity to self-inflicted civil discord; individuals work to their own advantage and to the disadvantage of the common good.¹⁰⁹

Silius employs the aetiological function of the *locus amoenus* in order to explore the origins of tension between Rome and Carthage. The distrust shown in Aeneas' and Anna's discourse provides an example of the difficulties in Romano-Carthaginian relations, and the ghost of Dido focuses attention on Dido's suicide and Aeneas' misadventures in Carthage. As well as refocusing attention on the causative potential of *Aeneid* four, the meeting of Aeneas and Anna also functions as an *aition* recording the fundamental mutual antipathy between Rome and Carthage, and the Anna narrative acts as a precursor to the battle of Cannae which is structurally placed at the centre of the *Punica*, despite occurring chronologically early in the war.¹¹⁰ Anna is given a crucial role in ensuring that the battle takes place, reassuring Hannibal following his failure against Fabius in the previous book. By forming strong intertextual links with the *Aeneid* and the *Fasti*, Silius suggests that the centre of his epic, the battle of Cannae, is of fundamental importance for influencing the direction of Roman development. Silius views the Second Punic War as a whole as a pivotal existential moment for Rome,¹¹¹ foreshadowing both the greatness of the city as well as its decline into degeneracy; Cannae is placed at the centre of this and Silius accentuates its importance by making Anna, sister of Dido, the necessary facilitator of the battle. Anna's sublimation into the Italian landscape, drawn from the *Fasti* where it is explicitly connected to events that

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Ahl, Davies and Pomeroy (1986) ; McGuire (1997) 135.

¹¹⁰ Ahl, Davies and Pomeroy (1986) 2501-11; Santini (1991) 7. The battle of Cannae takes place in 216BC, the third of eighteen years of war.

¹¹¹ Ahl, Davies and Pomeroy (1986) 2493-501; Vessey (1982a) 95-6; Pomeroy (1990) 126; Vessey (1975) 405 on the *locus amoenus* represented on the shield of Hannibal: "The shield as a whole fixes the Punic Wars in the perspective of eternity".

precipitate the transition from Republican to Imperial Rome,¹¹² establishes a link between mythical past and Silius' present; just as Aeneas' story is embedded in the Roman narrative, Silius' engagement with Perennial Anna's sublimation into the landscape attributes similar perennial qualities to the battle.

By asserting the centrality of the events he narrates to the movement of the Roman story, Silius appropriates for his epic a position within the potential Roman epic cycle.¹¹³ Yet the poet does not unequivocally endorse a perception of history of which imperial Rome is the *telos*, as reflected by the ambivalent attitude towards the actors in the narrative: the proto-Romans are not idealised, and Anna's identity crisis prefigures a set of Romans who seem to have forgotten their identity in the wake of prolonged, successful Imperial expansion; an identity that was at its greatest realisation in the disaster of Cannae, the event that paradoxically prepared the way for this Roman expansion and its ultimate decadence. Silius' exploratory attitude towards aetiological narratives finds further expression in his narrative of Hercules and Pyrene, another tale of rape set in the *locus amoenus*, and in which Hannibal's tendency towards transgression is highlighted.

5.3: A peak you reach: breaking through the *locus amoenus*.

Shortly after the conquest of Saguntum, Hannibal begins his epic journey to Italy and Rome. Silius' Saguntum episode constructed an antithesis between Hercules and Juno,¹¹⁴ whose support for the Saguntines and Hannibal respectively led to a stalemate which ended with the city's self-immolation;¹¹⁵ Juno also remained true to form by

¹¹² Ov. *Fast.* 3.697-710; cf. Newlands (1996) 321.

¹¹³ Above, p. 190.

¹¹⁴ Sil. 1.268-2.707. Vessey (1974) 30.

¹¹⁵ Marks (2005b) 533.

summoning a fury and unleashing the forces of hell in support of Hannibal.¹¹⁶ However, Silius' depiction of Hannibal's journey sets up a contradictory parallelism between Hercules and Hannibal, making them traverse the same geographical boundaries and constructing the pair as transgressors against physical and moral boundaries, as Hannibal follows Hercules' footsteps by crossing from Spain and travelling via the Pyrenees and Alpine mountain ranges (3.415ff.).¹¹⁷

Silius expands on Livy's treatment of this march,¹¹⁸ although his treatment of the actual crossing is also brief.¹¹⁹ Silius includes an aetiological digression on Hercules' rape of Pyrene (3.420-441):¹²⁰ *nomen Bebrycia duxere a virgine colles, / hospitis Alcidae crimen*, 3.420-1 ("The hills took the name from the virgin daughter of Bebryx, a victim of the guest Hercules"). According to Silius' account, Hercules, in the course of his labours, became drunk and raped Pyrene (3.421-6); she is abandoned by Hercules and left to give birth to a serpent (3.426-9). Pyrene hides in a nearby *locus amoenus* and laments her plight to the trees; while praying for succour from her ravisher, she is torn to pieces by wild beasts: *tum noctem Alcidae solis plangebant in antris / et promissa viri silvis narrabat opacis, / donec maerentem ingratos raptoris amores / tendentemque manus atque hospitis arma vocantem / diripuerunt ferae*, 3.429-33 ("Then, in lonely caves she lamented the night with Hercules and she told his promises to the shady trees until, while mourning the unpleasant affections of her ravisher, and stretching her hands, and calling for defence through her guest, wild animals tore her apart"). Hercules returns to find only the dismembered remains of Pyrene, and, mourning her loudly he buries what is left of her in the mountain range.¹²¹

¹¹⁶ Hardie (1993) 82; Sil. 2.526-649, 673-4.

¹¹⁷ On the Alps as a "symbolic frontier" (cf. Lucan's Rubicon), Šubrt (1991) 225; Hardie (1990a) 14-6.

¹¹⁸ Liv. 21.24.1.

¹¹⁹ Spaltenstein (1986) 231.

¹²⁰ Silius reiterates a concern with *fas*, 3.435; above, p. 190 n. 13.

¹²¹ Bruère (1958) 480-1; Keith (2000) 56-7; Augoustakis (2003) 252-4.

Augoustakis has described how Hercules' rape of Pyrene foreshadows Hannibal's crossing of the Alpine landscape and provides a metaphor for his violent progress; as Hercules defiles Pyrene and abandons her, Hannibal and his troops are "penetrators of the mountains [who] leave a landscape polluted with blood but...also infected with the unhealable wounds of warfare".¹²² Keith has suggested that by equating Hannibal's crossing of the Pyrenees with Hercules' rape of the young girl, Silius is making a negative moral judgement on Hannibal's actions;¹²³ Hannibal is violating the landscape just as Hercules violated Pyrene in a manner consistent with previous examples of rape narratives set in the *locus amoenus*.¹²⁴ Moreover, Pyrene is dehumanised by her encounter with Hercules; in an action that strips him of his *pietas*, Hercules is aligned with Hannibal in an act that echoes the dehumanising tendency of violence in the *Bellum Civile*, depriving Pyrene of her connection to humankind. Silius' *aition* destabilises the character of Hercules: this is not the exemplary Hercules of Vergil's aetiological Cacus narrative; the hero rather emulates Statius' ambivalent and capricious Apollo.¹²⁵ In book 3, Hannibal frequently emulates Hercules:¹²⁶ he draws parallels between his own deeds and those of Hercules (Hannibal repeatedly uses the word *labor* to describe his task in a speech to his wife, 3.89-92¹²⁷); and he also associates himself with the Carthaginian equivalent of Hercules, Melqart, by worshipping at his temple after sacking Saguntum (3.14-44). Additionally, the doors of this temple depict the Labours of Hercules (3.32-60), and the image inspires him with

¹²² Augoustakis (2003) 250. Cf. 1.42-54.

¹²³ Keith (2000) 56; cf. Newlands (1984) 7-9.

¹²⁴ Above, p. 21.

¹²⁵ Stat. *Theb.* 1.557-720.

¹²⁶ Cf. Sil. 11.135-7; 215-8.

¹²⁷ Vessey (1982b) 326.

its depiction of the hero's valour (3.45). In the Pyrene episode, Hannibal is set up as a direct counterpart to Hercules, contextualising his act of spatial violation.¹²⁸

Hannibal's identification with Hercules in the *Punica* is problematic and acts as further exposure for the fundamental paradoxes of the *Punica* and the Second Punic War: Hercules is a Stoic sage, a Roman moral exemplar and a parallel in the epic for the figure of Scipio Africanus.¹²⁹ Conversely, Hannibal is *belliger* (1.38), and as well as his violence against the Romans and their homeland (1.59-60), Hannibal commits the impious deed of besieging and laying waste to Hercules' own city of Saguntum (2.457-707); Hercules is the bringer of culture, while Hannibal destroys it.¹³⁰ Yet this does activate a tradition of portrayals of the brutal, "comic" Hercules whose characterisation can be more ambiguous.¹³¹ Both Vessey and Augoustakis have highlighted the manner in which Hannibal's crossing of the Pyrenees and Alps marks a divergence from the Roman Hercules' typical behaviour. Following on from his rape of Pyrene in book 3, Hercules is portrayed in an increasingly positive manner: the paradoxical Hercules of the myths converges with the divine Hercules who has already expressed his dismay at the sacrifice of Saguntum.¹³² Hannibal, on the other hand, inverts the path of Hercules, going on to further and more audacious violations.¹³³ Augoustakis sees the Hercules who rapes Pyrene as an extreme aberration from the normal, Stoic behaviour of the hero:¹³⁴ thus, Hercules' violent act, even if incongruous in terms of the idealised portrayal of the hero in the rest of the epic, achieves greater significance as a marker of

¹²⁸ Šubr (1991) 229.

¹²⁹ Cf. Hercules and Cacus, Verg. A. 8.184ff.; Galinsky (1972) 126-49; Colish (1985) 30-1. On Scipio with Hercules, Matier (1990) 69-70. Cf. Vessey (1974) 32.

¹³⁰ Cf. Bassett (1966) 268.

¹³¹ Galinsky (1972) 81-100, 126-9; Hardie (1993) 66; cf. Lucan's treatment of Hercules as a non-exemplary figure in books 4 and 9 of the *Bellum Civile*; Martindale (1981) 73; Ripoll (1998) 87.

¹³² Although note that Hercules and Tisiphone act in concert to inspire the Saguntines to suicide; cf. Hardie (1993) 82.

¹³³ Vessey (1982b) 333.

¹³⁴ Augoustakis (2003) 253.

Hannibal's nefarious nature in spite of his obvious qualities as a strategist and a leader of men.¹³⁵

As an aetiological tool for understanding origins, violent metamorphosis gives way to a permanent memorial in the landscape which will function as a reminder of the individual who has been transformed. The Pyrenees fulfil this function for Pyrene, but Hannibal's crossing suggests that the mountains have a more turbulent and changeable status: *At Pyrenaei frondosa cacumina montis, / turbata Poenus terrarum pace petebat*, 3.415-6 ("But the Carthaginian, throwing the peaceful earth into disorder, approached the leafy summits of the Pyrenees mountains"). Hannibal is not only throwing the human world into disorder, but just as with his Alpine crossing, he challenges the physical order of the world to assert his own dominance, irrevocably changing it.¹³⁶

Once again, Silius demonstrates a preoccupation with the idea of landscape as eternal;¹³⁷ according to Silius, the Pyrenees form an eternal division (*aeterna...divortia*, 3.418-9) between Spain and Gaul. Yet this barrier is breached by Hannibal in his desire to destroy barriers both physical and moral in his pursuit of glory, leaving the mountain range irredeemably altered. Neither the Pyrenees nor the Alps are the inviolable barriers they once were. As Hannibal crosses the Pyrenees, violating a natural boundary between Carthage and Rome,¹³⁸ his spatial violation is equated to Hercules' moral violation, engaging with the *locus amoenus*' paradigmatic moral dimension. Moreover Hannibal usurps aetiology by changing the past and future story of the mountains, passing through them, and demonstrating their liminality. This offers a metapoetic analogy for Silius' insinuation of his epic and the Punic War into the aetiological narrative of Rome, asserting its equal status and importance with other foundational Roman mythologies,

¹³⁵ Liv. 21.4.1.10; cf. Sil. 17.401-5.

¹³⁶ Augoustakis (2003) 242.

¹³⁷ Cf. Perennial Anna, above, p. 202.

¹³⁸ Šubrt (1991) 226-7.

primarily those of Aeneas and Hercules (particularly as both are encompassed within the scope of the *Aeneid*).¹³⁹ Hannibal perceives no limits to his conflict with Rome, and his violation of physical boundaries and the limits of aetiology reflects this characteristic of the Carthaginian general.¹⁴⁰

Hannibal's spatial violation and alteration of the mountains' physical characteristics from *aeterna...divortia* to permeable boundary parallels a dissolution of the permanence usually associated with aetiological metamorphosis. Pyrene exemplifies resistance to resolution and permanence: despite receiving a permanent memorial, Hercules' victim is subject to several violent metamorphoses. Initially she is raped by Hercules, and gives birth to a serpent; following this she flees her home and the wrath of her father, seeking safety from his anger in the *locus amoenus* only to be torn apart by wild beasts. Her change of form continues in that her mangled body is strewn across the landscape, and Hercules must engage in a search to find her head (3.433-5); here too the landscape is "polluted with blood".¹⁴¹ Finally, Pyrene is entombed and embodied within the mountains. The episode recalls Hercules' frantic search for Hylas in book 3 of Valerius' *Argonautica*;¹⁴² there, Hercules is recorded as rushing throughout the *locus amoenus*, calling the boy's name over and over and causing chaos in the landscape (V. Fl. 3.592-7).¹⁴³ In the *Punica*, Hercules does not cry the maiden's name until after he has found her body, but here the landscape again echoes the hero's cries:

*at voce Herculea percussa cacumina montis
intremuere iugis; maesto clamore ciebat
Pyrenen, scopulique omnes ac lustra ferarum
Pyrenen resonant.*

(3.436-9)

¹³⁹ Cf. Galinsky (1990) 277-83.

¹⁴⁰ Vessey (1982b) 323.

¹⁴¹ Augoustakis (2003) 250.

¹⁴² Spaltenstein (1986) 234.

¹⁴³ Above, p. 108.

Then the summits of the mountains, struck by Hercules' voice, were shaken to the top of the range; he called Pyrene with sorrowful shout, and all of the crags and haunts of wild animals echoed 'Pyrene'.

While figures such as Valerius' anadiplosis or Silius' anaphora are common enough in depictions of mourning,¹⁴⁴ Silius follows Valerius in stressing the interaction of Hercules' voice with the landscape around him.¹⁴⁵ In both cases, Hercules has a significant effect on the topography surrounding him; however, in the *Punica*, it is claimed that the mark he leaves is permanent and indelible. Where Valerius seems to deny a physical existence for Hylas (*puer...visus*, V. Fl. 4.22), Silius manages to suggest that in tandem with the manifestation of Pyrene in the mountains, the hills themselves are subject to violence; Hercules' call carries enough force to reconfigure their nomenclature (3.441). In the *Argonautica*, Hercules can at best interact with *umbra* and *flumina*, upon neither of which can he leave an indelible mark. Hercules' vocal and physical violence alters the status of Pyrene and the mountain range, creating an analogue for Hannibal's violation of spatial boundaries. Unlike the Valerian episode, which highlights the manner in which the *locus amoenus* seems to engage in an attempt to deceive Hercules, the landscape is here entirely subjugated to Hercules' power.

Unlike Pyrene, Hylas can only ever be an echo for Hercules, at best appearing in a dream,¹⁴⁶ and by the time the hero is fully awake, Hylas' non-corporeal form is no longer perceivable. However, in the *Punica* Pyrene's remains are available for Hercules to pick up and mourn, as well as physically inter in the ground (Sil. 3.433-5). Moreover, Silius claims that the name will be permanent, even if the mountains' status as *aeterna...divortia* is not: *nec honos intercidet aevo, / defletumque tenent montes per saecula nomen*, 3.440-1 ("her legacy will not be destroyed by time, and the mountains will keep her lamented name through the ages"). Permanence is verbal as well as

¹⁴⁴ Pollmann (2004) 282; cf. Verg. *A.* 12.948-9; Stat. *Theb.* 12.805-7.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Verg. *E.* 6.44; *G.* 4.523-7.

¹⁴⁶ V. Fl. *Arg.* 4.22-57.

physical, and Silius' statement is given legitimacy by the continued validity of the name that results from the poetic *aition*;¹⁴⁷ this is especially notable in a poem which demonstrates an ongoing concern with names and naming, frequently opting for obscure, unusual and archaic alternatives that suggest naming conventions themselves are fluid and redefinable.¹⁴⁸ Unlike the *imago* of Hylas that only exists as long as Hercules remembers him (V. Fl. 4.35-7), Pyrene's name exists independently of Hercules, having been written into the landscape; yet the pair share a textual afterlife, preserved within the literary landscape. Hylas' memory is only retained as long as poets continue to write about him and as long as their poetry survives.¹⁴⁹ Valerius' Hylas episode foregrounds the issue of textual and narrative variance, questioning the value of textual permanence. The dissonance between Valerius' narrative and Mopsus' prediction demonstrates that narrative, like memory, can be fluid and deceptive, rather than fixed and verifiable, prompting us to question whether or not the narrative is truly 'remembered'.¹⁵⁰ Silius' claim that Pyrene's name can exist outwith the text stems from a similar problematisation of poetic remembrance. Silius appears to suggest that the Pyrenees stand independently as a memorial to Pyrene, regardless of poetic recollection. Hercules cries his final tears (3.440) and goes on his way, with no indication that the girl will be remembered; only the name is guaranteed to remain. While the episode is, ostensibly, a demonstration of aetiological exploration, it appears to undermine the importance of such aetiologies by implying that effects can exist beyond the recollection of their causes; in this case, that the name of the Pyrenees is capable of outlasting its *aition*. Following this reading, poetic permanence, either in terms of a consistent reading of a myth across one or more texts or in the physical survival of texts, is no

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Bate (2000) 175.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Wilson (1993) 219.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Reynolds and Wilson (1974) 18-27.

¹⁵⁰ V. Fl. 1.218-20; 3.521ff.; Malamud and McGuire (1993) 192-7. Above, p. 109.

longer a necessary requirement for the survival of the victim's fame; yet the reference to Pyrene's name lasting *per saecula* implies that it will have some kind of permanence regardless of whether it is recorded or not. The vagaries of textual transmission heighten this element of Silius' Pyrene narrative: the *Punica* is the only work to record this version of the myth in full.¹⁵¹ To a certain extent, therefore, the mountains retain the name regardless of the paucity of textual material concerning their nomenclature, and the loss of either the *Punica* or the relevant passage of Pliny would not have lost the mountains' name. To this extent, the "Pyrenees" stand with or without a poet to record the *aition*.

However, Silius' insistence that the mountains are *aeterna...divortia* and that Pyrene's name will be kept eternally by the mountains engenders a further paradox: it may be the case that the Pyrenees *tenent...per saecula nomen*, but at this point in the narrative the hills have already had one "eternal" characteristic removed: the "eternal division" has been revealed to be a liminal space that is nevertheless fluid and traversable. Landscape can be redefined, and like Pyrene, the Pyrenees mountain range is subject to violence and change. Redefinition of "eternal" characteristics implies fluidity and flux, and Hannibal's crossing is antithetical to the conceptualisation of the mountain landscape as defined by its innate characteristics. In contrast to parallel aetiological metamorphoses that employ the phrase *per saecula nomen*,¹⁵² Silius here acknowledges the possibility of ongoing metamorphosis:¹⁵³ this is in contrast to the mountain named for Aeneas' ill-fated companion Misenus (Verg. *A.* 6.156-235). Like Pyrene, Misenus is buried beneath a mountain that will keep his name throughout the ages: *aeternumque tenet per saecula nomen* (Verg. *A.* 6.235). Beyond the aetiology of

¹⁵¹ Augoustakis (2003) fn. 21; Bruère (1958) 480-1. Plin. *Nat.* 3.8 refers to the story, but does not go into any detail.

¹⁵² Spaltenstein (1986) 234. Cf. Verg. *A.* 6.235; Luc. 7.589; Stat. *Theb.* 2.486; 5.747; Sil. 10.71; 15.553.

¹⁵³ Cf. Luc. 2.399ff.; see above, p. 44.

the mountain, however, there is no emphasis on the metamorphosis of the sailor; there has been no stress on changes to his physical characteristics (other than death), and there is no suggestion of continuing change to the status of the mountain. Unlike Hercules' struggle to find and identify Pyrene's body parts, Aeneas and his companions easily recognise Misenus' body (Verg. A. 6.156-65). Moreover, the discovery of Misenus' body heralds the fulfilment of the Sybil's prophecy concerning the Golden Bough (Verg. A. 6.142-55). The episode is more straightforwardly aetiological than some others in Virgil's epic;¹⁵⁴ Misenus' name is, in the *Aeneid*'s terms, unquestionably going to last *per saecula* and the episode contributes to the aetiological progression of the *Aeneid* as a whole,¹⁵⁵ whereas Silius' Pyrene narrative is an interrogation of the aetiological movement of his poem. This does not deny the aetiological thrust of the *Punica*, which is not incompatible with instability (indeed, instability might be argued to be a requirement for metamorphic *aitia*).¹⁵⁶ However, by intertextually exploring the paradox inherent in the metamorphic aetiology of the *Punica* Silius engages in metapoetic reflection on the role of aetiology in his epic and explores the tension that exists between the mutability of the victim and her allegedly immutable memorial.

Silius' deployment of the *locus amoenus* in which Pyrene meets her end demonstrates Silius' ongoing exploration of causes, effects, *aitia* and their relation to his text. As a physical environment, the *locus amoenus* embodies the paradox of change and instability leading to order, and Silius reiterates his ongoing thematic exploration of the causes and consequences of the Second Punic War. Further, Silius' activation of the moral resonance of the landscape by equating Hannibal's violation of a spatial boundary with Hercules' rape of Pyrene reinforces a sense of moral ambiguity and ambivalence within the poem. As Hannibal's audacious *nefas* becomes more prevalent, the

¹⁵⁴ Cf. the instability associated with the metamorphosis of Aeneas' ships into nymphs, Verg. A. 9.77-122.

¹⁵⁵ Austin (1977) 107-8.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Feldherr (2002) 169-78.

landscapes of the poem metamorphose into *loca horrida*, with a concomitant problematisation of the moral status of Hannibal and the Romans; this antagonism finds increasing expression in the transformation of the Italian *locus amoenus* into *loca horrida*; the disaster of defeat is etched into the battlefield landscapes despoiled by Hannibal's relentless march onward. These *loca horrida* find a precedent as Hannibal's march across the Pyrenees is matched and surpassed by his crossing of the Alps; although not quite a *locus horridus*, this landscape is nonetheless harsh and dangerous, inspiring fear in the Carthaginian army but, as with other hellish landscapes in the poem, energising Hannibal's action (3.477-569).¹⁵⁷ Crucially, however, Hannibal's crossing of the mountains establishes him as an unnatural force that can conquer nature, and also aligns him with the Underworld:¹⁵⁸

*quantum Tartareus regni pallentis hiatus
ad manes imos atque atrae stagna paludis
a supera tellure patet, tam longa per auras
erigitur tellus et caelum intercipit umbra.*

(3.483-6)

Deep as the abyss between the upper world and the kingdom of pale Tartarus that descends to the dead below and pools of black marsh, so high the earth rises through the air and shuts out heaven with shade.

Thus, prior to his entry into Italy, Hannibal conquers an Underworldesque landscape, and his passage into Roman territory from the Alps suggests the passage of a Fury from Hell into the Earth. Hannibal's transgressive and boundary breaking march presages the *loca horrida* that are to come over the course of the war, leading ultimately to Roman defeat at Cannae and further engagement with Lucan's landscapes of *nefas*.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. Hardie (1993) 60.

¹⁵⁸ Cf. Santini (1991) 94-6.

5.4: Bringing Hell to Earth: transforming Italy into the *locus horridus*.

The Furies of Vergil and Statius emerge from the Underworld to spread chaos and *nefas* across a wide geographical area: Philip Hardie has suggested that in Silius' *Punica* the siege of Saguntum has effectively opened a passage from the Underworld, allowing Tisiphone access to the human sphere and energising Hannibal's own assumption of Fury-like tendencies.¹⁵⁹ Having gained access to Italy, Hannibal continues his appropriation of the role of the Fury, transforming the Italian *locus amoenus* into a hellish *locus horridus* that reflects his spatial violation of the boundaries between the antithetical non-Roman and Roman spheres.¹⁶⁰ At the opening of book 4 and directly following his conquest of the Alps, Hannibal is greeted with the site of an Italian *locus amoenus*: as the first example of an Italian landscape following Hannibal's Alpine crossing, the Ticinus offers a model for the natural state of Roman territory,¹⁶¹ and the Italian landscape also functions as a suggestive metaphor for the Roman *pietas* that is shortly to be contaminated by the incursion of Carthaginian *nefas*:¹⁶²

*Haec ait atque agmen Ticini flectit ad undas.
caeruleas Ticinus aquas et stagna vadoso
perspicuus servat turbari nescia fundo
ac nitidum viridi lente trahit amne liquorum.
vix credas labi; ripis tam mitis opacis
argutos inter volucrum certamine cantus
somniaferam ducit lucenti gurgite lympham.*

(4.81-7)

He said this, and turned his column towards the waves of Ticinus. Clear Ticinus keeps its waters blue, and its pools in its shallow bed free from disturbance; and slowly drags its bright river of green water. You would barely believe it moved; so soft among its shady banks, with birds contending in bright song, it leads in a shining flood its sleep-bringing waters.

The Ticinus contrasts with the harsh Alpine landscape previously traversed by Hannibal and his army, suggesting peace and calm; this is also a contrast to the force of

¹⁵⁹ Hardie (1993) 60.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Šubrt (1991) 226.

¹⁶¹ Cf. the lands of Falernus, also Hannibal's vision of the serpent in Italy, 3.184-213: above, p. 192.

¹⁶² The Ticinus is a tributary of the River Po, often portrayed as the archetypal Italian *locus amoenus* (cf. Phaethon, Ov. *Met.* 2.259; Luc. 3.399ff.).

Hannibal's entry into Italy and the whirlwind of violence that he is to spread across the peninsula.¹⁶³ The Ticinus is paradigmatic of Italian landscapes prior to Hannibal's arrival, but will be the first site for Roman defeat within their own territory, the first in a cycle of disasters that are etched into the Italian topography and onto the Roman psyche. Hannibal's audacious entry into Italy is a hitherto unthinkable challenge to Rome, reflected by the transformation of Roman territory into a *locus horridus*; the encounter with the Ticinus inaugurates a cycle of warfare across the next five books that will culminate with the disaster of Cannae. The topography of the Ticinus river is transformed as it becomes saturated with the gore of battle: *arva natant, altusque virum cruor, altus equorum / lubrica belligerae sorbet vestigia turmae*, 4.162-3 ("the fields overflow, and much blood of men, and much of horses, sucks up the slippery soles of the fighting band"). Silius comes close to the exultant violence of Lucan and Statius as limbs are detached from bodies and the combatants become drenched with blood;¹⁶⁴ in the confusion of battle it becomes impossible to demarcate the boundaries between topography and the armies: *spissaque ruunt conferta per arma / undae Boiorum*, 4.158-9 ("and the crowding waves of the Boii rushed over the close-packed spears").¹⁶⁵ This exuberant charge in the depictions of post-battle topography recurs throughout the following books as Hannibal's *nefas* is inscribed upon the landscape.

Roman *pietas* receives expression in Scipio's famous rescue of his father from the Ticinus, rendered even more momentous by the direct involvement of the Olympians. While Livy gives only a brief notice of the rescue (Liv. 21.46.7-9),¹⁶⁶ Silius attributes the rescue to Jupiter's desire to preserve the life of the elder Scipio (4.417ff). Scipio's involvement in the battle foreshadows the resurgence of Rome later in the

¹⁶³ Spaltenstein (1986) 270.

¹⁶⁴ I.e. 4.189-215.

¹⁶⁵ Spaltenstein (1986) 278.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. Liv. 21.46.8; moreover, Livy gives competing versions of the story, 21.46.10.

poem; not only does Jupiter's desire to save the consul reflect his partiality towards the Romans, but his favour singles Scipio out as divinely favoured amongst the protagonists. Moreover, this is an opportunity for Silius to introduce Scipio early in the narrative, setting him up as a fitting counterbalance to the superhuman force of Hannibal. Where Hannibal and his army bring chaos and destruction to the *locus amoenus* at the Ticinus as the landscape dissolves in the disintegration of topography and the dismemberment of soldiers' bodies, the younger Scipio brings a form of order, bringing his father from the chaos of the plain and clearing a path by killing his enemies (4.461-2),¹⁶⁷ although there remains a ragged edge to this violent imposition of order which perhaps foreshadows Roman tendencies towards self-destruction; Scipio's Aeneas-like demonstration of *pietas* is undermined by the potential pursuit of glory over the good of the state.¹⁶⁸

Building on the momentum gained following his defeat of the Roman army at the Ticinus, Hannibal presses on towards the river Trebia, following a Roman army who have become fearful of the Italian landscape (4.483-4);¹⁶⁹ when seeking sanctuary by the Trebia, the Romans are exposed to further attack despite assiduously destroying the bridges across the Po. The landscape is complicit in assisting Hannibal, whose passage proceeds with remarkable ease (4.485-92). Although the fortunes of the Romans appear to take an upward swing with the arrival of a second consul, Ti. Sempronius Longus (for whom Silius appropriates the symbolism of topographical force),¹⁷⁰ the Trebia rises to participate in battle with the consequence that it takes an active role in precipitating

¹⁶⁷ Spaltenstein (1986) 304. *Limes* here seems loaded, as though Scipio is beginning the restoration of the correct boundaries between the Romans and the Carthaginians as well as clearing a path through the opposing army; OLD s.v. *limes* (2), (3). Cf. Vessey (1982b) 325.

¹⁶⁸ Ahl, Davies and Pomeroy (1986) 2544-5; cf. Marks (2005b) 535.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. Liv. 21.48.1-10; Silius omits Livy's account of a bloody revolt of Gallic auxiliaries at 21.48.1; similarly, Livy interrupts his account of the war in Italy with a recollection of events at Sicily, 21.49.1-21.51.7.

¹⁷⁰ 4.517-24.

its own dissolution into a *locus horridus* by its partiality towards the Carthaginians: *Tum Trebia infausto nova proelia gurgite fessis / incohat ac precibus Iunonis suscitatur undis*, 4.573-4 (“Then the Trebia, with its swirl of ill-omen, began a new battle with the tired Romans, and, obedient to Juno’s petition, roused up its waters”). Juno perverts the Trebia, which should have responsibility for assisting and nourishing the Romans.¹⁷¹ Trebia’s transformation into a *locus horridus* is evident during the battle: the river bank begins to collapse, creating a quagmire that entraps the Romans; and, as Scipio’s troops attempt to extricate themselves, they are cut down by the Carthaginians (4.575-91). The river becomes polluted with blood (4.591-3), and is then blocked by the bodies of the Roman and Carthaginian dead during a Roman resurgence led by the wounded elder Scipio (4.622-37). The Trebia itself then takes action against Scipio, and Silius’ narrative has obvious affinities with Achilles’ battle against the Scamander in *Iliad* 21: indeed, Silius establishes a metapoetic context for his narrative that reifies the Homeric intertext within his own variation upon the *topos*.¹⁷² However, Hippomedon’s fight against Ismenos in the *Thebaid* supplies a further poetic reference for Silius’ narrative.¹⁷³

Having entered the waters of the river, the elder Scipio slays a number of enemies, whose bodies clutter the river (4.625-6). The river responds with a treacherous attack on Scipio (4.638-41), raging in an embodiment of Roman epic *furor*,¹⁷⁴ and while Silius’ narrator reveals that the river is *ferox*,¹⁷⁵ the consul himself recognises the Trebia’s *rabies* (4.648). In contrast with the river combats of the *Iliad* and the *Thebaid*, the Trebia is unique in that the river is betraying the people who are geographically connected with it; in the *Iliad* the Scamander rages because it has been filled with

¹⁷¹ Cf. Juno and Anna Perenna, above, p. 202; cf. McGuire (1997) 129.

¹⁷² 4.525-8; Spaltenstein (1986) 309-10.

¹⁷³ Stat. *Theb.* 9.196-569. Contra Feeney (1991) 308-10.

¹⁷⁴ 4.640-1: *furit unda sonoris / verticibus*.

¹⁷⁵ 4.638.

bodies, but its geographical alignment with the Trojans is pertinent to the conflict.¹⁷⁶ Statius' Ismenos reacts to the despoliation of his waters and the death of his grandson, the Theban Crenaeus (Stat. *Theb.* 9.404ff.). The despoliation of the river is less of a motivating factor for Silius' river god (4.662-5); however, Silius engages with the thematic concerns of the *Thebaid* by echoing Statius' focus on the proper disposal of the dead as an aspect of *pietas*; two of Scipio's victims are referred to as being swept out to sea without any burial.¹⁷⁷ Just as *pietas* collapses in the world of the *Thebaid* as a result of the war's origin in *fraternae acies*, Silius' depiction of the battle between the Trebia and the consul enacts a Statian variation on the theme of civil war.

Silius' allusion to the civil war thematics of the *Thebaid* undermines an initial metapoetic reference to Homer that asserted the primacy of the *Iliad*;¹⁷⁸ while on one level the allusion is certainly a positive poetic comment on the deeds of the elder Scipio and the potential for epic poets to record the deeds of heroes, the Statian intertext problematises the episode by developing the sense that the battle between the river and the consul replicates civil conflict, undermining the positive aspects of heroic glory that are celebrated in the Homeric epic; *gloria* attains more problematic connotations as Silius reveals that the consul is also motivated by extreme emotion against the river's *furor*.¹⁷⁹ Scipio is characterised as feeling *violentius ira* (4.642), and his own human excesses are criticised by the river god.¹⁸⁰ Scipio's attack on the river is also characterised as an attack upon the wider topography of the area;¹⁸¹ and the river offers Scipio the opportunity to withdraw, seemingly tired of the wanton carnage upon its previously pleasant banks, which in fulfilment of Juno's prophecy, overflow with the

¹⁷⁶ Hom. *Il.* 21.122-386.

¹⁷⁷ 4.635: *tu quoque, Thapse, cadis, tumulo post fata negato.*

¹⁷⁸ 4.525: *Maeoniae ... gloria linguae.*

¹⁷⁹ Cf. Marks (2005a) 140.

¹⁸⁰ 4.659-60; the Trebia suggests that Scipio should attack another nearby landscape instead, 4.666.

¹⁸¹ 4.662.

bodies of the dead as the river runs backwards (4.662-6). Yet although the river's *furor* has partially subsided, this is not the case for Scipio's *ira*.

Although Scipio's anger appears to be righteously held against the treachery of the river landscape, the river battle *topos* itself exemplifies the consul's excessive behaviour by engaging with Statius' Hippomedon,¹⁸² whose impossibly excessive stand against the river god has no chance of succeeding; as with Achilles, Hippomedon's only option is to appeal to the gods for assistance. In common with Hippomedon, Scipio's main concern is that he does not wish to die in combat with a river; this is, somehow, unfitting for a Roman warrior (4.670-5). Following Scipio's appeal, Venus (taking the role of Juno in the *Iliad* and *Thebaid*) provokes Vulcan into emulating his Homeric counterpart and the god burns up the river and the bodies contained within it, correcting his failure to do the same in Statius' *Thebaid*; however, a concomitant effect of Vulcan's intervention is that the remaining elements of the *locus amoenus* are destroyed and rendered as a *locus horridus*:

*iamque ambusta comas abies, iam pinus et alni,
iam solo restans trunco dimisit in altum
populus adsuetas ramis habitare volucres.*

(4.682-4)

And now the foliage of the fir is consumed, now the pine and alders; now the poplar remains only with its trunk, has sent into the sky the birds that were accustomed to living in its branches.

While the action of Vulcan appears to restore balance by forcing the river back within its own bounds (4.696-7), the fire god's desiccation of the landscape (4.685-9) introduces an imbalance into the Italian landscape, noticed by the river Po (4.690-2). The Hannibalic war impinges on another eternal element of landscape, in this case the *aeterni cursus* of the Po's waters.¹⁸³ Just as the Po in Lucan's *Bellum Civile* represents in microcosm the dissolution of the cosmos during the civil war, Silius' Trebia, a

¹⁸² Above, p. 181.

¹⁸³ 4.690-1.

tributary of the Po, reflects the ongoing violence inflicted by Hannibal on the Italian landscape; moreover, the Po as an intertextual signal activates the metapoetic force of landscape as representative of the poetics of internal warfare:¹⁸⁴ the battle between the elder Scipio and the Trebia enacts a facet of civil discord between the Romans and their dominion. Silius alludes to the continuing significance of landscape by referring to Trasimene, the next geographical location that will mark disaster for the Romans.¹⁸⁵

At the battle of Lake Trasimene the topography is not initially a demonstrably willing participant in the destruction of the Romans; rather, the Romans lead themselves to destruction.¹⁸⁶ Following the defeat at the Trebia, Silius describes the arrival of the consul Flaminius and appropriates the ship of state metaphor suggestively, implicating Flaminius in the Roman defeat as a result of his desire for individual glory (4.711-17); thereafter Silius depicts Juno appearing before Hannibal in the guise of Lake Trasimene, exploiting the Carthaginian's perception of an affinity with the Italian landscape in language which is once again redolent of the *locus horridus* (4.723-35). Juno's appearance to Hannibal in the guise of the lake is a perversion of the vision of Tiberinus to Aeneas,¹⁸⁷ inverting the promise of settlement made to the Trojans and the willing subjugation of the Italian topography to Trojan/Roman rule. Juno/Trasimene consolidates the betrayal of the Trebia in order to undermine the Vergilian concord between Italy and Troy. Yet her encouragement to Hannibal is qualified by her knowledge of his ultimate defeat (4.729-31). Despite knowing that Hannibal's adventure is doomed, Juno appropriates the identity of the lake in order to encourage him, reifying Hannibal's own perception of an allegiance between himself and the Italian landscape.

¹⁸⁴ Above, p. 41. Cf. Bru ere (1958) 483-4, also Wilson (2004) 230.

¹⁸⁵ 4.700-3.

¹⁸⁶ Juno has some involvement in the selection of commander, 4.708-10; Ahl, Davies and Pomeroy (1986) 2521.

¹⁸⁷ Verg. A. 8.26ff.; Spaltenstein (1986) 324.

Although Silius elides many of the events that transpire between the defeat at the Trebia and the battle at Lake Trasimene,¹⁸⁸ he appears to invent a report of the arrival of Carthaginian envoys that wish Hannibal to give up his child as their traditional human sacrifice (4.763-829).¹⁸⁹ Although Hannibal's wits allow him to suggest that the Romans are to be the sacrifice in the place of his son (4.808-29), Silius intertextually activates the frequent exploitation in post-Lucanian Latin epic of human sacrifice within the *locus horridus*, substituting the Romans for the offering. Further events such as Hannibal's passage of the Apennine mountain range are passed over swiftly (4.739-62);¹⁹⁰ Silius does not construct this episode as another spatial violation,¹⁹¹ instead maintaining narrative momentum. Silius' interest here is less in historical fidelity, but in his overarching topographical connection between the first *locus amoenus* at the Ticinus and the pivotal defeat of the Romans at Cannae.

Prior to the battle, Silius opens book 5 by giving a short description of the topography surrounding Trasimene, and narrates a brief *aition* that establishes the lake within Romano-Italian myth (5.1-23): a youth named Trasimene is kidnapped by a nymph named Agylle,¹⁹² and the lake takes the name of the boy in remembrance of their marriage.¹⁹³ Yet the initial description of the lake is foreboding, contrasting with Juno's appropriation of the lake's identity as a *locus amoenus*: *at parte e laeva restagnans gurgite vasto / effigiem in pelagi lacus umectabat inertis / et late multo foedabat proxima limo*, 5.4-6 ("but on the left side the lake overflows, spread with great waters like a sluggish sea, despoiling widely the neighbouring area with much slime"). The landscape is a suitable location for a trap, and the *aition* of Trasimene offers an analogy for

¹⁸⁸ Liv. 21.57.1-22.3-14.

¹⁸⁹ Spaltenstein (1986) 327.

¹⁹⁰ Liv. 21.58.3-59.1; 22.1.1-4.

¹⁹¹ Above, p. 213.

¹⁹² Spaltenstein (1986) 334; cf. Hylas in Valerius; Salmacis and Hermaphroditus in Ovid.

¹⁹³ 5.22-3.

entrapment, prefiguring the violence that Hannibal will inflict upon the Romans and the lake.

The topographical colouring of the narrative continues as the Roman army marches closer to its doom.¹⁹⁴ Silius depicts an army marching in disarray over what is not the most auspicious terrain (5.28-33),¹⁹⁵ and the lake adds to the gloom, producing mist that impedes the ability of the army to perceive their enemies (5.34-7).¹⁹⁶ The Romans march into a trap sculpted by landscape,¹⁹⁷ and Flaminius and his army are confined within the topography to be swept along by *fatum* (5.54). The Romans are beset by prodigies: Silius innovates on his Livian model by showing the earth bleeding as they attempt to pull up their standards (5.66-9).¹⁹⁸ Further prodigies are associated with the lake, including a bolt cast by Jupiter which sets the lake alight, anticipating Roman defeat (5.70-4). Although entreated not to fight against the will of heaven (5.101ff.),¹⁹⁹ Flaminius is determined to avenge the unburied dead of Trebia, again invoking the association between landscape and the proper disposal of the dead (5.127-9); and Flaminius' decision to march is unavoidable, given that Silius' topography of entrapment reflects the Romans' inability to escape their fate.

What follows is a long and bloody description of the battle between the Romans and the Carthaginians. Silius intervenes in his poem to stress his inability to comprehend the horror:²⁰⁰ even the gods are unable to continue watching.²⁰¹ Elements of the *locus amoenus* betray the Romans, including two ancient trees that seemingly

¹⁹⁴ 5.24-8; Marks (2005a) 17-19.

¹⁹⁵ Cf. Flaminius' haste, Liv. 22.3.7-14, 22.4.4-5. Hannibal has some difficulties, 22.2.1-3.2; and loses an eye at 22.2.10-11.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. 5.535-9.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. Trinquier (1999) 260.

¹⁹⁸ Liv. 22.3.11-13; Spaltenstein (1986) 341.

¹⁹⁹ Cf. Ahl, Davies and Pomeroy (1986) 2522.

²⁰⁰ I.e. 5.190-2; 420-4.

²⁰¹ 5.201-7; Spaltenstein (1986) 352; cf. Stat. *Theb.* 11.120-35.

offer safe haven (5.480-88).²⁰² One of the trees is overwhelmed by the number of men crowding into it; the *locus amoenus*, frequently a place of seclusion and isolation,²⁰³ becomes overcrowded, revealing the tree to be rotten at its core (5.492-7), before Sychaeus the Carthaginian leads his men in cutting down the tree. Silius' narrative does not appear to engage with Ovid's Erysichthon narrative,²⁰⁴ beyond the shared depiction of the destruction of a tree by axe; there is no god of the grove to be angered. However, it is possible to note an affinity with Caesar's destruction of the Massilian grove in Lucan's *Bellum Civile*.²⁰⁵ Sychaeus reveals the Silian grove's true identity as a *locus horridus*, bringing down the rotten branches and exposing the complicity of the landscape in the destruction of the Roman soldiers. Moreover, as with Caesar there is no retribution from any divine inhabitant of the grove: like the Massilians, the Romans are abandoned by the adjacent topography and associated divinities. Finally, the tree crashes to the ground, characterised as *inhospita*, and *suffugium infelix* (5.508); paradoxically, the tree is inhospitable to the Roman allies who seek its shelter, and like the Massilians in the *Bellum Civile* who find that Caesar is not punished, it is their Carthaginian enemies who benefit (5.508-9). The second tree is burned, but the first represents the rotten core that brings defeat to Rome early in the war and will return to the Republic in the form of Caesar.

Following the death of Sychaeus Hannibal is driven wild with rage, made subject to a psychological metamorphosis that leaves him unable to produce intelligible speech;²⁰⁶ he then singles out Flaminius and rushes to engage him in single combat, performing his own *aristeia*. Primarily, Silius engages with Vergil's depiction of the

²⁰² Cf. Segal (1969) 49; Newlands (2004) 136;

²⁰³ And hence, an ideal place for sexual violation, rape and murder.

²⁰⁴ Ov. *Met.* 8.738ff.

²⁰⁵ Luc. 3.399ff.; above, p. 49.

²⁰⁶ Cf. Hecuba, Ov. *Met.* 13.568-75; Lucan's Pythia, 5.217-8. Silius uses a suggestive landscape simile to represent Hannibal's anger, Sil. 5.603-6. Cf. 1.77-80, Feeney (1982) 59.

encounter between Aeneas and Turnus in the final book of the *Aeneid* (*solumque...Flaminium*, 5.607-8; *solum Turnum*, Verg. A. 12.466²⁰⁷), inverting the roles of the protagonists: Hannibal assumes the role of Aeneas,²⁰⁸ seeking out Flaminius on the battlefield; as the native inhabitant of the Italian landscape Flaminius, like Turnus, is exposed to the violence of an incomer.

Yet in addition to the Vergilian intertext, Silius also constructs the episode with significant relation to the civil war thematics of Statius' *Thebaid*. Silius invokes the liminal *locus horridus* of the Underworld by dissolving the boundary between the human and hellish spheres in a distinctly Statian manner which includes Mars' participation in the fight (5.609). Flaminius' encounter with Hannibal is quite literally a seismic event, splitting the earth open to reveal the shades in the Stygian depths (5.615-19),²⁰⁹ and recalling Amphiaraus' descent into hell at the height of his own *aristeia* in *Thebaid* 7 and 8.²¹⁰ As the Romans are defeated, so the topography of the lake is thrown into chaos as its waters are thrown over nearby mountains and the rivers that feed Trasimene are forced to flow backwards, causing the native Fauns to flee (5.619-26). The reversal of rivers and the seas exposes the chaotic character of Hannibal's incursion into the Italian landscape and represents the final attempt of the Romans to flee into the waters of Trasimene (5.627-31) despite the efforts of the consul to rally his men.²¹¹ Having attempted to recall his men by appealing to their patriotism, Flaminius is identified by a Gaul who encourages his companions to target the consul (5.644ff.); Flaminius is overwhelmed by missiles and killed, but his men, enraged, pile on top of his body, seemingly committing suicide and seeking death at the hands of their enemies

²⁰⁷ Spaltenstein (1986) 382.

²⁰⁸ Cf. Fowler (1996) 64.

²⁰⁹ Cf. Liv. 22.5.8; Spaltenstein (1986) 382-3.

²¹⁰ Stat. *Theb.* 7.794-824; 8.32.; cf. Sen. *Oed.* 178-9.

²¹¹ Cf. Liv. 22.6.5-7; despite his rashness being the cause of the Roman defeat, Flaminius achieves a noble death; cf. Ahl, Davies and Pomeroy (1986) 2522.

in order to provide the consul with a tomb made of bodies (5.658-66),²¹² once again engaging with the ongoing Statian concern with the proper disposal of the dead.²¹³ The theme is carried into the next book, as daylight reveals the extent of the carnage and displays the collapse of the vision of epic glory promised by the *Aeneid* (6.6-13).²¹⁴ Yet the transformation of the landscape at Trasimene into a corpse-covered *locus horridus* (5.665-9) prompts Hannibal to speculate upon the outcome of the war, associating his own misgivings with the Romans' relationship with their homeland (5.674-6). Despite the apparent allegiance between himself and the Italian landscape, Hannibal perceives the ultimate *imperium* to be held by the Romans, as well as recognising the Romans' true affiliation with Italy. Moreover, Silius' depiction of the battle elides any hint of *pietas* that might recuperate the Carthaginian general; where Livy notes Hannibal's unsuccessful attempt to retrieve Flaminius' body to give it proper burial (22.7.5), Silius elides this detail, returning to the theme of the unburied dead at the opening of book 6 (6.12-3). Flaminius himself has been given a grave by the *pietas* of his men; however, this is not the case for the rest of the Roman army, who are left by Hannibal in dereliction of proper funeral duties.

5.5: Herculean endeavours: Regulus, a snake, and civil war

Having built and sustained the momentum of Hannibal's incursion into Roman territory, Silius disrupts his narrative to focus on several "digressions" that emulate the strategy of delay adopted by Fabius (books 6-8). Each of these digressions is embedded within the text and located in a significant *locus amoenus* or *horridus* landscape; two offer models of proper Roman behaviour and examples of *pietas*: these are the tale of

²¹² Cf. Plb. 3.84.10.

²¹³ 5.665-6; cf. Hopf and Dymas, *Stat. Theb.* 10.435-48.

²¹⁴ 6.6: *arma virique* = Verg. *A.* 1.1: *arma virumque*.

Falernus,²¹⁵ and of Regulus, told in the aftermath of the disaster at Trasimene. The third digression in this series is the tale of Anna Perenna.²¹⁶ The Falernus and Anna Perenna episodes both encompass Silius' interests in aetiology and origins, while his Regulus narrative is suggestive of Roman resistance to the Carthaginians, and also engages with the Regulus familiar from earlier works such as Cicero's *De Officiis* in which the general provides a model to be emulated in the service of the Roman state.²¹⁷

Having discussed the fates of some Roman survivors of Trasimene, Silius follows Serranus, the son of Regulus, as he escapes and finds shelter with one of his father's former soldiers (6.62ff.).²¹⁸ As an example of true Roman bravery, Serranus is told the tale of his father's campaign in Libya, which included an encounter with a giant, autochthonous serpent in a *locus horridus* landscape (6.140-293).²¹⁹ The serpent's habitation is constructed as directly connected to the Underworld.²²⁰

*'Turbidus arentes lento pede sulcat harenas
Bagrada, non ullo Libycis in finibus amne
victus limosas extendere latius undas
et stagnante vado patulos involvere campos.*

...
*lucus iners iuxta Stygium pallentibus umbris
servabat sine sole nemus, crassusque per auras
halitus erumpens taetrum exspirabat odorem.
intus dira domus curvoque immanis in antro
sub terras specus et tristes sine luce tenebrae.'*

(6.140-3; 146-50)

The turbid Bagrada furrows the dry sands with sluggish pace, and it is not surpassed by any river in the whole of Libya in spreading wide its slimy waters and in covering wide plains with greater floods ... Nearby stood a motionless grove with dark Stygian shade, a grove without sun, and thick fumes burst into the air, exhaling offensive airs. Within was an ill dwelling and in a winding cave under the earth a vast hollow and dismal shadows without light.

²¹⁵ Above, 192.

²¹⁶ Above, 202.

²¹⁷ Cic. *Off.* 2.8.26-9, 3.26.99-27.101; Hor. *Carm.* 1.12, 3.5; Ahl, Davies and Pomeroy (1986) 2522-3; Bassett (1955) 1; cf. Vergil's Hercules and Cacus narrative in *Aeneid* 8.

²¹⁸ Serranus also describes the transformation of Italian landscapes into *loca horrida*, praying to Jupiter, 6.101-15.

²¹⁹ Spaltenstein (1986) 401.

²²⁰ Cf. 6.154: *lucos...Avernos*.

Marus describes his own mental horror, suggesting the psychological dimension of the *locus horridus*: ‘*horror mente redit*’, 6.151 (“ ‘Trembling returns to my mind’ ”). Yet this is not the limit of the horrors at Bagrada; Marus and his companions are struck by an unidentifiable fear and they pray to the nymphs and spirit of the unknown river (6.168-73). Yet while these unknown gods may share a *locus horridus* grove in common with the unknown Massilian gods of Lucan’s *Bellum Civile* here they are not disturbed by agents of *nefas* such as Caesar; rather, the grove is invaded by upstanding Roman soldiers. Although the episode is analogous to the Argive army’s encounter with the serpent of Nemea in Statius’ *Thebaid*, the Romans do not display excessive behaviour as they enter the grove;²²¹ the landscape here is already a *locus horridus*, and while they may err in believing that they can enter it safely, they do not inflict damage upon it. Despite their prayers the monster awakes, causing atmospheric disturbances akin to the noise made by Cerberus (6.174-78);²²² again the soldiers are stuck by fear, the landscape reflecting their anguish:

“*pavefacti clade vicissim
adspicimus. resonare solum tellusque moveri
atque antrum ruere et visi procedere manes*”.

(6.178-80)

“Alarmed by calamity, we stared at one another. A single noise rang, and the earth moved, and the cave fell in ruins and the spirits seemed to come forth”.

Marus describes his companions seeking refuge within elements of the *locus horridus* only to be caught and devoured (6.190-203); he then relates his own escape and the manner in which he reported the events to Regulus (6.204-293). The following narrative details Regulus’ assault against the serpent, a task in which he is successful despite the loss of several men. However, in spite of the hellish nature of the beast, when it is killed its autochthonous nature and relationship with the landscape is revealed more fully.²²³

‘*erupit tristi fluvio mugitus et imis*

²²¹ Above, p. 168.

²²² Spaltenstein (1986) 403.

²²³ Cf. Stat. *Theb.* 6.579-87.

*murmura fusa vadis, subitoque et lucus et antrum
et resonae silvis ulularunt flebile ripae'*

(6.283-5)

'A cry burst from the sad river and the sounds ran through the depths of its bed, and suddenly, both grove and cave cried forth grief and the banks echoed the trees'

Marus then relates the tale of Regulus' capture and claims that the Italian landscape would remain unsullied with the blood of the Roman dead had Regulus remained with the Romans (6.294-98).

Substantially, the story of Regulus is a positive *exemplum* for the Romans,²²⁴ although there are some disturbing elements in Regulus' character (i.e. his desire for glory, 6.207-9).²²⁵ The Statian intertext is perhaps unsettling, but crucially the Roman soldiers do not turn the grove into a victim trampled underfoot; it seems more likely that the allusion to the *Thebaid* recalls the element of delay which underpins Statius' Nemean narrative.²²⁶ Moreover, given that Hannibal has been consistently associated with the *locus horridus* throughout the *Punica* and has been equated in a dream with another monstrous serpent that destroys the Italian *locus amoenus*,²²⁷ it is likely that the killing of the Bagrađa serpent functions as an analogue for Rome's ultimate victory.²²⁸ Interpretation of Regulus' function can be guided by his first appearance in the poem as an *exemplum* for Saguntum, rendered ecphrastically on the Shield of Hannibal (2.435-6).²²⁹ Regulus' exemplarity is further demonstrated in Marus' following tale of the general's indefatigability as a captive, during which the Roman demonstrates Stoic *virtus* (6.299-551);²³⁰ this characterisation of Regulus is further suggested by the Herculean overtones that run throughout the narrative; as well as explicit similes

²²⁴ Wiseman (2004) 154-8; cf. Cic. *Off.*, Hor. *Carm. op. cit.*

²²⁵ Cf. Colish (1985) 287.

²²⁶ Above, p. 165.

²²⁷ 3.184-213; above, p. 192.

²²⁸ Vessey (1982b) 330-1; Steele (1922) 321; cf. the simile at 12.6-10. Hardie (1993) 70 suggests that the defeat of the serpent represents Regulus' defeat of the bestial element of human nature.

²²⁹ Vessey (1975) 402-3; the depiction of Regulus is juxtaposed with a scene of "Punic pastoral". Cf. Frank (1974) 841.

²³⁰ Bassett (1955) 1; Matier (1990) 70; Billerbeck (1986a) 351-2.

comparing the serpent with creatures fought by Hercules,²³¹ the killing of the Bagrada serpent resonates with *aetia* which feature the civilising influence of Hercules' incarnation as a Stoic sage. Regulus is thus elevated to equal status with the demi-god.²³²

Yet the equation of Regulus with Hercules is also subject to an unsettling intertext: Regulus' defeat of the serpent at Bagrada recalls Hercules' fight with Antaeus at the same geographical location in Lucan's *Bellum Civile* (table 3 below).²³³ Silius' Marus confirms that Regulus' troops pitched camp by the river: '*Turbidus arentes lento pede sulcat harenas / Bagrada*', 6.140-1;²³⁴ in Lucan's *Bellum Civile*, Curio also makes camp at the Bagrada, *qua se / Bagrada lentus agit siccae sulcator harenae*, Luc. 4.587-8 ("where the Bagrada slowly pushes itself, furrowing the dry sands").²³⁵ In addition to the geographical resonance, both narratives draw on Vergil's portrayal of Hercules the civiliser,²³⁶ and the intertextual signal is critical in that it alludes to an episode in Lucan's epic where an explicit connection is drawn between the civil war and the Punic Wars,²³⁷ set within a context of Hercules' participation in aetiological narratives such as his slaying of Cacus.²³⁸ Consequently, Regulus' behaviour is thrown into relief against that of Curio, the Caesarian who managed to outdo Marius and Sulla by selling Rome to the highest bidder (Luc. 4.821-4). Curio's behaviour is found wanting when set against the heroic acts of Hercules (Luc. 4.739-824); yet Hercules is not the only example of Roman *virtus* contrasted against Curio, who views the remains of a earlier camp

²³¹ Similes at 6.181-4, including Gigantomachy; Spaltenstein (1986) 404. Cf. Wilson (1993) 228-9 on Hercules, Gigantomachy, and Scipio.

²³² Ripoll (1998) 121.

²³³ Luc. 4.581ff; Spaltenstein (1986) 400; Bassett (1955) 2.

²³⁴ Cf. 6.677-9.

²³⁵ Cf. Verg. A. 6.296-7. See above, p. 31.

²³⁶ Ahl (1976) 91; Bassett (1955) 2; cf. Galinsky (1966) 39-40.

²³⁷ Luc. 4.654-60; 788-98.

²³⁸ Cf. Ahl (1976) 91-99.

established by Scipio Africanus (Luc. 4.654-60).²³⁹ In Lucan's poem, Scipio's deeds are equated with those of Hercules: his defeat of Hannibal is as much a victory for civilisation as Hercules' defeat of Cacus and Antaeus. Being attentive to his mythology, Curio believes that he is emulating Hercules and Scipio and even Aeneas, acting as an agent of civilisation against the African king Juba; however, he is mistaken, and instead brings his men to defeat.²⁴⁰

As well as contrasting with Regulus' display of Herculean heroism, Curio's rashness also diverges from the delaying tactics of Fabius which underline Silius' narrative delay and provoke his "digressions"; moreover, Curio is a further example of the desire for glory that prompts decline and civil war.²⁴¹ Yet this creates a problematic dissonance for the actors of the *Punica*, given that Regulus too has a desire for glory; his *virtus* is destabilised and Silius deconstructs traditional Roman martial values. In common with Curio, Regulus leads an unsuccessful attack against an African enemy, despite achieving *memoranda ausa* upon the battlefield (6.318); Regulus is captured by the Carthaginians because he trusts treacherous martial glory (6.332-3).²⁴² This undermines the otherwise positive assessment of Regulus' leadership and suggests that his status as a Stoic sage is not achieved until his capture.²⁴³ However, Regulus' position is destabilised further by the Lucanian intertext: Charles Martindale has suggested that Hercules' portrayal in Lucan's Antaeus narrative is not fully positive and that Lucan deploys the narrative as a parody of Evander's tale of Hercules and Cacus,²⁴⁴ evoking the brutish oaf rather than the agent of positive change; Curio therefore does emulate an aspect of Hercules: however, he emulates the *wrong* Hercules. Like Silius'

²³⁹ Cf. Luc. 4.788-98.

²⁴⁰ Cf. Masters (1992) 116.

²⁴¹ Cf. Hardie (2003) 20-2.

²⁴² 6.332: *gloria et incerti fallax fiducia Martis*.

²⁴³ Colish (1985) 287.

²⁴⁴ Martindale (1981) 74.

Hannibal, Lucan's Curio confuses the mythic tradition and emulates Hercules the violator rather than Hercules the civiliser.²⁴⁵ Silius, as a sophisticated reader of both Vergil and Lucan, draws upon Lucan's problematising vision of Hercules and Curio as a means of destabilising his own portrayal of Regulus as an ideal Roman leader:²⁴⁶ in common with Flaminius, whose rash leadership at Trasimene led to disaster, Regulus (at least prior to his capture) was overly concerned with *gloria*. Indeed, nature's response to the slaughter of the serpent recalls Statius' empathy for the serpent of Nemea and further undermines Regulus' act: Cacus' cave does not mourn the passing of that monster.²⁴⁷ The landscape may be an opening into hell, but in this case Silius engages with the ambiguous morality of the unpleasant landscape in order to foreground an ambivalent presentation of the Roman general.²⁴⁸

Moreover, in an ecphrastic remix of Regulus' battle against the serpent the embassy from Carthage is completely elided; significantly, this is an ecphrasis viewed by Hannibal, and the depiction recorded by Silius' narrator is also mediated by Hannibal's focalisation of the image.²⁴⁹ Regulus' defeat of the serpent is contextualised by Hannibal's position as the viewer and his reaction to the images: he is angered, and orders that they be destroyed (6.698-716); yet either Regulus' embassy is elided from the images, or Hannibal chooses to only see the deeds of violence against the snake, already destabilised by Silius in his earlier presentation of the narrative. In either case, it is the less morally praiseworthy elements of Regulus' character that are contextualised by Hannibal's *perfidia*, not the image of the Stoic *sapiens*.

²⁴⁵ Above, p. 213.

²⁴⁶ Cf. Hardie (1993) 70-1.

²⁴⁷ Cacus' death leads to the establishment of an altar by Hercules within a *locus amoenus*; however this is not an expression of landscape, Verg. A. 8.271-5.

²⁴⁸ Cf. Hardie (1993) 70-1.

²⁴⁹ Cf. Fowler (1996) 63-73; also the ecphrastic depiction of Regulus on the Shield of Hannibal in book 2.

Consequently, Silius is able to suggest that at this juncture in the poem the Romans require a leader who can transcend his own deeds, differentiating between individual *gloria* and the glory of Rome; after Trasimene the state requires a leader who can emulate the restraint of Hercules the civiliser, not the impulsive violator of boundaries. Rome needs a Fabius, not a (pre-capture) Regulus.²⁵⁰ Indeed, this reading is strengthened by Fabius' introduction into Silius' poem: having been eulogised by Jupiter as the man to lead Rome,²⁵¹ Fabius is introduced as a descendant of Hercules' union with the daughter of Evander, reiterating the thematic connection with Vergil's Cacus narrative (6.619-40). Yet where Hercules' prior relations in the poem have been characterised by violence and produced monstrous offspring,²⁵² Evander's daughter gives birth to the first Fabius (6.633-40).²⁵³ This short *aition* for the genesis of the Fabii contextualises the preceding Regulus narrative in a manner that emphasises the positive paradigm offered by Hercules over his more violent incarnation.

Silius' recollection of Lucan's Bagrađa narrative has implications for his portrayal of Scipio; having aligned the violator Hercules with Curio, it is also significant that by means of his camp, Scipio is also aligned with Hercules. While Lucan is doubtless using Scipio Africanus, the hero of the Republic, as a means of highlighting the degeneracy of Curio, it remains that for Silius, the correlation of Curio, Hercules and Scipio intertextually reiterates another motivating theme in the *Punica*: that Scipio's ascendancy may save the Roman state, but it also lays the groundwork for the descent into *nefas* that is depicted in the *Bellum Civile*. Scipio is an ambiguous figure who, like Hercules, is able to reconcile violence with wisdom;²⁵⁴ yet the model he offers is for an exceptionality that is not entirely positive for those incapable of encompassing the twin

²⁵⁰ Cf. Marks (2005a) 26.

²⁵¹ 6.613-7.

²⁵² Above, p. 212.

²⁵³ Augoustakis (2003) 246-8. Cf. 2.3.

²⁵⁴ Ahl, Davies and Pomeroy (1986) 2547; 2553-4.

Herculean aspects or who lack a legitimate, external enemy at which to direct their energies. As a result, Scipio's association with Hercules in the *Punica* is indicative of Hercules' status as a problematic figure,²⁵⁵ and this also finds expression in the intertextual resonances perpetuated by the Regulus narrative.

Thus Silius' Bagrada landscapes engage with Vergil and Lucan in order to promote the thematic movement of the *Punica*; with his interpolation of Statius' Nemean narrative as an element of delay, Silius also demonstrates the ability with which he is able to integrate his sources and models into the Punic narrative and situate himself within the poetic landscape. However, like Statius and Fabius, Silius is unable to delay the onward momentum of events, and Hannibal's progress against the Romans at Cannae once again emphasises the metamorphosis of the Italian landscape into the *locus horridus*; moreover, for Silius the tragedy of Cannae is intensified by the rejection of Fabius in favour of the rash leadership of Varro.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁵ Cf. Wilson (1993) 228-9; Ahl, Davies and Pomeroy (1986) 2553-5.

²⁵⁶ 6.242-83.

<i>Aeneid</i>	<i>Bellum Civile</i>	<i>Punica</i>
Aeneas lands in Italy; meets Evander on the site of Rome (8.184-279); tale of Hercules and Cacus	Curio lands in Libya and meets native; within sight of ruins of Scipio's camp (4.581-592); tale of Hercules and Antaeus	Serranus escapes from Trasimene and meets Marus (6.62-116); tale of Regulus and the snake
Cacus' cave: a <i>locus horridus</i> (8.190-7)	Antaeus' cave: a <i>locus horridus</i> (4.593-609)	The snake's grove: a <i>locus horridus</i> (6.140-177)
Hercules & Cacus (198-275) Hercules as paradigm for Aeneas	Hercules and Antaeus (609-655)	Regulus and the serpent (208-260); Marus plays his part (261-93)
	Scipio's fame greater than Hercules' (656-60)	Regulus' fame: with him, Trasimene wouldn't have happened (294-8)
Libations (276-279)		Regulus captured; his embassy to Rome (299-551)
Aeneas = Hercules	Curio ≠ Hercules	Regulus ≠ Hercules = Fabius
		Regulus = Hercules = Scipio Africanus
<i>Aeneas conquers Italy</i> Beginnings of Rome	<i>Curio defeated by Juba (but in light of Caesar's success)</i> End of Republic	<i>Fabius delays Hannibal</i> Republic Saved
		<i>Scipio defeats Hannibal</i> Regulus and Scipio paradigms for Caesar: Republic doomed

Table 3: Herculean narratives in the *Aeneid*, *Bellum Civile* and *Punica*

5.6: You reap what you sow: Cannae

Silius' Cannae narrative consolidates the themes that have sustained his *Punica* and his depiction of the topography at Cannae is redolent with ill-omens for the Romans reminiscent of the *locus horridus*. Prior to the battle, Cannae has begun to emulate the despoiled Italian landscape (8.623-55), and a vision of the carnage of the battle situates the defeat within the context of the treachery of the Trebia (8.656-70). The battle itself takes place over books 9 and 10: a disaster for the Romans, Varro provokes the battle by his rashness,²⁵⁷ and his leadership proves inadequate; the more competent Paulus sacrifices himself upon the battlefield in an act of *devotio*.²⁵⁸ After the battle, Cannae has been resolved into another *locus horridus* on Italian soil.

Following a sordid incident in which a father is accidentally slain by his son (9.66-177),²⁵⁹ Hannibal addresses his troops in a manner which underscores the connection established between his victories and the Italian landscape, measuring his own progress by means of his transformation of Italy into a *locus horridus* (9.187-91). Hannibal reiterates an underlying theme of his *nefas* by claiming that he seeks no reward but glory: the spoils of battle will be for his men (9.193-4). Moreover, Hannibal's speech engages with Vergil's famous depiction of the post-civil war landscape of the *Georgics*,²⁶⁰ locating Cannae within the context of poetic representations of the civil war.

Throughout his narrative of the battle, Silius makes frequent reference to the landscape: torrents of blood run across the field (9.365-7); men are dropped by collapsing river banks into the swollen Aufidus and do not receive burials (10.202-14);

²⁵⁷ 9.1-65; 244-77. Cf. 8.243-57; Dominik (2003) 492-3. Varro's own mind is subject to *discordia* at 9.648.

²⁵⁸ 9.632-43; 10.1-325. Wilson (1993) 227; Ahl, Davies and Pomeroy (1986) 2531-36.

²⁵⁹ Cf. Oedipus and Laius, as well as the recurring thematic emphasis on familial discord in Lucan, Valerius Flaccus, and Statius.

²⁶⁰ Verg. *G.* 1.489-508; Spaltenstein (1990) 19.

and as the battle draws to a close, Silius depicts the wreckage of the Roman military across the battlefield (10.309-20), including a depiction of the carnage in the river

Aufidus:²⁶¹

*sanguineus tumidas in campos Aufidus undas
eiectat redditque furens sua corpora ripis.*

(318-20)

Bloody Aufidus casts up his swollen waves onto the plain and, raging, returns to the banks their bodies.

Aufidus is characterised as susceptible to *furor*, reflecting the facet of uncontrollable rage that has been a part of Silius' depiction of the battles conducted by Hannibal against the Romans. The gory battlefield is visited by Hannibal after the battle (10.449-71);²⁶² Silius places emphasis on the heaps of dead (10.454-6), and as part of Hannibal's tour of the battlefield, he encounters the body of Paulus, whose *devotio* has appeared to represent the highest virtue displayed on the battlefield.²⁶³ Hannibal's final act in rendering the Italian landscape into a *locus horridus* comes with his order to destroy several groves in order to provide funeral rites to the dead Carthaginians although the Roman soldiers go unburied (10.530-2).²⁶⁴ Having placed a Statian emphasis on funerary arrangements throughout his poem, Silius disdains the importance of such activity;²⁶⁵ yet the implication is, perhaps, that the exercise is more than is required for warriors: an elaborate bier is an example of glory-seeking. Having completed the funeral, however, the Carthaginians feel fear for their future (10.543-6), realising that their own bodies will lie on Italian soil. As they despoil an Italian grove, it is at this moment, with Rome at her weakest, that the tide will turn and the Romans will draw together to combat Hannibal effectively under the leadership of Scipio.

²⁶¹ Cf. 1.45-54.

²⁶² Cf. Caesar after Pharsalus, Luc. 7.789-824.

²⁶³ Ahl, Davies and Pomeroy (1986) 2536.

²⁶⁴ Cf. Verg. A. 6.179; Stat. *Theb.* 6.90; Spaltenstein (1990) 93.

²⁶⁵ 10.536; cf. 13.460.

One Roman does receive a funeral from Hannibal: having expressed his joy at the death of Paulus, a warrior that he recognises as his equal, Hannibal orders that Paulus be cremated.²⁶⁶ Paulus appears to receive the most elaborate burial of all, and having had his praises sung by Hannibal Paulus' spirit rises *exultans* (10.558-77). Paulus, although a morally positive figure is thus given a problematic send off; moreover, while Hannibal is doubtless recognising Paulus as an equal in skill rather than temperament, this has the effect of recasting Paulus' *aristeia* in a more difficult light:²⁶⁷ at several points, Paulus has claimed that he seeks glory and has exulted in the battle.²⁶⁸ Although it is not going to be suggested here that Silius problematises Paulus in the same manner in which he undermines the heroic presentation of some of the other characters in his poem, it is worth noting that, within the context of the transformation of the Roman landscape into a *locus horridus*, Silius deploys a similar strategy with regard to Paulus as he does with other Romans who are more concerned with *gloria* than with the proper defence of the state. Silius' underlying thematic concern is therefore to propagate the possibility of *nefas* when a Roman general becomes more concerned with his own glory than with the good of Rome. Moreover, while this is an act of *pietas*, Hannibal's interest in Paulus relates to glory and he encourages Paulus' spirit to exult (*superbas animas*, 10.572-3), forcibly contextualising the Roman general with unfavourable terminology. Silius' depiction of the despoliation of the *locus amoenus* landscape represents the final occasion upon which Hannibal is able to inflict wanton damage across the Italian landscape: Cannae is the limit of Hannibal's spatial violation. For the rest of the narrative, the most significant *locus horridus* and *amoenus* landscapes will be associated with the saviour of Rome: Scipio Africanus.

²⁶⁶ Cf. the death of Marcellus at 15.381ff.

²⁶⁷ Yue (2007) (unpublished paper).

²⁶⁸ 10.70-1; 276-91; 307-8. Cf. Vell. 1.ix.3-5.

5.7: The choices of Scipio Africanus.

Following the defeat of the Romans at Cannae and the enervation of the Carthaginians during their occupation of Capua (books 9-11), Silius thematically reiterates the motivational force of hell by engaging with the landscapes of the Underworld.²⁶⁹ The Roman and Carthaginian leaders are contextualised and made contrasting parallels for the remainder of the epic by Silius' placement of them in the Avernine *locus horridus*; Scipio is the recipient of a positive energising influence while for Hannibal the intertextual engagement with the landscape of the *Aeneid* represents a downward turn in his fortunes. Hannibal's engagement with the *locus horridus* retains his connection to the forces of hell and *nefas*, but this is no longer sufficient against a resurgent Rome led by Scipio, whose placement in both *locus horridus* and *locus amoenus* reiterates his centrality to Rome's recovery.

Although at this point the Carthaginian has resumed hostilities against the Romans, the momentum of the poem has shifted. Once the Romans have initiated a successful response to Hannibal, the Italian landscape begins to fight against Carthage.²⁷⁰ Silius attributes the success of the Romans to a group of commanders who are able to put the city ahead of their own interests;²⁷¹ principally, however, recovery is due to the assumption of martial leadership by Scipio. Acting as a counter-Hannibal,²⁷² Scipio emulates the Carthaginian general's audacity by directly attacking Punic territory.²⁷³ Scipio's exemplarity is demonstrated by his engagement with two significant landscapes, including a traditional heroic encounter with the Underworld,²⁷⁴ and Silius' depiction of the entrance to the Underworld evokes Vergil's portrayal of

²⁶⁹ Hardie (1993) 64, 96.

²⁷⁰ 15.522-59, 612-25.

²⁷¹ I.e. Livius at 15.591-600.

²⁷² Cf. 17.402-5.

²⁷³ Cf. 16.645-97.

²⁷⁴ Bassett (1966) 272.

lake Avernus and the archetypal Roman hero, Aeneas. Even while the success of the Romans is down to their ability to work effectively together, Silius nonetheless establishes the final third of the *Punica* as a representation of Scipio's ascendance to the position of epic hero,²⁷⁵ although there remain a number of problematising elements as related by the topography of the Underworld.

Silius' initial depiction of the Avernine landscape comes as Hannibal laments his inability to make further headway; while his men attempt to attack the city of Puteoli (having already failed to take Cumae) Hannibal is given a tour of the surrounding landscape and told a number of stories that link Italy to the mythological past. Although apparently digressions, these tales are thematically important for the further movement of the *Punica*: the first is a version of the Daedalus and Icarus myth told on the occasion of a visit to a temple dedicated to Apollo by Hannibal, which itself is an analogue for Aeneas' visit to the temple of Apollo at Cumae prior to his descent into the Underworld.²⁷⁶ Yet where Vergil's Aeneas is cut short from full understanding of the ecphrases within the temple by the Sibyl, Hannibal is given a full explanation of the myth, but in which he displays little interest;²⁷⁷ Silius adopts a moralising variant of the myth in which Hannibal becomes Icarus, failing to pay attention to the lesson offered in moderation. Within this context, Hannibal is brought into contact with the landscape at Avernus, and he takes a perverse interest in the aspect of *nefas* that permeates the *locus horridus*; in this case, the landscape reflects the characterisation of the individual perceiving it. Silius' depiction of Avernus draws heavily upon that of the *Aeneid* as birds refuse to fly over the lake (12.120-1);²⁷⁸ however the excesses that inspire Hannibal are themselves inspired by the Erichthonian topography of the *Bellum Civile*,

²⁷⁵ Cf. Marks (2005b) 535.

²⁷⁶ Verg. *A.* 6.9-41.

²⁷⁷ 12.104-5; cf. Barchiesi (1997) 274.

²⁷⁸ Spaltenstein (1990) 153-61.

and the topography of the lake is home to Stygian gods who inhabit a landscape marred by grotesquery and poisons (12.120-9):²⁷⁹

*huic vicina palus ...
... caecas stagnante voragine fauces
laxat et horrendos aperit telluris hiatus
interdumque novo peturbat lumine manes.*

(12.126-9)

Near to here, a swamp opens up darkened abysses with stagnant waters and reveals fearsome gaps in the earth and sometimes disturbs spirits with new light.

Hannibal's tour encompasses a nearby swamp that links with Acheron and the city of the Cimmerians;²⁸⁰ and the volcanic landscape of Campania is described in terms which emphasise the boiling heat and fumes which are interpreted as originating in hell, marking the liminal nature of the location (12.129-42). Hannibal views the landscape at Vesuvius (12.152-6) but it is not the proximity to the Underworld and potential for gaining knowledge from the dead that excites him; it is the violence of the landscape itself (12.157).²⁸¹ The description is dependent upon Hannibal's focalisation of the surrounding landscape.²⁸² Where Hannibal drew upon the energising power of hell in Dido's Carthaginian grove, he is unable to do so in a geographical location implicit in the Roman national myth. Rather, Hannibal is excited by the topographical excesses that have accrued to Avernus, the archetypal Latin epic *locus horridus*, and the landscape of *nefas* reflects his psychological state. Hannibal exults in the extremes of the landscape and goes on to lay waste to a wine-producing *locus amoenus* beloved by Bacchus (12.158-60). Embedded within the narrative there is also further reference to Hercules' *labores*, invoking the overthrow of the giants and the tradition of their entrapment beneath the violent volcanic landscape (12.143-6). Despite threatening to burst back into heaven, the giants cannot fully traverse the boundary, and Hannibal is paralleled

²⁷⁹ *Olim* (120) is suggestive of temporal liminality; cf. Verg. A. 8.348, Martindale (1997a) 5; OLD s.v. *olim* (1), (2), (3), (4).

²⁸⁰ Cf. *Od.* 11.14; V. Fl. 3.399.

²⁸¹ Cf. 3.45-60: Hannibal is mesmerised by the violence of the Atlantic ocean.

²⁸² Cf. Fowler (1991) 29.

with the impotence of the giants trapped beneath the earth, contextualising him as a malign, but spent, agent of chaos.

Scipio's interaction with this topography differs markedly from that experienced by Hannibal, differentiating the two generals as Scipio remains unenthralled by the landscape of dissolution and chaos. Rome's progress against Hannibal in Italy is tempered by personal sorrow for Scipio, whose father and uncle are killed in Spain (13.381-99). Scipio's reaction to this news seems uncomfortably violent, highlighting his potential for excess;²⁸³ however, rather than succumbing to excessive grief Scipio is provoked by these deaths to consult the dead and learn the future.²⁸⁴ Having described the landscape of Avernus in the previous book, Silius does not cover the same descriptive ground again, instead linking the *locus horridus* to Scipio's motivation: *hortatur vicina palus, ubi signat Averni / squalentem introitum stagnans Acherusius umor*, 13.397-9 ("He was encouraged by the nearness of the swamp, where the stagnant water of Acheron signals the grotesque entrance to Avernus").²⁸⁵ Hannibal's earlier inability to remotivate himself is contextualised by Scipio's energised response to the same Avernine landscape, and the pervasive Vergilianism of the passage embeds Scipio within the Roman heroic paradigm. On the advice of the Sibyl, Scipio prepares the *nekuia* (which involves pouring blood from still-living victims into a trench in the ground, 13.405-6);²⁸⁶ unlike Aeneas, Scipio does not actually descend into the Underworld, and his interaction with the dead is limited to the shades that drink the blood from the ritual victim. In contrast to Hannibal's experience of Avernus, which is limited to the *locus horridus* on the human side of the barrier, Scipio's engagement with the landscape of *nefas* is mediated by another figure, sparing him direct contact and

²⁸³ Ahl, Davies and Pomeroy (1986) 2547.

²⁸⁴ Cf. his outburst at 4.454-9.

²⁸⁵ Spaltenstein (1990) 235.

²⁸⁶ Cf. Hom. *Od.* 11.23-33; V. Fl. 1.735-8.

preventing the Roman from being polluted with *perfidia*; this is the shade of the Vergilian Sybil (taking the place of Homer's Tiresias).²⁸⁷ Moreover, Scipio's experience features further contrasts with Hannibal's Carthaginian grove: neither of the two Sibylline priestesses share the wicked characteristics of Erichtho, nor do they exult in death; and the ritual is not overtly connected with the ambiguous figure of Hecate,²⁸⁸ differentiating Scipio and the Sibyl from Hannibal and from the African witch.²⁸⁹ However, the Scipionic *nekuia* retains the horror that belies the mediation of the Vergilian topography through Lucan and the Flavian epicists,²⁹⁰ and the Vergilian Sibyl possesses some disturbing characteristics.

The location of the rite reiterates the nature of the landscape and its liminality as a gate of access to the Underworld: *qua se primum rupta tellure recludit / invisus caelo specus atque eructat acerbam / Cocyti laxo suspirans ore paludem*, 13.424-6 ("where a rupture in the earth begins to open itself up, panting with its wide mouth, and a hollow hateful to heaven belches bitter air from the marsh of Cocytus"). Unlike Hannibal, Scipio breaks through the *locus horridus*, seeking more than just to exult in the violence of landscape. Scipio's sacrifices to the Furies Allecto and Megaera (13.429-33; 575; 611) do not represent his submission to *furor*, but rather his *pietas* and obedience to the Sibyl; the Furies themselves do not participate. Silius follows epic conventions whilst allowing himself room for deviations: Scipio's encounter with Appius Claudius leads to a digression on funeral customs, before the Sibyl launches into an attack on the short-sightedness of the Romans who neglected to accept her offer of prophetic texts (13.500-2). Although apparently unrelated to the thrust of the episode, these philosophic

²⁸⁷ 13.410-12.

²⁸⁸ She is, however, *docta comes Triviae* (13.786), although cf. Verg. A. 6.35, Spaltenstein (1990) 271. Vergil's Sybil is *docta* at 6.292; cf. Austin (1977) 123.

²⁸⁹ Above, p. 200.

²⁹⁰ Billerbeck (1983) 337-8, who also notes influence from Seneca's *Hercules Furens* (Spaltenstein (1990) 247).

moments contrast with the violent psychology of Hannibal; mentally, Scipio is unaffected by the *locus horridus*.²⁹¹ The Sibyl herself reveals Scipio's triumph and later exile to him, which he accepts with forbearance.²⁹² Later in the narrative, Scipio consults with family members and friends; his mother reveals that he is the son of Jupiter (13.634-44);²⁹³ his father discourses on *virtus* and *gloria*, two key motivating themes of the *Punica*; Paulus, Brutus, Curius and others are lauded by Scipio as having found glory in the service of the state (13.705-31). The elder Scipio's message is somewhat mixed: virtue is to be its own reward, but it is pleasant for warriors to be remembered (13.663-5). It goes without saying that each of these figures is revealed to reside in Elysium, which never receives an extended description, but is nonetheless explicitly called the *loca amoena piorum* (13.703).²⁹⁴ These paragons of virtue are followed by the ranting Hamilcar, who rejoices in Hannibal's orgy of destruction and the glory of his son (13.732-51). After an encounter with Alexander (which may or may not be positive²⁹⁵) Scipio comes into contact with Homer, giving a metapoetic context to the recurring thematic emphasis on fame and glory in the service of the state:²⁹⁶ Scipio explicitly wishes that Rome could have such a talent to sing of her achievements (13.793-797).²⁹⁷ As a result of his genius, Homer is explicitly placed in the *locus amoenus* of Elysium (13.778). Next, Scipio views male and female heroes of Rome (including Lavinia),²⁹⁸ and finally, the spirits of the unborn preparing to be born into the upper world (a sequence heavily indebted to Vergil). Each of the figures is the recipient of acclaim and fame, although there is a mixed bag of figures, including Sulla, Julius

²⁹¹ 13.505-6.

²⁹² Cf. Marks (2005a) 136-7.

²⁹³ Making him Hercules' half-brother; Bassett (1966) 272; Marks (2005a) 138.

²⁹⁴ Cf. 13.550-5; cf. Verg. A. 734-5.

²⁹⁵ Ahl, Davies and Pomeroy (1986) 2551-2.

²⁹⁶ McGuire (1997) 234-7.

²⁹⁷ Cf. Alexander at the tomb of Achilles; Cic. *Arch.* 24; Ahl, Davies and Pomeroy (1986) 2552.

²⁹⁸ 13.798-850; Bassett (1966) 272.

Caesar and Pompey: Scipio pre-emptively mourns for his country.²⁹⁹ Finally, Scipio receives information on the fate of Hannibal before returning to his companions (13.874-895).

Virtus and *gloria* recur as key themes in the episode; largely, the figures encountered by Scipio are positive *exempla* who deserve to be remembered for their services to the state. Yet the quasi-obsession with the pursuit of *gloria* is disquieting; even Scipio is somewhat disingenuous: having been informed that he is to lead Rome's resurgence against Hannibal, his desire for a poet as great as Homer to record the deeds of the Romans is troubling.³⁰⁰ Thus, some anxieties remain in this Underworld narrative, even if it is broadly positive; and these elements appear to be picked up on by the Sibyl and demonstrated by her conduct of Scipio among the dead.

As noted by Ahl *et al.*,³⁰¹ the Sibyl does not reveal any contemporary figures to Scipio (contrasting with Aeneas' vision of Augustus³⁰²). No figure is named who postdates Julius Caesar and the final Romans viewed by Scipio are implicated in the degeneration of the Republic into civil war. This results in a tension between Rome's glorious future and the decline of the Republic; this tension can be further analysed by means of the landscape of Tartarus as presented to Scipio by the Sibyl. When Scipio asks to learn the geography of Hades the Sibyl tells him it is a place that one should not desire to see;³⁰³ rather, the Sibyl describes the Underworld, mediating Scipio's experience of the topography of Hell. Silius makes Scipio (and the reader) dependent on the Sibyl as the focaliser for the landscape of Tartarus, emulating his use of Hannibal as the means of focalising the Avernine landscape; as such, the extended depiction of the *locus horridus* is a result of the preoccupations of the Sibyl rather than Scipio, just as

²⁹⁹ 13.850-874.

³⁰⁰ McGuire (1997) 236.

³⁰¹ Ahl, Davies and Pomeroy (1986) 2552-3.

³⁰² Verg. *Aen.* 6.792.ff.

³⁰³ 13.523-4: '*non optanda recludis / regna*'. Cf. Verg. *Aen.* 6.125ff.; cf. Fowler (1997) 266-7.

the initial depiction of Avernus is influenced by Hannibal's experience of the landscape.³⁰⁴ The Sibyl's depiction of the topography is somewhat confusing and contradictory;³⁰⁵ it is one location, accessible to all, yet ten gates are passable by predefined character types;³⁰⁶ poets are admitted by the fourth gate;³⁰⁷ the seventh gives a hint of the topography of Hell, as it sits beside the location of Proserpina's groves (13.545). The ninth is the exit to the Elysian fields, and the final gate is for the reincarnation of noble souls.

Tartarus is lifeless,³⁰⁸ runs with bloody rivers and is excessively foul; it is home to tyrants and wrongdoers; and it is occupied by allegorical personifications of Grief, Sorrow, and others.³⁰⁹ Yet while there is a Vergilian precedent for much of the topography of Hell, the Sibyl's sharp concentration of topographical description stands in contrast to the Vergilian narrative, where Aeneas experiences the *locus horridus* first hand in an extended sequence; Silius' version is concentrated and the actual topography of Hell is exaggerated, even to the extent of the Sibyl outdoing her models by adding an extra river to the canonical four rivers of Hell.³¹⁰ Silius' Sibyl derives energy from the topography of Hell, describing a landscape which has accumulated a number of features filtered through Lucan and the other Flavian epicists. This can be seen in the portrayal of a giant tree at the centre of Hell which draws on Vergil (13.595-600):³¹¹ Silius marks the Vergilianism of the tree from the first line of the depiction, substituting the funereal yew for Vergil's elm;³¹² further intertextual resonances not only intensify the sombre atmosphere but also increase the horror of the location by making the tree home to

³⁰⁴ Cf. Fowler (1990) 42-4.

³⁰⁵ Spaltenstein (1990) 251.

³⁰⁶ 13.525-561.

³⁰⁷ Cf. V. Fl. 1.835-40; Verg. A. 6.660ff.

³⁰⁸ 13.562-614.

³⁰⁹ Cf. Verg. A. 6.268-81.

³¹⁰ Spaltenstein (1990) 254.

³¹¹ *Ibid.* 257; Verg. A. 6.282-94; Austin (1977) 121.

³¹² Verg. A. 6.282-3; Pun. 13.595-6.

Harpies and other *dira volucres* (13.597). Vergil's *locus horridus* grove is also home to *multaque...vararium monstrum ferarum* (6.285), including Harpies, but Silius' allusion to *dira volucres* engages with Aeneas' encounter with the Harpy Celaeno in book 3 of the *Aeneid*,³¹³ appropriately, this reinforces the prophetic force of Silius' narrative by linking Scipio's *nekuia* with one of Vergil's most notable prophecies. Yet Celaeno's prophecy is one which is limited in its revelation: while she promises the discovery of the site of Rome, she omits to inform Aeneas of the death of his father.³¹⁴ Celaeno's omission provides a parallel for the selective prophecy of the Sibyl to Scipio; moreover, the phrase *dira volucres* has further parallels in the poems of Lucan, Valerius Flaccus³¹⁵ and Statius. Lucan's birds are an omen presaging the attack on Rome by Caesar;³¹⁶ Statius' references to the birds of ill-omen are associated with the *locus horridus* of the Greek landscape and are connected to his depiction of civil conflict at Thebes.³¹⁷

Scipio's experience of the Underworld as mediated by the Sibyl contains little reference to the resting place of the blessed, Elysium. There is no extended depiction of Elysium analogous to Aeneas' vision of the *locus amoenus*,³¹⁸ nor is there even a brief depiction such as that which caps Valerius' first book.³¹⁹ Silius' Sibyl shares with Hannibal an interest in the landscape of dissolution and horror; and this is in accordance with her resistance to predicting events beyond the life of Caesar and the civil war. Doubtless, Silius depicts Scipio's emergence as the exemplary Roman hero capable of resolving within himself the tension that lies between idealised sublimation to the good of the state and the ability to stand out as a martial leader against Hannibal.³²⁰ Yet the

³¹³ Verg. A. 3.262.

³¹⁴ O'Hara (1990) 26; Serv. A. 3.713.

³¹⁵ V. Fl. 4.79.

³¹⁶ Luc. 1.558.

³¹⁷ Stat. *Theb.* 2.522; 3.510.

³¹⁸ Verg. A. 6.636ff. Above, p. 18.

³¹⁹ V. Fl. 1.825-851. Above, p. 101.

³²⁰ Cf. Billerbeck (1986a) 343; Marks (2005a) 114.

Sibyl shows him only the *locus horridus*: the landscape of *nefas*; Roman and Theban civil war, Erichtho, and the site of Crenaeus' and Alcimedede's suicide. It is the landscape of the perfidious Hannibal. Scipio is exhorted to serve the state and to pursue *gloria* for Rome and the public good, yet his decision to stand for Rome, reified during his encounter with the dead, lays the foundation for the rise of Caesar. Silius' combination of future-history as far as Caesar and the *locus horridus* are appropriate to the thematics of civil war present throughout post-Vergilian Latin epic. Silius exploits the irony by reiterating Lucanian dissolution within the pervasively Vergilian Underworld narrative; and Scipio's exemplarity is implicated within the degeneration of the Republic into civil war.

Book 14 of the *Punica* departs from the Scipionic narrative in order to focus on the campaign of Marcellus in Sicily. Later Scipio is revealed to be still undecided, and facing advisers who oppose his leadership.³²¹ Contemplating his options, Scipio relocates to a *locus amoenus* where he is visited by *Virtus* and *Voluptas*, each of whom attempt to direct his choice of action in an echo of Prodicus' *Choice of Hercules*, narrated by Xenophon but made contextually significant by its presence in Cicero's *De Officiis* as part of a discussion on service and the individual.³²² The episode reflects the *Punica*'s ongoing thematic concern with Hercules as an analogy for Scipio, and the choices offered by *Voluptas* and *Virtus* exemplify the recurring and competing strains in the Herculean character resonant in the characterisation of Scipio. Scipio's choice demonstrates conclusively his commitment to emulating the *labores* of Hercules and his rejection of the kind of self-indulgence promised by *Voluptas* and demonstrated by Hannibal's excesses.³²³ It is not necessary to examine the episode in detail; moreover, it bears only the shortest of landscape descriptions intimating that Scipio is within a *locus*

³²¹ 15.10-17.

³²² X. *Mem.* 2.1.21-34; Cic. *Off.* 1.32.118.

³²³ Cf. Ripoll (1998) 128.

amoenus: Has lauri residens iuvenis viridante sub umbra / aedibus extremis volvebat pectore curas, 15.18-19 (“Settling under the green shadow of a laurel behind the home, he was turning over in his mind these cares”). His choice recontextualises Scipio within the Hannibalic war, following his encounter with the longer term Roman future in the Underworld. Rather than focussing on Scipio as a problematised model for Roman generals’ desire for *gloria*, his choice of *Virtus* over *Voluptas* situates Scipio within the immediate context (reintroduced by the Sicilian war) in which Rome faces destruction; his choice demonstrates his commitment to Rome, and to a form of *gloria* dedicated to the good of the state.³²⁴ Scipio’s choice represents his final assimilation to the model of the “philosophical” Hercules, with the *locus amoenus* in which he makes his choice demonstrating his opposition to Hannibal and his natural alignment with the *locus horridus*. Moreover, even if Scipio’s legacy has negative implications for Rome at this point in the narrative he is orientated towards the defence of the Republic. This brief encounter in the *locus amoenus* reiterates the immediate, positive, context for Scipio’s actions: the tension that resides in the implication of Scipio’s ascendancy as a cause for Republican decline is put aside in favour of the final vanquishing of Hannibal and assurance that Rome will survive as a viable entity.

Silius’ deployment of *loca amoena* and *horrida* is informed by his predecessors and marks his modifications to the landscape as he situates his epic in the Roman mytho-historical narrative. These landscapes are not imitations of his Vergilian model, but function as contextualised elements within the narrative that reiterate the key themes of the poem: Hannibal shares with Caesar a taste for the *locus horridus* and these landscapes reflect the aetiological force of the Second Punic War as a point of origin for

³²⁴ 15.88-9; Ahl, Davies and Pomeroy (1986) 2553; Colish (1985) 288.

the decline that leads to the civil wars of the late Republic. The landscape also refracts Hercules' influence on the actors in the poem: Hannibal emulates the Hercules the violator, while Scipio demonstrates himself to be an analogue for the philosophical, heroic Hercules.³²⁵ In so doing, the *locus amoenus* remains in the ascendance as the Republic is preserved in the face of the *perfidia* of Hannibal, but the seeds are sown for the Erichthonian landscape and the *nefas* of Caesar as represented by Lucan's *Bellum Civile*.

³²⁵ Marks (2005a) 161.

Conclusion: rewriting the landscape

The preceding chapters have explored the redefinition of landscape in the post-Augustan Latin epics of the first century AD. I have argued that as a delimitation of space which nonetheless resists fixity and is susceptible to effects of relocation which shift vantage points and expand horizons, landscapes can appropriately be considered in relation to the hermeneutics of literary reception.¹ This is, I suggest, particularly pertinent for Roman poets, who demonstrate an engaged landscape sensibility which indicates an awareness of the subjectivity of spatial representation. Consequently, I have argued that the landscapes of Latin epic poetry demonstrate the effects of spatial, political, aesthetic and poetic relocation. In particular, I have suggested that Lucan's Neronian *Bellum Civile* redefines the landscapes of Latin epic, shifting away from the quasi-utopian harmony of the Augustan *locus amoenus*, towards the violent, despoiled *locus horridus*. The significance of Lucan's redefinition of epic landscape is particularly visible in the reception of the Lucanian *locus horridus* in the Flavian epics of Valerius Flaccus, Statius and Silius Italicus. In these works the topographical symbolism of landscape is redolent with the thematics of civil war and shaped by the Flavian poets' response to the *Bellum Civile*. The increasing prevalence of Lucanian spatial representation articulates a sensibility which is replicated to varying extents in the thematics and aesthetics of the *Argonautica*, *Thebaid* and *Punica*. As a reflexive literary category, landscapes demonstrate the adoption and adaptation of Lucanian poetics in the works of the Flavian poets.

Although open to subversive readings, the epic poems of Vergil and Ovid engage with an Augustan ideological discourse which foregrounds images of abundance and fertility and which represents a new *aureum saeculum* following the turbulent dying

¹ See above, p. 7.

days of the Roman Republic.² Ovid's *Metamorphoses* subverts this discourse by making fertile and abundant *loca amoena* the setting for arbitrary and capricious displays of power on behalf of authority figures such as Jupiter and Apollo; however, the pleasance retains a position of primacy as a mode of landscape depiction.³ In my second chapter, I discussed the manner in which Lucan's poem inscribes the disaster of civil war into the epic landscape. Lucan's depiction of internecine strife in the late Roman Republic iterates his disillusionment following the capricious excess of Imperial power by Nero, provoking the redefinition of landscape; *loca amoena* in Lucan's poem are sites that mount an Ovidian challenge upon conceptualisations of cosmic, political and poetic order. Moreover, I suggested that the shift of emphasis from the pleasance towards its opposite, the depraved and chaotic *locus horridus*, articulates a universe that tends towards *nefas* and is dominated by transgressive figures such as Caesar and Erictho; further, the refiguration of landscape enunciates a refashioning of Roman epic that challenges the canonical Augustan texts. By transforming landscapes of pleasant breezes, streams and shade into cold, dark, dank and frequently bloody spaces, Lucan suggests the failure of Augustan optimism, utilising the moral potential inherent in the landscapes of Latin literature in order to express his perception of the violent consequences of unbridled Imperial power.⁴

The force with which Lucan rewrites the Latin epic landscape resonates in his poetic successors. Moreover, Valerius Flaccus, Statius and Silius Italicus each experience further political discord following the assassination of Nero in 69 AD, as well as further repression under Domitian. Consequently, Lucan's redefinition of landscape as an expression of cyclical civil discord continues to be politically and poetically pertinent. The second half of this thesis showed that each of the Flavian

² Above, p. 15.

³ Above, p. 21.

⁴ Above, p. 85.

epicists continued to deploy the *locus amoenus* for a variety of purposes. In particular, the Flavian poets persist in amplifying the Ovidian challenge to cosmic and political order. Increasingly, however, the *locus horridus* becomes the dominant mode of landscape depiction, following Lucan's perversion of the pleasance in order to articulate the psychological, political and poetic horrors of civil war. Of the three Flavian poems, two explicitly depict a variation of civil conflict in which the *locus horridus* becomes a site of depravity and despair.⁵ However, Silius Italicus' poem refashions the topography of horror in order to depict the flaws that reside within exceptional Romans and which paradoxically make possible the decline into civil discord and *bella plus quam civilia*. I have suggested that Silius' poem utilises the tension generated between the *locus horridus* and *locus amoenus* in order to underline both the dangers inherent in exceptional Romans as well as to articulate a pragmatic sense in which strong leadership is required to ensure the survival of the Roman state against an external enemy. Hannibal and a variety of Roman leaders are associated with the *locus horridus* and the dissolution of the *locus amoenus* into the unpleasant landscape; but Fabius Cunctator and Scipio Africanus retain connections to a morally more positive *locus amoenus* where, in Scipio's case, a conscious choice is made to adopt the path of *virtus*.⁶ Silius' reception of Lucan, as expressed through landscape, retains the moral ambiguity of the *Bellum Civile* whilst simultaneously alluding to the occasional necessity of strong leaders who make the wellbeing of the state their priority. As such, Silius' poem retains the *locus horridus* as a primary landscape for expressing moral ambivalence towards the assumption of power by individuals, as well as continuing to promote the *locus amoenus* as a site that challenges conceptualisations of order and

⁵ Above, p. 139, p. 186.

⁶ Above, p. 255; cf. Falernus' lands, which are owned by Fabius.

moral certitude within the Roman world;⁷ yet the ultimate resolution of Scipionic ambiguity in the choice of *Virtus* over *Voluptas* in a *locus amoenus*, as well as the more morally positive characterisation of individuals such as Falernus throughout the poem,⁸ is suggestive of a more pragmatic poetics that understands exceptional leadership as sometimes vital to the survival of the Roman state. However, the landscapes of Silius' poem continue to be dominated by Lucan's *locus horridus*. Thus representation of *loca amoena* and *loca horrida* landscapes not only represent the changing moral and political situation under the Principate, but the refiguration of space intimates the redefinition of Latin epic as a post-Lucanian poetic mode that articulates national dissolution and fraternal discord.

⁷ Above, p. 202, p. 212.

⁸ Above, p. 192.

Appendix: Silius Italicus *Punica*, 8.144-224

Silius Italicus' account of Anna, 8.25-241, includes a passage of some eighty lines, 8.144-224, which have had their authenticity contested by a number of scholars. The textual problem arises from the lack of the eighty lines in any edition of the poem prior to the Aldinus edition of 1523, to which 82 lines were added that had been published in a slightly different form by Jacobus Constantius in 1508.¹ Understanding the transmission of the *Punica* is in no way straightforward as neither of the two medieval manuscripts have survived.² Reconstructing a stemma for the *Punica* is extremely difficult, and while McGushin attempts to reconstruct the text's transmission, he explicitly notes that he is avoiding the question of the extra lines.³

Heitland attempted to explain the discrepancy between the earliest editions and the Aldine text by suggesting that the text had been miscopied; once it was noted that the lines were missing, they were called for and recovered.⁴ Goold gives some detail on how this might have occurred,⁵ and in the appendices of the Budé edition, the editors note Heitland's hypothesis, but indicate that regardless of the manner in which the lines became separated from the MSS, they are doubtlessly genuine following "l'examen des critères internes (langue, style, et surtout procédés et étroitesse de l'imitation)".⁶ Delz, however, while discussing some examples from these lines, states "Haec et alia Silio prorsus indigna esse iudico".⁷ Courtney elaborates on some of Delz's reservations, although he admits that, in most cases, "they can be countered".⁸ Spaltenstein remarks that "L'authenticité des vers 144 à 223 a été fort discutée, apparemment sans qu'un avis

¹ Heitland (1896) and Reynolds (1983) 389-91.

² McGushin (1985) 1.

³ *Ibid.* 158 n. 140; Reynolds (1983) 390.

⁴ Heitland (1896) 191-5.

⁵ Goold (1956) 10-12.

⁶ Volpilhac, Miniconi and Devallet (1981) 126-7.

⁷ Delz (1987) lxviii.

⁸ Courtney (1989) 326-7.

s'impose irrésistiblement".⁹ However, he also notes that it is also possible that they are "une consequence de la manière habituelle de Sil.",¹⁰ particularly with regard to his imitation of Virgil, although he resists making a final judgement. In a full length study of the lines, Brugnoli and Santini attempt to demonstrate the Silian authorship of the lines.¹¹

Courtney believes that the repetition of 7.282 at 8.165 is impossible to explain as the work of Silius, and must be that of an interpolator.¹² He cites the fact that this is the only duplicated line in the *Punica*, and that this is a rare practice in all Latin poets (particularly in post-Augustan poetry); while Ovid duplicates *Met.* 4.795 at 9.10, this is the only instance of this kind of duplication in the epic. However, neither Spaltenstein nor Miniconi consider this to be damning evidence that the lines are not of Silian authorship. Brugnoli and Santini indicate that the form of the line has parallels in Virgil and Lucan, and also that it is possible that it is only this line that is spurious.¹³ It is also possible that this is a stylistic device being employed by Silius.

As the style of the lines is credibly Silian, there is a plausible means of transmission for the lines, and as there is little in the way of conclusive evidence regarding the authorship of the lines, they are included in my discussion of the Anna Perenna narrative in the *Punica*, as without them it is impossible "to make the transition between 144 and 226".¹⁴ However, I note that any interpretation of book 8 that includes a discussion of the lines is open to debate.¹⁵

⁹ Spaltenstein (1986) 508-14.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 509.

¹¹ E.g. Brugnoli and Santini (1995) 17-51.

¹² Courtney (1989) 326.

¹³ Brugnoli and Santini (1995) 37.

¹⁴ Ahl, Davies and Pomeroy (1986) 2497.

¹⁵ Cf. Santini (1991) 54-6; Ahl, Davies and Pomeroy (1986) 2497.

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