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All Roads Lead to Home: Navigating Self and Empire in Early Imperial Latin Poetry

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Abstract

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Esther Meijer

This thesis examines how several early imperial Latin poets navigate and define their places, roles, and identities in Roman society, the Empire, and the world more generally. Following the spatial turn in the humanities and employing the concepts of collective memory and identity, I explore how they use journeys through liminal spaces to explore and articulate issues of identity and empire, their understandings and (dis)approvals of imperial power, and Rome's position as the centre of the world.

I investigate these phenomena via concrete journeys through which poets construct imperial power and construct their Roman selves in relation to it. In the first half, a study on Caesar's return to Italy in Lucan's *Civil War* is followed by Statius' poem in praise of Domitian's construction of the Via Domitiana (*Silvae* 4.3); and in the second half, an examination of homecoming in Seneca's *Agamemnon* is accompanied by Statius' occasional poem about his visit to Pollius Felix in his native Bay of Naples (*Silvae* 2.2).

Characteristic of these poems is their engagement with a wide range of genres and discourses. I show that this generic interplay facilitates and contributes to the poets' explorations: Lucan's, Seneca's, and Statius' destabilisation of generic boundaries and their journeys' generic heterogeneity function as a way of negotiating changing socio-cultural, political, and economic circumstances, contemplating and constructing imperial power, and expressing increasingly complex conceptualisations of Romanness. Through examination of the generic interplay of these poems, this thesis aims to expand our understanding of formations of identity, both in relation to the self and to the Roman state, in the 1st century CE, and to contribute to our knowledge and understanding of Latin literary culture in Roman society during this time.

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Abbreviations

Abbreviations for the names of ancient authors and their works follow the fourth edition of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. Additions and exceptions follow similar conventions and include:

Alb.	Albinovanus Pedo
RG	Augustus, *Res Gestae*
Ennod. *Vit. Ep.*	Ennodius, *Vita Epifani*
Liv.	Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*
Plut. *Comp. Nic. et Crass.*	Plutarch, *Comparatio Niciae et Crassi*
Mela	Pomponius Mela
Sen.	Seneca
Ag.	*Agamemnon*
Ot.	*De otio*
Thy.	*Thyestes*
Strabo	Strabo, *Geography*
Theophr. *Sign.*	Theophrastus, *De Signis*
Val. Fl.	Valerius Flaccus, *Argonautica*

Apart from the works listed below, modern works are cited by author and year. A full list of references can be found at the end of this thesis, where I have also specified the editions of ancient texts and the translations that I have used. Where translations are not listed, I have used my own. Minor adaptations have been made to existing translations: these are limited to the decapitalisation of certain nouns (such as 'nature'), the modernisation of English (for example: 'Isles of the Blessed', not 'Isles of the Blest'), and the translation of certain words and phrases that are fundamental to my argument (such as *otium* and *vestigia*).

AE	*L'Année Épigraphique* (1888–). Paris: Presses universitaires de France.
CIL	*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (1893–). Berlin: G. Reimer, D. Gruyter.
EDRL	Berger, A. (1953) *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Roman Law*. Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society.

LSJ	Liddell, H. G., Scott, R. (1968) *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. Revised and augmented by H. S. Jones *et al*. Ninth edition.
OLD	Glare, P. G. W. (ed.) (2012) *Oxford Latin Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Second edition.
RE	*Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* (1894–1978). Stuttgart: Metzler.
TLL	*Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* (1900–). Leipzig: Teubner.

List of Maps

Maps have been produced by the author. Maps 3 and 4 are digitisations of published materials, which are specified *in loco*.

Acknowledgements

Introduction

Looking Outwards and Looking Inwards

atque aliquis prora caecum sublimis ab alta

aera pugnaci luctatus rumpere visu,

ut nihil erepto valuit dinoscere mundo,

obstructa in talis effundit pectora voces: 15

'quo ferimur? fugit ipse dies, orbemque relictum

ultima perpetuis claudit natura tenebris.

anne alio positas ultra sub cardine gentes

atque alium bellis intactum quaerimus orbem,

di revocant rerumque vetant cognoscere finem   20

mortales oculos? aliena quid aequora remis

et sacras violamus aequas divumque quietas

turbamus sedes?'

(Albinovanus Pedo = Sen. *Suas*. 1.15)[1]

Someone high up on the prow, struggling with his combative gaze to break through the impenetrable mist, when he lacked the strength to distinguish anything – for the world had been snatched away – poured out his choking heart in words such as this: 'Where are we being carried? Day itself is in retreat and outermost nature shuts off the world which we have left in perpetual darkness. Are we seeking peoples beyond, who live under another pole, and another world untouched by war, and do the gods call us back, forbidding mortal eyes to learn of creation's end? Why do we violate seas that belong to others and holy waters with our oars, disturbing the peaceful abodes of the gods?'

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[1] Hollis (2007) fr. 228 = Blänsdorf (1995) Pedo 1, Courtney (1993) Pedo 1.

In Seneca the Elder's first *Suasoria*, declaimers debate whether Alexander the Great should sail the Ocean. The declaimers unanimously respond negatively, but they have varying reasons. Some emphasise the importance of self-control and moderation, and others underline the transgressive and sacrilegious nature of this act. The debate features citations from philosophers and poets alike, and near the end of the fragmentary text that has been transmitted to us, Seneca quotes the cited passage from Albinovanus Pedo, a friend of Ovid whom we mainly know because of his epic poetry, and praises it for its *spiritus* in comparison to the lack of detail and the over-diligence of Latin declaimers (Alb. 1–23 = Sen. *Suas*. 1.15).[2] Albinovanus' passage presents us with a particularly Roman version of Alexander at the ends of the earth: a Roman fleet faces the elements on what appears to be the Ocean. This natural catastrophe causes an anonymous sailor to question not only the fate of his fleet ('Where are we being carried?', Alb. 16), but also the actions and motivations that have caused the fleet to end up in this situation, namely curiosity and the expansion of the Roman Empire ('Are we seeking peoples beyond … and another world untouched by war …? … Why do we violate seas that belong to others?', Alb. 18–9, 21–2).

In Albinovanus' passage, then, Roman curiosity and desire for conquest and expansion encounter limits that work on several levels. In geographic terms, the fleet seems to have reached the end of the world; in philosophical terms, it is debatable whether the Romans should even attempt to cross this boundary or if doing so would be sacrilegious; and in political terms, the Ocean might pose a limit to the expansion of the Roman Empire.[3] Thus, by confronting the Roman fleet with different and potentially conflicting limits, Albinovanus' passage provokes an identity crisis for the Roman fleet and prompts questioning of Roman ways of seeing, thinking, and understanding the world and the central place and function of the Roman Empire in it. What happens if your system of acquisition and consolidation of knowledge, power, and wealth through exploration and conquest is no longer feasible or possible? Where is your place and what is your function now in society, in the Roman Empire, and in the world more broadly? What does Roman rule look like, and what does being Roman mean? These questions are at the root of this study, in which I examine how early imperial Latin poets navigate and define their places, functions, and identities in Roman society, the Empire, and the world more

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[2] I have cited Alb. 12–23. In Alb. 1–11, Albinovanus describes the fleet's transgression of the limits of the world and the manifestation of a storm on what the fleet believes to be Oceanus.

[3] Anzinger (2015) discusses the passage in detail, examining the images that lie behind Albinovanus' depiction of the Ocean, its historical context, and its engagement with literary and philosophical discourses.

generally, through a series of case studies in which I analyse poets' narrations of journeys through liminal spaces.

The fleet's search for the limits of the world and its subsequent questioning of Roman expansionist activities illustrates a challenge faced by all of Augustus' successors, namely their definition of Roman rule and their legitimisation as emperors inheriting the Roman state as reconstituted by Augustus. This imperial concern with (self-)definition in relation to one's predecessors is particularly noticeable in periods marked by instability and political shifts in government. In this case, Albinovanus' questioning of Roman ways of understanding the world and the empire's place in it should be situated around the first instance of such a shift in government following Augustus' reign, namely early on during Tiberius' rule. In all probability, Albinovanus' passage describes one of Germanicus' expeditions in and beyond the north of the Roman Empire, part of a series of campaigns following Varus' defeat in the Teutoburg forest in 9 CE.[4] With Germanicus having won a number of battles against Germanic peoples, thereby avenging Varus' defeat, Tiberius faced some big questions: would he attempt to conquer these Germanic peoples? Where would he locate the boundaries of the Roman Empire?[5]

This last question epitomises a concern with the definition of Roman rule and what it means to be Roman that can be recognised throughout the 1st century CE, particularly when an emperor's position was uncertain and his successor unclear or not secured. Such periods of instability happened all too often, but took on more extreme forms in the late Julio-Claudian and late Flavian periods, especially during Nero's and Domitian's rules. Because works of poetry written during these periods typically testify to and interact with this instability, they form an especially good avenue of research into poets' exploration and articulation of their place and role in society and their understandings of Roman rule and Romanness.[6] By examining poetic works from the late Julio-Claudian and late Flavian periods, I therefore aim to investigate how poets participate in conversations about imperial power, the nature and

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[4] See Hollis (2007) 375, Anzinger (2015) 373–81 for discussions of the prevalent identification of the sea journey described by Albinovanus as Germanicus' shipwreck on the North Sea (as also described in Tac. *Ann*. 2.23–4, for which see Goodyear (1981) 243–45). Anzinger also considers Drusus Germanicus' expeditions to Germany under Augustus' rule to be a possible interpretation of Albinovanus' passage.

[5] Augustus reportedly advised that Tiberius should limit the empire to its current boundaries (Tac. *Ann*. 1.11: *consilium coercendi intra terminos imperii*, cf. also Cass. Dio 56.33.5). For discussion of this advice in relation to Tiberius' employment of Germanicus to Germany, see Whittaker (2004) 40–3.

[6] I use 'Romanness' and 'Roman identity' interchangeably to discuss (different aspects of) different ways of being Roman. For such a plural approach to Romanness, see e.g. Revell (2016). I discuss my methodological approach to issues of identity in more detail below (p. 19).

continuity of the Roman state, and Romanness, in a world characterised by social, political, and cultural insecurity. This predominantly includes poets' articulations of their social and political function in society, their relationship to the state, and their views on, disruptions of, and contributions to the legitimacy and legitimisation of imperial power.

Albinovanus' passage draws on several genres and discourses to depict a moment of crisis. The confrontation between the Roman fleet and the limits of Roman curiosity and imperial conquest at the ends of the world is articulated in the martial language of imperial conquest as well as in philosophical diction.[7] The conflation of imperial and philosophical discourses demonstrates a relation between Roman imperialism and epistemic exploration, and is key to recognising and interpreting the passage's crisis of Roman identity. This conflation of generic discourses is characteristic of early imperial Latin literature to such an extent that it has contributed to past scholars' stigmatisation of so-called 'Silver Age' Latin and their characterisation of such literature as excessively rhetorical or as spectacular verbal display.[8] Since then, much work has been done to demonstrate how ancient authors employ such generic multiplicity to navigate and articulate the relations between their work and other discourses, and, relatedly, to show how poets' generic interactions and their self-reflexivity pertain to historical, social, and cultural reality, commenting on topics such as imperial rulership and participation in public life through the employment of specific literary genres or discourses.[9]

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[7] The sailor's gaze is warlike (*pugnaci ... visu*, Alb. 13), and he describes the fleet's activities as violent and invasive, affecting peoples and worlds still untouched by wars (Alb. 18–9).

   At the same time, the conflict is also phrased in philosophical diction: the anonymous sailor is described as *sublimis*, an adjective which typically characterises the human ability to look up at the heavens and study the nature of things (Bömer (1969) 46 *ad* Ov. *Met*. 1.85–6). The sailor also tries to break through epistemic darkness with a combative gaze reminiscent of that of Epicurus, directing his mortal eyes towards nature, in Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* (compare *pugnaci ... **rumpere visu***, Alb. 13 and *di ... rerumque vetant / cognoscere finem / **mortales oculos***?, Alb. 20–21 with Lucr. 1.66–7, 70–1: *primum Graius homo **mortalis** tollere contra / est **oculos** ausus primusque obsistere contra ... **effringere** ut arta / naturae primus portarum claustra cupiret*, 'A man of Greece was the first that dared to uplift moral eyes against her, the first to make stand against her … so that he should desire first of all men, to shatter the confining bars of nature's gates'). Finally, it has been recognised that Albinovanus' reference to the 'peaceful abodes of the gods' (***divumque quietas turbamus / sedes***, Alb. 23) is Lucretian too: cf. Lucr. 3.18–9: *apparet **divum** numen **sedesque quietae** / quas neque **concutiunt** venti...*, 'Before me appear the gods in their majesty, and their peaceful abodes, which no winds ever shake …'. See Hollis (2007) 380–1, Anzinger (2015) 399–401.

[8] Williams (1978) exemplifies this stigmatisation through his characterisation of early imperial literature as a 'Change and Decline' from the 'Tradition and Originality' of Augustan poetry's Golden Age – for which see Williams (1968). On the judgemental application of the ages of metal to the periodisation of Latin literature, see e.g. Klein (1967), Mayer (1999), and most recently, Bessone and Fucecchi (2017a) 1, describing the Flavian era as 'an epoch that nobody today would any longer call 'Silver'.'

[9] See especially Conte (1985) ≈ Conte (1986), Hardie (1993), Hinds (1998). On poetic self-reflexivity and the use of literary genres – particularly philosophical discourse – in relation to participation in public life, see e.g. Newlands (2002), Armstrong, Fish, Johnston, and Skinner (2004), Garani and Konstan (2014) and, most recently,

Through this study, I aim to further elucidate early imperial poets' interplay of genres and discourses, demonstrating how intergenericity facilitates and contributes to poets' navigations of the aforementioned topics.[10] In particular, I aim to shed light on the relations between poetry, politics, and philosophy in early imperial Latin poetry, showing how the examination of poets' multifaceted employment of features attributed to specific literary genres can help us move beyond predominantly literary or surface level understandings of generic imagery and tropes towards more comprehensive insights about poets' lives, careers, and identities.

This thesis does not seek to provide a comprehensive overview of different poets' articulations of their understandings of empire and their individual relations to society and the imperial court, or a systematic treatment of poets' engagements with specific genres. Rather, I undertake a series of case studies in which I focus on poetic descriptions of journeys through liminal spaces, from river crossings and sea storms to arrivals in harbours. Throughout this investigation, I pay attention to issues such as poets' self-presentations and conceptualisations of their social and political functions within society and empire as Roman citizens, their contributions to conversations about imperial power and the Roman state, and the roles played by genres and discourses in these explorations. By doing so, I hope to expand our understanding of formations of identity, both in relation to the self and to the Roman state, in the 1st century CE, and to contribute to our knowledge and understanding of Latin literary culture in Roman society during this time.

Directions: The Case Studies

In ancient Greek and Roman literature, journey imagery frequently functioned metaphorically and/or metapoetically, reflecting on, for example, people's emotions, careers, and lives, the welfare of the state, and poetic enterprise.[11] Often, it is impossible to make strict distinctions between metaphorical or metapoetic journeys on the one hand and journeys taking place in the

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the contributions to Bessone and Fucecchi (2017b)'s *The Literary Genres in the Flavian Age* and the articles in *Phoenix* 72.3–4 (2018) on *Philosophical Currents in Flavian Literature*.

[10] As such, I build on recent work on genre in early imperial literature, including e.g. Bessone and Fucecchi (2017b). My approach to genre and the term intergenericity, owed to Vamvouri (2020) 3, is discussed in more detail below (see pp. 21ff.).

[11] As Biggs and Blum (2019) 4 point out in reference to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), the journey is a 'metaphor we live by.' Select publications on metaphorical and/or metapoetic use of travel imagery in ancient literature include, on ships and sea voyages: Curtius (1948) 137, Lieberg (1969), Harrison (2007b); on chariot rides: Norden (1891) 274–5 and Volk (2002) especially pp. 20–4; and on road imagery: Becker (1937), Durante (1958) 3–4, Messimeri (2001). On many occasions, expressions of travel imagery overlap. For a comprehensive discussion of the rhetoric of Roman vehicular transportation, see Hudson (2018), (2021).

physical world on the other hand. This multiplicity of function and meaning makes poets' narrations of journeys a particularly productive avenue of research into their explorations and articulations of self and empire.

The case studies of this thesis have been chosen because each presents us with competing and conflicting expectations about the directions and destinations of the journeys they describe, thus playing with notions of departure and return. The ambivalence about journeys within each individual case study facilitates examination of how different poets use journeys to explore and articulate issues of identity and empire, namely their own social and political functions within society and empire as Roman citizens, their understandings and appreciations of imperial power, and Rome's position as the centre of the world. Within each case study, then, journeys mobilise the poet's contemplation on their location within the Roman world, both literally and metaphorically. I examine two manifestations of this phenomenon, namely journeys through which poets construct imperial power and journeys through which poets construct their Roman self in relation to imperial power. Accordingly, this thesis is organised into two parts: 'Constructing Imperial Power' and 'Constructing Roman Self'. Each part consists of two late Julio-Claudian case studies, accompanied in each case by one of Statius' *Silvae* that forms its thematic counterpart.

In part 1 of this thesis, 'Constructing Imperial Power', I focus on poets' reflections on and (de)legitimisations of individual political leaders and their transformations of the Roman state through depictions of swift travel over roads into Italy.

Chapter 1 examines Caesar's return to Italy through the crossing of the Rubicon river as described by Lucan in his *Civil War*. I show how the interactions between Caesar and *Patria* at the Rubicon are embedded in Roman formalised practices of departure and return and informed by Roman rituals of war, including the fetial ritual of lawfully declaring war against a foreign enemy and fetial treaty solemnisation. Caesar's application of these rituals to the Roman state rather than to a foreign enemy prompts a breakdown of Roman ways of understanding the world and the central place of the Roman state in it. Through considering the passage's embedment in similar narratives of war beginnings, this analysis enables consideration of how Lucan's epic contribution to Roman narratives of empire informs and exemplifies his perception of Romanness.

As a counterpart to chapter 1, chapter 2 investigates a late Flavian text that treats another political leader who causes transformations of empire and Romanness through the facilitation of swift travel: Statius' *Silvae* 4.3. Through a laudation of Domitian that celebrates the

completion of the Via Domitiana in 95 CE, Statius presents us with a poem about techniques of construction. By examining the literary construction of this road poem in combination with its physical form, and by exploring its location in Campania, a site of transgressions and contradictions, I investigate Statius' contribution to Domitian's legitimacy as emperor as well as Statius' participation in the creation of narratives of empire that explore the continuity of empire without an imperial heir. Just as Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon, the construction of the Via Domitiana too threatens to break down Roman ways of understanding the world, in this case by facilitating speedy access to Rome for eastern peoples. While Lucan catastrophises such a collapse in his depiction of Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon, Statius appears to celebrate this expansion of Romanness.

In part 2 of this thesis, 'Constructing Roman Self', I examine poets' contemplations of their own social and political functions in society and empire as Roman citizens as explored and articulated through themes of homecoming and displacement. The two case studies that make up this part of the thesis approach homecoming via sea journeys through different philosophical lenses: Stoicism and Epicureanism.

Chapter 3 focuses on Seneca's *Agamemnon*, a late Julio-Claudian play in which Seneca stages Agamemnon's return from the Trojan War to his home community, a journey that is marked by a catastrophic sea storm. By examining the philosophical-didactic, poetic, and political levels on which this journey operates, I show how Seneca's engagement with the theme of homecoming in this play can be read as a Stoic-philosophical exploration of how (not) to endure crisis and displacement. Key to this exploration is my examination of Seneca's reconceptualisation of the genre of tragedy, in which I suggest that Seneca, through pluralistic employment of intertextuality, encourages spectators of all walks of life, not just students of Stoic philosophy, to pursue self-improvement and prepares them to endure extreme and uncertain circumstances. As such, my analysis furthers our understanding of Seneca's pedagogical approaches to the teaching of Stoicism and thus of the relation between Senecan drama and Senecan philosophical thought.

Chapter 4 explores a late Flavian counterpart to Seneca's Stoic staging of a homecoming: *Silvae* 2.2, in which Statius orchestrates Epicurean homecomings in the bay of Naples through a narration of his visit to the villa of his patron and friend Pollius Felix on the Surrentine peninsula. Just as Seneca does in the *Agamemnon*, Statius plays with geographic, philosophical, and poetic aspects of homecoming to reflect on ways to navigate his social and political role in society as a Roman citizen and his social, political, and topographical relationship to Rome and

the imperial court. In addition to providing us with insights into Statius' and Pollius' careers, lives, and identities, my analysis increases our understanding of Statius' generic formulation of laudatory poetry and emphasises the importance of philosophical discourse for Statius' reflections on the (im)possibility of withdrawal from Rome, the imperial court, and the composition of epic.

Together, then, these case studies facilitate the consideration of commonalities in and differences between poets' navigations of self and empire across the early imperial period, both regarding their individual understandings of issues of identity and empire and with respect to the methods they employ in their explorations and articulations.

Methodology

Theorising Space

Fundamental to this project is our understanding of space as a product and producer of stories, emphasising its exploratory, processual, and instrumental nature. This approach follows the so-called spatial turn in the Humanities and Social Sciences, and builds on strands of scholarship across several disciplines, including – but not limited to – literary studies, philosophy, sociology, and geography.[12] Broadly speaking, rather than understanding space from a hegemonic point of view as a background or a static surface to be crossed, discovered, or even conquered, its places, peoples, and cultures as phenomena awaiting the arrival of the discoverer or conqueror, such scholarship considers space as the product of interactions and relations, as holding heterogeneities – of agents, of temporalities both past and future, and of lived experiences –, and as always in the process of being constructed.[13] For these reasons, the geographer Massey proposed to think of space as a 'simultaneity of stories-so-far.'[14] This understanding of space as a meeting-up of stories is an especially fruitful way to examine poets' articulations of issues of identity and empire through their productions of spaces, and underlies my project for the following reasons.

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[12] A comprehensive overview of the spatial turn is impossible within the limits of this thesis, but formative works include, in philosophy: Bachelard (1964), Foucault (1977), (1986), Deleuze (1988), (1994), Butler (1990), (1993), Lefebvre (1991); in sociology: Soja (1989), (1996), Bourdieu (1990); in geography: Massey (1994), (2005), and in postcolonial studies: Said (1978), (1993), Bhabha (1994). For a discussion of some of these thinkers in the context of and in relation to postcolonial studies, see Loomba (1998), especially pp. 19–111. Hubbard, Kitchin, and Valentine (2004) provide a good general overview of key thinkers on space.

[13] Thus, interrelations bring space into being. This understanding of space primarily draws on Massey (1995), (2005).

[14] Massey (2005) 32.

To Romans, stories, histories, and memories were inextricably connected with each other and formed an essential way of connecting with the past. The past functioned as a social construction, as a narrative, and as such, stories, histories, and memories deeply informed formations of identities: the identities of individual Roman citizens, but, on a more collective level, also the identity of the Roman state.[15] To a certain extent, such stories, histories, and memories were constructed and conveyed through texts, which often operate as sites for ideological interactions and thereby play an important role in constructions of cultural authority, not simply reflecting dominant ideologies, but also encoding 'tensions, complexities, and nuances within colonial cultures.'[16] Thus, narration was central to explorations and formations of identities, and pieces of writing can offer us a glimpse of ancient authors' processes of exploration and construction of identities.[17] These processes are visible to us because authors typically told their stories through self-conscious engagement with existing stories, histories, and memories, alerting readers to their doing so through, for example, intertextual engagement with other texts: their pieces of writing are therefore very much part of a meeting-up of stories. Crucially, texts constitute only part of this meeting-up: stories, histories, and memories were formed and conveyed through interactions with and between all kinds of media, such as monuments and built and natural environments. During the last few decades, for example, scholars have demonstrated the various ways in which works of literature, together with experiences of and movement through physical spaces, including interactions with objects, buildings, and landscapes, contributed to formations of Roman memories and identities.[18]

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[15] See Erll (2011) for an overview of cultural memory studies that explore relations between memories and collective identities, including, most notably, Halbwachs and Alexandre (1950), Halbwachs (1976), works and collections from the 1920s by the art and cultural historian Aby Warburg (see e.g. Warburg (2001)), Assmann (1988), (1999), (2011), Nora (1989), (1996), Le Goff (1996). Select foundational studies on the formations of collective and state identities in the ancient Roman Mediterranean through stories, histories, and memories include Edwards (1996), Habinek (1998), Citroni (2003), Gowing (2005), the contributions to Stein-Hölkeskamp and Hölkeskamp (2006), as well as Connolly (2009), Lowrie (2009), Willis (2011).

[16] Loomba (1998) 82ff. Pandey (2018) approaches Latin poetic responses to early imperial iconography in this way, examining how they function as 'a tool for dissecting, debating, and even disrupting imperial power' (p. 5).

[17] On the creation of self through narrative and on identity-as-narrative, see especially McAdams (1988), (2011), McAdams and McLean (2013) as well as the contributions to Brockmeier and Carbaugh (2001) and Josselson, Lieblich, and McAdams (2006).

[18] See e.g. Favro (1996), Jaeger (1997), Walter (2004), Welch (2005), Flower (2006), Rea (2007), O'Sullivan (2011), Galinsky (2014). Landscape is different to space in that 'foregrounds cultural context and emphasizes the relationship between humankind, nature, and the inhabited world', and 'prioritizes aesthetics and the relationship between observer and observed': Spencer (2010) 1. On connections between landscapes and ancient identities, see especially Spencer (2010), Mackie, Reitz-Joosse, and Makins (2021).

Most of the works of poetry studied in this thesis specifically interact with such other media, from buildings and construction works to landscapes: namely the Rubicon river in chapter 1, the Via Domitiana in Campania in chapter 2, and Pollius Felix' villa on the Sorrentine peninsula overlooking the bay of Naples in chapter 4. Moreover, although chapter 3 focuses on Seneca's *Agamemnon*, which is set in Argos/Mycenae, the play's dramatic world is permeated with allusions to Rome and Roman life, history, culture, and myth.[19] As I will demonstrate, these interactions play a key role in poets' navigations of self and empire through their descriptions of journeys. Thus, these journeys contribute to the spaces they describe as products and producers of stories, legitimising, disrupting, and otherwise contributing to formations of stories, memories, and identities. Overall, then, my methodological approach to space is generally in line with those taken by Rimell in *The Closure of Space in Roman Poetics: Empire's Inward Turn*, and by the contributions to Fitzgerald and Spentzou's recent edited volume on *The Production of Space in Latin Literature*, where Rome and its empire are seen as 'a contested space', manifesting themselves 'not necessarily in conflict or struggle, but in the layering of multiple and contrasting meanings in the spaces.'[20]

Navigating Connections between Texts

In their engagement with similar tropes and ideas, from road imagery and notions of departure and return to themes of homecoming, the works of poetry studied in this thesis draw on a wide range of genres and discourses. This multigenericity is not surprising: homecoming stories, for example, are omnipresent across many literary genres, including, but not limited to, epic, lyric poetry, tragedy, historiography, and philosophical prose.[21] Moreover, multifaceted engagement with various generic discourses is characteristic of works of literature in late Julio-Claudian and Flavian times.

Following the Augustan age's production of a vast body of literature, many works of which rapidly acquired canonised status, we encounter a highly dynamic landscape of literary genres in late Julio-Claudian and Flavian times. This landscape is characterised by authors' literary self-consciousness and their constant redefinition of genres, motivated by tensions between

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[19] Boyle (2019) 107–9.
[20] Rimell (2015), Fitzgerald and Spentzou (2018) 7.
[21] See *RE* s.v. *nostoi* and s.v. *Odysseus*. The edited volume by Biggs and Blum (2019) examines the centrality of the (epic) journey across genres. For a cross-generic overview of *nostoi* in ancient Greek literature, see Alexopoulou (2009). See also the contributions to the volume edited by Hornblower and Biffis (2018), which discuss *nostoi* as literary traditions as well as paths and patterns of migration.

tradition and innovation.[22] Many texts of this era feature aspects attributed to multiple literary genres, which can produce different effects: the reaffirmation of a particular genre, for example, a redefinition, or even the creation of hybrid texts such as the *Silvae*, which have recently been termed 'non-genre'.[23] Because of this dynamic and complex generic activity, I approach the works of poetry in this thesis through the concept of intergenericity. According to Vamvouri's definition, intergenericity does not imply a specific genre determination of a particular text: it therefore involves the 'examination of generic directions and coloring in the form and content of a text and … a close look at the ways in which … texts integrate, manipulate or subvert features attributed to different literary genres.'[24] As I aim to demonstrate, poets' multifaceted engagement with a range of generic discourses is central to their explorations and articulations of issues of identity and empire.

Consequently, the study of intertextual relations between texts, discourses, and genres is crucial to my examinations. Many scholars of ancient Greek and Latin literature have studied the ways in which reflexive interaction between texts creates meaning: my examinations of these interactions are grounded in the theoretical work of Fowler and Hinds among others.[25] Throughout my case studies, I explore such interactions on multiple levels, firstly analysing intertextual relations between specific texts and secondly considering interactions between specific texts on the one hand and discourses or genres more broadly on the other hand. Accordingly, my analyses are not limited to Latin poetry, but they engage with a variety of discourses across Greek and Latin poetry and prose, and sometimes with material culture too. Finally, I draw on narratological theories and concepts to examine the roles of narrators and narratees, the focalisation of stories and events, and the presentations of time and space.[26]

So far, I have discussed abstract methodological issues that inform my approaches to the texts studied in this thesis. In what follows, I set the stage for my examinations more concretely. I do so by briefly discussing how notions of Roman imperialism and ideas of home informed

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[22] Bessone and Fucecchi (2017a) 1.

[23] Since Kroll (1924)'s *Kreuzung der Gattungen*, much scholarship on genre and generic interactions has been undertaken, building on Conte's and Hinds' formative work on genre as dynamic and existing through its progressive making in relation to other genres, thereby making up a literary culture or a system of genres: Conte (1984); (1985) ≈ Conte (1986); Conte (1991) ≈ Conte (1994); Hinds (1998). See especially Depew and Obbink (2000), Harrison (2007a), Papanghelis, Harrison, and Frangoulidis (2013), Bessone and Fucecchi (2017b). For 'non-genre' as a label indicating the *Silvae*'s elusion of precise genre identification, see Bonadeo (2017).

[24] Vamvouri (2020) 3. This edited volume is dedicated to the dynamics of intertextuality in Plutarch: its approach to genre via intergenericity seems to me applicable to early imperial literature more widely.

[25] Scholarship on Roman intertextuality and reception is extensive: see e.g. Thomas (1986), Martindale (1993), Wills (1996), Fowler (1997), Hinds (1998), Edmunds (2001), Schmitz (2007) 77–85, Hutchinson (2013).

[26] Formative to my understanding and practice of narratology have been Bal (1985) and de Jong (2014).

poets' thinking about identity and empire as carried out in their narrations of journeys through liminal spaces.

Imperialism, Identity, and Empire

Roman imperialism remains fundamental to constructions of spaces of Rome, its empire, and its narratives. The imperial and colonial conquest and demarcation of non-Roman lands as Roman was key to the foundation, expansion, and thereby to the continued existence of the Roman Empire.[27] Central to empire, in other words, was 'a logic of expansive becoming.'[28] This logic also informed formations of Roman identity, which functioned in tandem with and in response to expansions of empire and the continuous redrawing of imperial boundaries. The polarities of self (Roman) and other (non-Roman) through which constructions of Roman identity often operated found spatial expression in the contrasting dynamics between the empire's centre, Rome, and its periphery in various expanding concentric circles, which can be roughly understood as Italy, territory under Roman control, and the borders of the known world.[29] This understanding of self and empire, built on the centrality of Rome, generates a paradoxical dialectic between expansion and enclosure: how is it possible to keep expanding the *imperium sine fine*, while maintaining supposedly impermeable boundaries and a fixed and solid Roman centre?[30]

As Rimell has demonstrated in her examination of tropes of enclosed, 'interior' spaces and their relations to vast, expanding empire, this dialectic underlies many works of early imperial Latin literature.[31] It is closely tied to poets' explorations of issues of philosophical and political importance, including the nature, limits, and durability of imperial power and rulership, narratives of empire, and articulations of what it means to be Roman. In this thesis, I approach these navigations of self and empire by focusing on poetic journeys through liminal spaces, such as journeys over roads and rivers and travels over seas and into harbours.[32] Liminal spaces are characterised by 'in between-ness': they have no fixed meaning, but they form an area of

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[27] On the relation between Roman imperialism, empire, and identities, see e.g. Nicolet (1991), Laurence and Berry (1998), Woolf (2000), Revell (2009), Mattingly (2011), Ando (2015).

[28] Coward (2005) 865. I follow Rimell (2015), (2018) in applying Coward's 'logic of expansive becoming' to the Roman Empire and its literatures.

[29] Nicolet (1991) 29–33, Romm (1992) 46–8, Jaeger (1997) 9–10.

[30] Jaeger (1997), Rimell (2015).

[31] Rimell (2015).

[32] Biggs and Blum (2019) 6: space is 'always caught up in the transformative journey to which it is subjected through the construction of "place".'

ambiguity and transition between one space and another. Through this ambiguity, liminal spaces facilitate or even demand the (re)ordering and rearticulation of stories, histories, memories, and identities.[33] This means that they are the types of spaces that can tell us something about how humans – in this case, authors of Latin poetry – perceive the world and their literal and metaphorical place in it. Just as Rimell's interior spaces, then, liminal spaces are key locations for thinking about identity, politics, poetry, and philosophy.[34]

The liminal spaces that feature in my case studies broadly fall into two categories, which correspond with the two parts of this thesis. The first part, 'Constructing Imperial Power', focuses on journeys over Roman roads that traverse liminal landscapes, characterised by rivers and swamps, and that collapse the distance between the Empire's centre, Rome, and its peripheries, from areas in Italy to more distant territories under Roman rule. These journeys are very much situated in the geopolitical dialectic I have just described: through their depictions of swift travel, Lucan's Rubicon passage and Statius' *Via Domitiana* overtly engage with the centrality and accessibility of Rome, the repeated redrawing of the Empire's boundaries, and their consequences for constructions of Roman identity.[35]

Home, Identity, and Empire

The works of poetry by Seneca and Statius examined in the second part of this thesis, 'Constructing Roman Self', engage with the centrality of Rome too, but in a different way, namely through themes of homecoming. These poems' journeys home traverse a different type of liminal space, the sea.[36] Seneca's play features a catastrophic sea storm and the disastrous homecoming of Agamemnon, while Statius' travels lead to a peaceful harbour in the bay of Naples, an arrival that is framed simultaneously as Odysseus' homecoming to Ithaca and

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[33] Influential work on liminality was undertaken by van Gennep (1960) and Turner (1967), and many scholars have worked with the idea that liminal places, border areas, and spaces in-between, or 'places on the margin', lend themselves to people's acts of (self-)definition: see e.g. Bakhtin (1981), Kristeva (1982), Anzaldúa (1987), Shields (1991), Bhabha (1994). Recent and theoretically informed treatments of travels through liminal spaces include Andrews and Roberts (2012), Parker, Downey, and Kinane (2016), Roberts (2018) 31–46.

[34] Rimell (2015) 9.

[35] On the connections between travel and Roman imperialism, see Adams and Laurence (2001).

[36] Thus, the liminal landscapes studied in this thesis are all characterised to some extent by the presence of water. In ancient Greek and Latin literature, water is often found in the context of explorations of cultural complexities, commemorating and contemplating historical, contemporary, and even fictional events. On the importance of the sea in the Greek imagination, see Beaulieu (2016), and on the roles of bodies of water in Latin literature, see e.g. Saint-Denis (1935), Jones (2005), Malissard (2012) 301–22, Rimell (2018). The management of water was central to the development, daily life, and culture of the Roman state: for discussions of Roman water management, including the floods of the Tiber, the importance of rivers as infrastructure, and Roman 'water culture' more generally, see Purcell (1996), Aldrete (2007), Campbell (2013), Rogers (2018).

Aeneas' landing in Carthage. Through engaging with these narratives, Seneca and Statius pose questions of belonging: where is home, and what does 'home' mean? And how do one's answers to these questions inform and affect one's identity and social and political roles in society?[37]

Ideas of home are always complex constructions, informed by and embedded in societal power structures.[38] In the Roman Mediterranean, ideas and manifestations of home were inherently plural because they were shaped by people's mobility, which could be motivated and indeed necessitated by a number of reasons both voluntary and forced, including the need to acquire food, seasonal conditions, and natural disasters, but also, for example, military expeditions, labour, enslavement, and exile.[39] In many cases, such mobility or displacement was a 'group activity', shaping the nature of a collective of people throughout the process.[40]

Such collective mobility was also key to the (hi)story of Rome, founded by the displaced Aeneas and developed into a wealthy empire through conquest and expansion.[41] In this context of mobility and expansion, practices of departure from and return to Rome became systematised, illustrating the fixity of Rome as the practical and ideological centre – that is, the 'home' – of the Empire.[42] The ceremonial *profectio* and *reditio*, for example, marked the military's departures from and returns to Rome in their professed quests to protect the Roman state's interior from the outside world's threats, often through the waging of wars.[43] It is in this context, then, that people formed individual and collective ideas of home.

In other words, 'home' will have meant different things to different people in different stages of their lives, on both individual and collective levels. This concept is illustrated by and explored in *nostoi* narratives: Agamemnon returns to a home community that has changed significantly in his absence, and, despite Penelope's best efforts, Ithaca does not conform to Odysseus' memories and expectations either, not least because Odysseus himself and his ideas of Ithaca – of home – have changed, too. This plurality of ideas of home makes homecoming

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[37] Jacobson (2009), (2010), (2012) discusses the importance of 'home' for our being-at-home in the world and for the shaping of the self, building on ideas of home and notions of territorialised existence developed by, among others, Bachelard (1964) 15, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) 315–6.

[38] Purcell (2018) 269.

[39] Horden and Purcell (2000), (2019), Purcell (2018).

[40] Purcell (2018) 270.

[41] Montiglio (2006) 576: 'The initial displacement, exile, is turned into the motor (if not the precondition) for imperial expansion.'

[42] Biggs and Blum (2019) 3: home, as the 'most common and powerful point of departure … is both a fixed point of orientation and a transportable set of cultural values.'

[43] Purcell (2018) 279–80 discusses how this system categorised the world into home, the locus of civilian life, on the one hand and the 'aggressive, appetitive, violent' exterior world on the other hand.

narratives a particularly suitable medium for poets to explore and articulate their identity, role in society, and place in the world, both generally and in relation to Rome.[44]

Thus, by exploring scenarios in which homecomings do not go as expected, and through descriptions of fast travel that construct imperial power, poets are able to navigate and grapple with issues of identity and empire, including their understanding of Romanness and their changing social, political, and cultural functions in society and empire as Roman citizens. Equipped with this understanding and with our route mapped, let us now accompany Lucan, Seneca, and Statius on their journeys.

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[44] This phenomenon can already be recognised in Greek literature: Biffis (2018) argues that the concept of *nostos* as staged in Greek tragedy contributed to the shaping of the relationship of self to ancient Greek society.

Chapter 1

Crossing the Rubicon: Turning Empire Inside Out

Introduction[45]

In January 49 BCE, Caesar and his army crossed the Rubicon, the geographical and legal boundary between Gaul, his province, and the *patria*, Italy. Although the crossing is absent from contemporary sources, it eventually became a defining event for Roman remembrance of the civil war between Caesar and Pompey and the fall of the Republic.[46] As the first extant narrative of the crossing, over 100 years later, Lucan's *Civil War* represents an important step in this development.

Lucan's epic starts with an introduction, in which the theme of civil war is introduced and its causes and destructive impact on Italy are described (Luc. 1.1–182). At the beginning of the narrative proper, we see Caesar, having crossed the Alps without any problems, arrive at the banks of the Rubicon. Here, a distressed *Patria* appears to him, pleading for him not to proceed and reminding him of the legal consequences of his actions, that is, being considered an enemy of Rome. Caesar ignores her pleas, justifies himself with a speech, and crosses the Rubicon, which swells up in an attempt to hinder his passage. This is one of the few moments in Lucan's *Civil War* that forces the characteristically speedy general to slow down: after crossing the Rubicon, hardly anything forms an obstacle to Caesar's movement.[47] Through its transgression

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[45] An earlier version of this chapter was published in the volume *Landscapes of War in Greek and Roman Literature* (2021) under the title 'Justifying Civil War: Interactions between Caesar and the Italian Landscape in Lucan's Rubicon Passage (*BC* 1.183–235)', pp. 157–76. In this chapter, I have expanded on my argument presented there through the inclusion of an analysis of Cicero's *Patria* in the first *Speech Against Catiline*, a more detailed exposition of fetial rituals, and more explicit discussion of the ways in which Caesar's Rubicon passage illustrates Lucan's perception of Romanness.

[46] In his own *Bellum Civile*, Caesar does not mention how he crossed from his province into Italy (Caes. *BCiv.* 1.8). Asinius Pollio, who accompanied the general at the Rubicon, might have written about the crossing, but his account is lost. Although Cicero wrote negatively about the outbreak of the civil war, he does not explicitly mention Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon (Cic. *Fam.* 16.12). The first reference to this event can be found in Velleius Paterculus, who identifies it as the instigation of the civil war (Vell. Pat. 2.49.4). The crossing only gained significant meaning in the accounts of later writers such as Lucan, Plutarch, and Suetonius, who represent the culmination of Rubicon narratives and considered it to be a crucial moment in the demise of the Republic (Luc. 1.183–235, Plut. *Vit. Caes.* 32, Suet. *Iul.* 31–2). Later accounts dealing with the outbreak of the civil war include Appian (App. *B Civ.* 2.35) and Cassius Dio, who does not mention the Rubicon at all (Cass. Dio 41.4). For a discussion of the development of Rubicon narratives and the way they ask questions about the fall of the Republic, see Beneker (2011).

[47] In Lucan's epic, Caesar is characterised by great haste – perhaps a continuation of the general's rapid advance through Italy as it was represented in Caesar's *Civil War* and Cicero's *Letters* (Caes. *BCiv.* 1.8; Cic. *Att.* 7.22.1, 8.13.1, 7.20.1). See Roche (2009) 192–4, 204, Peer (2015) 59–61, Adema (2017) 237–9.

of geographic, legal, political, and moral boundaries, Lucan's Rubicon passage is programmatic both for the rest of the first book and for the *Civil War* in general.[48]

Central to these transgressions is their destabilising effect: Caesar's approach to Italy is a military advance on Rome rather than a triumphant return to Rome from Gaul, and thereby overturns the common categorisation of the world into *domi*, civilian life in Rome and Italy, and *militiae*, warfare away from home and Rome.[49] In this chapter, I show how this inversion enables Lucan to explore the (in)adequacy of constructions of Roman identity through oppositions of self and other in the early imperial Roman Empire. I do so by examining the Rubicon passage's embedding in Roman formalised practices of departure and return, and, more specifically, in Roman rituals of war.

I begin with a brief discussion of the Rubicon as a topographical referent with a particular legal meaning that informs understandings of Roman space and formations of Roman identity. I show how Caesar, his Roman identity complicated by his lengthy stay in Gaul, attempts to justify his transgressive actions to *Patria* by drawing on Roman rituals of war, including the fetial ritual of lawfully declaring war against a foreign enemy and fetial treaty solemnisation.[50] Caesar's application of these rituals to *Patria* rather than to foreign peoples transfers his conflation of Roman and non-Roman to the Roman state and its citizens, thereby causing a breakdown of Roman ways of understanding the world through polarities of self and other and prompting a crisis of Roman identity.

This breakdown is not limited to Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon, but it is transferred to and perpetuated by members of the Roman state, both within the boundaries of Lucan's epic and beyond. I will demonstrate that Caesar's engagement with Roman rituals of war here not only shows parallels with Pompey's proposed collaboration with the Parthians in book 8, but also evokes the failed treaty between Aeneas and king Latinus in book 12 of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Through this discussion, I explore how the Rubicon passage's connection to these stories informs Lucan's representation of the Rubicon crossing as an event that prompted the civil war and instigated the transition from Republic to Principate, and I consider what this contribution to Roman narratives of empire might tell us about Lucan's perception of Romanness.

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[48] Masters (1992) 1–10 has famously argued that the passage programmatically sets up contradictions between Caesar's urgency in crossing boundaries and Lucan's narrative obstructions to and compliances with Caesar's progress.

[49] Purcell (2018) 279–80 discusses how these spatial categories inform ideas of home and formations of Roman identity.

[50] My understanding of Lucan's Rubicon passage as a spatial and verbal negotiation between Caesar and *Patria* builds on Willis (2011) 59–82.

Landscape, Space, and Roman Identity in Lucan's *Civil War*

Lucan's landscapes often function as a medium through which civil conflict is articulated and political, civic and socio-cultural issues are explored.[51] Rivers and oceans in particular play an important role in this.[52] When the epic arrives at the Rubicon, we have already encountered such exploratory landscapes: the deserted and half-demolished fields of Italy contrast with their fertile and cultivated counterparts in Virgil's *Georgics*, and hint at the impossibility of agricultural recovery and the sometimes permanent effects of civil war.[53] This uncultivated landscape contrasts poignantly with Rome's (self-)image as a community of farmer-citizens whose identity was rooted in working the land, a notion that should be understood in the context of Roman ethnocentrism.[54] As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, this ethnocentric understanding of Roman space relates Rome as the centre to its peripheries in expanding concentric circles: Italy, territory under Roman control, and the borders of the known world.[55] This Romanocentric approach, closely tied to Roman identity, generates a paradoxical dialectic between expansion and enclosure: how does one maintain a solid sense of Roman self while repeatedly conquering and incorporating foreign lands and peoples into the Roman Empire?[56] This anxiety underlies the decentralisation of Rome and the Roman world that is recurrent throughout Lucan's *Civil War*.[57]

Crucially, this decentralisation is prompted by Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon, which effectively collapses the legal boundary between two of these concentric circles, namely outside space (territory under Roman control, or provinces) and inside space (Italy).[58]

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[51] Masters (1992), O'Gorman (1995), Leigh (2010), Bexley (2014), Zientek (2014), (2021).

[52] Bexley (2014) 374. See e.g. the Tiber filled with blood and corpses of earlier civil war victims (Luc. 2.209–20); the sea battle at Massilia, where water makes corpses' features unrecognisable (Luc. 3.509–672); the Araxes where Crassus died (Luc. 8.431–9); Pompey's corpse buried at the coast of Egypt (Luc. 8.712–822); and, by contrast, Caesar claiming that he would not mind being buried under the waves – as long as he is feared forever and by everyone (Luc. 5.654–71).

[53] Zientek (2021).

[54] Leach (1974), Hardie (2006), Skoie (2006), Spencer (2010). See e.g. Cato *Agr. praef.*, Varro *Rust.* 2 *praef.* 1– 2, Sall. *Cat.* 2.10–3, Verg. *Ecl. passim*.

[55] See pp. 23ff. See Nicolet (1991) 29–56 (on Rome's conquest of the world), Romm (1992) 46–8 (on ethnocentrism in Strabo), and Jaeger (1997) 9–10 (on Livy's employment of this spatial model of Roman identity).

[56] Jaeger (1997), Rimell (2015).

[57] On decentralisation in Lucan, see Ahl (1976) 170–3, Masters (1992) 93–9, Rossi (2000), Myers (2011), Bexley (2014).

[58] Myers (2011) discusses how Lucan dismantles the traditional Roman notions of centre and periphery and creates a new concept of Roman space defined by the transgressions and violence of Caesar. On the legal and spatial reorganisation of Roman space caused by Caesar's Rubicon crossing, see especially Willis (2011) 59–82. I discuss the legal ramifications of the Rubicon crossing in more detail below (pp. 32ff.).

Accordingly, the Rubicon, a topographical referent that used to provide meaning within this spatial model of identity, loses its legal meaning. Caesar's crossing then does not only introduce us to some of the main themes of Lucan's epic and instigate the beginning of the civil war, but it also threatens a conceptual shift in – or even an uprooting of – Roman identity.

The Rubicon had probably not functioned as the legal boundary between Italy and Gaul for all that long: either for 30 years, if we believe that Sulla changed the boundary from the Aesis to the Rubicon around 80 BCE, or for 80 years, if we believe that Tiberius Gracchus moved the boundary to the Rubicon.[59] As such, the Rubicon's loss of meaning represents only one step of a longer process in which Romans kept adapting their spatial identity. In fact, such continuous adaptation was inherent to formations of Roman identity, as, from the early Kingdom onwards, Rome kept expanding its 'elastic' walls, and the integration of new citizens into an existing *patria* was an ever-existing issue.[60] However, this particular instance of a topographic referent losing its meaning is different, since it causes Rome's 'elastic' walls to move inwards rather than outwards, and since, from Lucan's time onwards, this moment was interpreted as related to a change of political institution.[61]

In what follows, I discuss how *Patria* protests her landscape's loss of meaning prompted by Caesar's advance on Rome visually, verbally, and physically, and how Caesar attempts to justify himself. He does so by drawing on Roman rituals of war, especially the fetial ritual of lawfully declaring war against a foreign enemy and fetial treaty solemnisation. Soon, however, Caesar ends his diplomatic efforts and violates the landscape – and thereby *Patria* herself – by crossing the physically protesting river and deliberately seeking war.

Arriving at the Riverbanks: *Patria* Voices Her Concerns

After Caesar has crossed the Alps, he reaches the Rubicon, where the *imago* of a visibly distressed *Patria* appears to him (Luc. 1.183–90). This is not the first time a vision of *Patria* appears to a Roman leader in the face of impending civil war. In the first *Speech Against Catiline*, Cicero stages a personification of *Patria*, suggesting that Catiline should respect her

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[59] See, respectively, Mommsen (1863) 367–8, Hardy (1916) 66–8, Sumi (2002) 425–6; and Cuntz (1902) 28–34, Walbank (1957) 396–7, (1972) 24.

[60] Konstan (1986), Rimell (2015) 30–2.

[61] On the relation between narratives of the Rubicon crossing and the transition from Republic to Principate, see Beneker (2011).

auctoritas, follow her *iudicium*, and fear her power (Cic. *Cat*. 1.17–8).[62] Through her silence, Cicero's *Patria* somehow manages to address Catiline, describing his involvement in crimes against citizens and pointing out that Catiline has not only been able to ignore Roman law, but even to overturn and shatter it.[63] Although *Patria* tolerated Catiline's earlier crimes, her message now is that he has now gone too far, and therefore she urges him to leave Rome, freeing her from the fear that she will be destroyed by him (Cic. *Cat*. 1.18). Lucan's *Patria* follows the example set by Cicero's precedent, escalating and inverting her message (Luc. 1.186–90):

> ingens visa duci patriae **trepidantis** imago
> clara per obscuram **vultu maestissima** noctem
> **turrigero** canos effundens vertice crines
> caesarie lacera nudisque adstare lacertis,
> **et gemitu permixta loqui**: …   190

> Clearly to the leader through the murky night appeared
> a mighty image of his country in distress, grief in her face,
> her white hair streaming from her tower-crowned head;
> with tresses torn and shoulders bare she stood before him
> and sighing said: …   190

Unlike Cicero's *Patria*, Lucan's *Patria* does not convey her message quietly, but she cries out audibly (compare *et gemitu permixta loqui*, Luc. 1.190, with *quodam modo tacita loquitur*,

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[62] My analysis expands on Beneker (2011) 92–3 and Roche (2009) 205–6, who note that *Patria*'s apparition at Cic. *Cat*. 1.17–8 is a precedent for Lucan's *Patria*. Roche also refers to implicit and explicit associations between Caesar and Catiline elsewhere in Lucan's *Civil War* (cf. Luc. 1.158–82, 2.542–3). In addition to Cicero's prosopopoeia, several other models for *Patria*'s appearance have been suggested, including Hector's apparition to Aeneas on the night of Troy's destruction at Verg. *Aen*. 2.268–97. For an overview of suggested models, see Masters (1992) 1–2 n. 4. More recently, Zientek (2014) 45–6 has suggested that Lucan's *Patria* is a reimagination of Roma's triumphant appearance in Anchises' speech about Rome's glorious future in Verg. *Aen*. 6.781–7. Mulhern (2017) points out *Patria*'s similarities to Roman *matronae* and widows, and interprets Caesar's rejection of *Patria* as his indifference to Rome as he 'embarks on his road away from his wife, Rome and Romanness to tyranny, luxury and a mistress' (p. 456). Clearly, *Patria*'s appearance here is poignant and related to Rome's future.

[63] Cic. *Cat*. 1.18: *tibi uni multorum civium neces … tu non solum ad neglegendas leges et quaestiones verum etiam ad evertendas perfringendasque valuisti*, 'No one but you has killed a host of citizens … Not only have you been able to ignore the laws and law-courts but you have been able to overturn and shatter them.'

'though silent [*Patria*] somehow makes this appeal to you', Cic. *Cat*. 1.17). And although Lucan's *Patria* trembles with fear just as Cicero's *Patria* did, she is also very sorrowful (compare *trepidantis*, Luc. 1.186, and *vultu maestissima*, Luc. 1.187, with *nunc vero me totam esse in metu propter unum te*, 'that I should now be in a state of total terror on your account', Cic. *Cat*. 1.18). In fact, several details of *Patria*'s portrayal correspond to common expressions of grief, including her loose hair, torn tresses, and naked arms. She is also wearing a tower-crown (*turrigero*, Luc. 1.188). This image, I suggest, evokes the personifications of cities, peoples, and their lands as familiar from Roman iconography and triumphal processions.[64] Some of these representations feature conquered peoples wearing Greek dress and hairstyle and a mural crown while adopting a friendly stance, indicating Roman understanding of these peoples as adopted members of the Roman state. But Lucan's *Patria* is more reminiscent of conquered peoples who, wearing unbridled hair, are depicted as grieving, illustrating Rome's understanding of them as conquered enemies and emphasising Rome's supremacy.[65] Since mural crowns often emphasise the military siege of places represented in Roman triumphs and reliefs, *Patria*'s mural crown not only underlines her representation of Rome, but also anticipates Caesar's imminent conquest of the *urbs aeterna*. Through her appearance, then, *Patria*'s *imago* forewarns the transition and decentralisation that Italy will go through if Caesar crosses the Rubicon, namely from the heart of the Roman state to one of Caesar's conquered enemies.

Next, *Patria* adds words to the message conveyed by her appearance, drawing Caesar's attention to his imminent transgressive engagement with the law just as Cicero's *Patria* had pointed out Catiline's legal transgressions (Luc. 1.190–2):

> 'quo tenditis ultra?   190
> quo fertis **mea signa**, viri? **si iure venitis,**
> **si cives**, huc usque licet.'

> 'Where further do you march?   190
> Where do you take my standards, warriors? If lawfully you come,
> if as citizens, this far only is allowed.'

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[64] Gardner (1888), Ostrowski (1996), Östenberg (2009) 204–8. Roche (2009) 208 notes that, from the early 2nd century CE, *Italia* is represented with a tower-crown on coins and (probably) on the Arch of Trajan at Beneventum.

[65] Ostrowski (1996), Östenberg (2009) 205–8. The distinction was first made by Bienkowski (1900).

Patria's question about and (re)appropriation of the Roman military standards (***mea signa***, Luc. 1.191) immediately calls attention to Caesar's belligerent and unlawful intentions.[66] She points out that, if they have come as law-abiding citizens, the general and his army must stop here, at the border of Italy. After all, it was prohibited for generals to guide their legions out of their assigned provinces without the authorisation of the Roman people or the senate since Sulla's establishment of the *lex Cornelia maiestatis* in 81 BCE.[67] The anaphora *si iure venitis, si cives* (Luc. 1.191–2) emphasises the legal ramifications of *Patria*'s request, underlining that Caesar is not allowed to transgress this legal boundary as a soldier. As such, *Patria*'s speech revisits the themes of transgression and *ius* as set out in the poem's introduction and marks their importance for this passage.[68] What is more, *Patria*'s speech sets up a formal negotiation between herself and Caesar. This negotiation is both spatial and legal: the river Rubicon is a spatial element fixed onto terrestrial space. At the same time, this spatial element has legal meaning, differentiating Roman citizens on the inside from others, potential enemies, on the outside. As such, Caesar's relation to *Patria* is defined by his position in and the nature of his movement through space: if he decides to cross the boundary and enter Italy as a general with his army, rather than as a citizen as requested by *Patria*, he becomes an enemy to the state – and Rome will become Caesar's enemy.[69]

Through her appearance as well as through her speech, then, *Patria* presages the far-reaching consequences of Caesar's actions. The general's crossing of the Rubicon would necessitate the application of terms such as *hostis* to a Roman citizen rather than to non-Roman enemies. The uprooting of this system of terminology means a breakdown of Roman ways of understanding the world through oppositions of self and other as well as through polarities of centre and periphery. As such, Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon endangers the spatial model on the basis of which Roman identity is formed. This breakdown is what *Patria*'s appearance

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[66] Roche (2009) 209: throughout the *Civil War*, Pompey (Luc. 2.592), Caesar (Luc. 5.349) and Cato (Luc. 9.281) all claim the *signa* for themselves.

[67] Cf. *EDRL* s.v. *crimen maiestatis*, *lex Cornelia de maiestate*: Sulla's law was concerned with *crimen maiestatis*, a crime of high treason diminishing the superiority (*maiestas*) of the Roman people, and 'addressed provincial governors who acted without authorisation of the Roman people or the senate' (Williamson (2016) 336–7). Cf. Cic. *Pis*. 50. A potential precedent of this law, the *lex Porcia*, is discussed by Lintott (1981) 54–8 and Braga (2014) 89–91. The precise date of this law is debated: it possibly dates back to the second century BCE, but occurred definitely no later than 100 BCE. It seems to have included prescriptions for governors, including a restriction of movement for governors with their armies.

[68] Cf. especially Luc. 1.1: *bella [...] plus quam civilia*, 'wars … worse than civil wars', introducing the theme of transgression, and 1.2: *ius [...] datum sceleri*, 'legality conferred on crime', underlining the conflation *ius* and *scelus* that characterises this *Civil War*.

[69] Willis (2011) 59–60.

as a conquered enemy illustrates, and why she emphatically points out that it is not legal for Caesar to travel into Italy with his army. We are therefore confronted with an inversion of the scenario faced by Cicero and the Roman senate described earlier, where *Patria* urged Catiline to leave Rome in order to avoid the destruction of the *res publica*.[70] Cicero concluded his prosopopoeia of *Patria* by asking Catiline: 'If your country were to appeal to you with these words, should not her request be granted, even if she cannot force you?' (*Haec si tecum, ut dixi, patria loquatur, nonne impetrare debeat, etiam si vim adhibere non possit?*, Cic. *Cat.* 1.18). We have seen that Lucan responds to this hypothetical condition by literalising it. Now it is time to examine how Lucan's Caesar will respond to *Patria*'s request to halt his advance on Rome.

Fetial War Diplomacy and Caesar the Priest

Caesar's first reaction to *Patria*'s supernatural appearance is to tremble: perplexed, he halts on the edge of the riverbanks (Luc. 1.192–4). Soon, however, he picks himself up and responds with a speech that includes an invocation of several gods (Luc. 1.195–200). These deities include Jupiter, the *penates* of the *gens Iulius*, Quirinus, Vesta, and Rome: because they are characteristic of the Julio-Claudian emperors, they are generally interpreted as a prefiguration of the Principate that Caesar's victory in this civil war helped to bring about.[71] Additionally, I suggest that they recall deities that are associated with Roman practices of war diplomacy, especially fetial procedures of war declaration and treaty solemnisation. Thus, *Patria*'s appeal to Caesar, framed in the legal language and imagery of Roman imperialism, prompts a corresponding legal and imperialist response. Before demonstrating how Caesar's words and actions are embedded in practices of fetial war diplomacy, I will briefly contextualise the *fetiales* and their relevance to Caesar.

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[70] Compare the contradictions in direction and movement between Luc. 1.190–2: *quo tenditis* **ultra** … **huc usque licet**, 'Where further do you march … this far only is allowed', and Cic. *Cat.* 1.18: *Quam ob rem* **discede** *atque hunc mihi timorem eripe; si est verus,* **ne opprimar**, *sin falsus, ut tandem aliquando timere desinam*, 'Depart, then, and free me from this dread; if it is well founded, that I may not be destroyed: if groundless, that I may at long last cease to feel afraid.' Cicero often uses *patria* and *res publica* interchangeably: see Wood (1988) 139–40, Beneker (2011) 79 n. 12.

    This inversion is in line with Lucan's inversions of other intertextual models for this passage, including Hector's advice to Aeneas to leave his fatherland at Verg. *Aen.* 2.268–97 and Mnestheus' speech at Verg. *Aen.* 9.781–7, encouraging the Trojans to fight for their *patria*, in contradiction with *Patria*'s request here to abstain from fighting: see Roche (2009) 205–9.

[71] Grimal (1970) 56–9, Roche (2009) 210–2.

The *fetiales* are considered to be an old priesthood, dating back to the early Roman Kingdom.[72] The priests, the fetials, were traditionally involved with the Romans' relations with other peoples. They were responsible, among other things, for formal diplomatic action, including the performance of rituals through which a *bellum iustum*, a just war, could be started, the solemnisation of treaties, and the surrender of Romans who did not adhere to these procedures.[73] As such, the fetials played an important role in Roman relations with other peoples, especially their enemies.

Since much of our evidence dates to the early imperial period, outlining the history and activity of the fetial priesthood is complicated. Nevertheless, the *fetiales* appear to have been active throughout the Republic.[74] Fetial ritual was certainly in the public eye during the imperial period, when Augustus revived certain fetial rituals that were probably not very well known by then and incorporated them in the construction and justification of his autocratic regime.[75] This includes, most famously, Augustus' version of the fetial declaration of a just war by means of throwing a spear into the *ager quasi hostilis* near the Columna Bellica in an effort to officially declare war against Mark Antony and Cleopatra, as well as his closure of the so-called Gates of War.[76] Most of our evidence regarding fetial rituals of war derives from antiquarian constructions of around this time.[77] Livy (1.24.4–9, 32.6–10) and Dionysius of Halicarnassus (2.72.6–8) provide descriptions of fetial activities, including the fetial ritual of declaring war against a foreign enemy and the solemnisation of treaties.[78]

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[72] A vast range of research on the fetials and related topics has been published. See *RE* s.v. *fetiales*, as well as Wissowa (1912) 550–4; Ogilvie (1965) 110–2, 127–136; Ziegler (1972); Rich (1976), (2011) 187–90, (2013) 559–64; Saulnier (1980); Wiedemann (1986); Rüpke (1990) 97–124; Beard, North, and Price (1998) 26–7; Santangelo (2008); Ager (2009) 17–25. For a comprehensive overview of relevant scholarship, see Santangelo (2008) 63–4 nn. 1–2.

[73] The concept of 'just war' was likely well embedded in earlier Roman culture, but we only find developed views on it in the first century BCE. Cicero (*Off.* 1.11) discusses when it is just to commence a war, namely when others have harmed or threaten to harm the Romans, and emphasises that no war is just or pious, unless a formal declaration of war has been made by the *fetiales*: see Ager (2009) 21–2, Cornwell (2015) 335–7. For *bellum iustum* in association with the *fetiales*, see Cic. *Off.* 3.30.107–8, *Rep.* 2.17, 2.31; Liv. 1.32.12, 42.47.8; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.72.4.

[74] See Santangelo (2008), Rich (2011) 190, Zollschan (2012) 119–44.

[75] Beard *et al.* (1998) 186, Rich (2011) 189: although it probably was one of the lesser priesthoods, the fetial college in the imperial period included members of the imperial family and some distinguished senators. See Rüpke (2008) 973–4 for a list of 35 *fetiales* in the imperial period, subsequently supplemented by Zollschan (2009).

[76] Rich (2013) 544, 561. As he explicitly mentions in the *Res Gestae* (*RG* 7), Augustus was a *fetialis* himself. On Augustus' closure of the Gates of War, cf. *RG* 13 and DeBrohun (2007) 258–60.

[77] Rich (2013) 559–64.

[78] Cf. also Varro *Ling.* 5.86; Cic. *Leg.* 2.9, *Off.* 1.11; Liv. 9.5, 10.45, 30.43; Plin. *HN* 22.2–3; Plut. *Vit. Num.* 12.3–5; Suet. *Claud.* 22, 25.5; Serv. *ad Aen.* 1.62, 9.52–3, 10.14.

Based on these descriptions, scholars have attempted to reconstruct fetial rituals. The procedure for declaring war, for example, has been divided into three different phases.[79] The first phase is the *rerum repetitio*, when the fetial *pater patratus*, probably accompanied by a delegation of fetials, travels to the enemy's frontier to invoke a number of gods, including Jupiter and the boundaries of the enemy, states Rome's complaints and demands, and swears they are just, giving the enemy roughly a month to meet the Romans' requirements satisfactorily.[80] It is likely that the fetials returned home after this.[81] Next, if the priests did not receive a satisfactory response, they would return to the enemy's boundary and call upon a selection of gods, including Jupiter, Janus Quirinus, and celestial and infernal gods, to witness that people's injustice and the legitimacy of the Romans' cause: this is typically called the *testatio*.[82] The fetials would then warn the enemy that matters would be taken into consideration by the senate, meaning that a war declaration might be impending. The final stage in this process would have been the *indictio belli*, when the fetials, following the senate's approval, would officially declare war on the enemy by throwing a spear into their territory.[83] Scholars have interpreted this action as symbolical, but they have also suggested that it could be considered magical: made from infertile cornel and tipped with iron, the spear's aim would be to attract and render infertile the enemy's potency.[84]

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[79] See especially Holland (1961) 61–2; Ogilvie (1965) 110–2, 127–36; Rüpke (1990) 99–109; Rich (2011). I discuss fetial treaty solemnisation in more detail below (pp. 49ff.).

[80] See Ogilvie (1965) 111, Rüpke (1990) 101–3 with Liv. 1.24.6, 30.43.9; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.72; Serv. *ad Aen.* 12.120. Although both Livy and Dionysius seem to indicate that only one fetial priest undertook this mission, Varro mentions four priests (see Non. p. 850L, quoting Varro *De vita populi Romani*). For the fetial invocation of gods, cf. Liv. 1.32.6–7, Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.72.6. This speech was repeated several times: immediately after crossing the boundary or upon meeting the first inhabitant of the area, upon arriving at the city's gate, and in the forum, addressing the enemy's magistrates (Liv. 1.32.8, Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.72.7). Livy mentions that the Romans give the enemy 33 days to respond (Liv. 1.32.9), as opposed to Dionysius' 30 days (Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.72.8).

[81] Holland (1961) 62. Livy does not specifically refer to a return of the fetial embassy, but Dionysius does (Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.72.8).

[82] Cf. Liv. 1.32.10, Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.72.8 with Schilling (1960), Holland (1961) 60, Ogilvie (1965) 131–2, and see n. 98 on p. 40 below.

[83] Cf. Liv. 1.32.11–4, 10.45.7–8 and Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.72.9 with McDonald and Walbank (1937) 192–93, Ogilvie (1965) 127, Rüpke (1990) 105–9, Ager (2009) 21. Plutarch (*Num.* 12.3–5) does not mention the consultation of the senate, and the *indictio belli* is not mentioned at all in Dionysius, where the fetials complete their task by informing the senate of the state of affairs after the *testatio* (Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.72.9).

[84] For symbolical interpretations, see McDonald and Walbank (1937), Rüpke (1990) 107–8. Ogilvie (1965) 135 argues that the spear was magical rather than symbolic, based on the spear's properties as they are described in Liv. 1.32.12: *hastam ferratam aut sanguineam praeustam*, 'a cornet-wood spear, iron-pointed or hardened in the fire.' Ogilvie thereby refers to *ferratam*, iron, as a 'potent source of magic' because of its magnetic properties, and to *sanguineam* as an adjective derived from a species of cornel that is considered to be infertile by Macrobius (*Sat.* 3.20.3) and Pliny (*HN* 16.74, 176). I discuss the fetial spear in relation to Virgil's *Aeneid* below (p. 53).

As Rich has pointed out, these accounts are likely to have been largely antiquarian inventions, and fetial practices will probably not have been as clearly defined as these authors' descriptions may make us think: Livy's accounts, for example, appear to conflate aspects of different fetial rituals.[85] Virgil's rituals of war in the *Aeneid* evoke different aspects of fetial rituals too, which are poignantly employed in an ambiguous manner: in book 7, for example, king Latinus refuses to complete the ritual of declaring war against the Trojans by opening the Gates of War, and Juno, gliding down from the heavens, forces open the Gates to begin what is proleptically a civil war, not a war against foreign peoples.[86] It is these recent, conflated, and ambiguous narratives of fetial ritual that Lucan engages with in the Rubicon passage.

Moreover, Caesar himself had a background in priesthood. As a young man, Caesar was nominated for the office of *flamen Dialis*. Later, he was elected to the pontificate and eventually he became *pontifex maximus*.[87] He also had personal experience with one of the fetials' practices, namely the surrender of Romans who had not adhered to fetial procedures or treaties in order to deflect divine punishment from Rome.[88] In 55 BCE, Cato argued that Caesar should be surrendered to two German tribes, the Tencteri and Usipetes, since he had attacked them during a truce and massacred their diplomats.[89] Although Cato's motion was met with contempt and the surrender did not take place, Caesar can be seen to justify his actions in the *Gallic Wars*: he explains that he had to act swiftly to avoid a more serious war, as the Germans' supposedly violent behaviour constituted an increasing danger.[90] This is only one instance of diplomacy and rituals of war in Caesar's works. Notably, such diplomatic moments typically affect the pace of the narrative in strategic ways: Adema discusses how, in Caesar's *Civil War*, long speeches that slow down the narrative tempo frequently occur in episodes in which diplomatic efforts are emphasised, but notes that the narrator focuses more on physical actions when negotiations are finished – or when they seem pointless from the start.[91] We will see that Caesar's strategic diplomacy contributes to the pace of Lucan's narrative too. Thus, Caesar's

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[85] See Rich (2013) 561–2, who discusses Liv. 1.32.5–14 in particular.

[86] Cf. Verg. *Aen.* 7.601–17 with Horsfall (2000) 391–2 and DeBrohun (2007) 263–9. Fetial ritual features in *Aeneid* 12 too, when king Latinus and Aeneas confirm a treaty for single combat between Turnus and Aeneas that will end the war by determining who gets to marry Lavinia. I discuss fetial ritual in the *Aeneid* in more detail below (pp. 49ff.).

[87] It is generally agreed upon that Caesar was never inaugurated as *flamen Dialis*. See Taylor (1941) 113–5, Ridley (2000) 214–5.

[88] For this procedure, typically labelled *deditio* by scholars, see Rüpke (1990) 110–1, Ager (2009) 22, Rich (2011) 195–9.

[89] Cf. Plut. *Comp. Nic. et Crass.* 4.3, *Vit. Caes.* 22.4, *Vit. Cat. Min.* 51.1–2; Suet. *Iul.* 24.3.

[90] Caes. *BGal.* 4. See Powell (2009), Morrell (2015).

[91] Adema (2016) 225, (2017) 237–9.

priesthood as *pontifex maximus*, undoubtedly still known to many people in Lucan's time due to his introduction of the Julian calendar, as well as his personal experience with diplomatic practices and rituals of war, serve as a fertile background for Lucan's Rubicon passage.

Caesar's Diplomatic Response to *Patria*

By travelling to the enemy's frontier and standing just outside it, Caesar has already fulfilled the first step of the fetial procedure of declaring war. He then invokes a selection of gods to testify that his demands and actions are just, makes an implied demand – namely that he can cross the boundary as *patria*'s *miles* rather than as citizen – and assigns blame to Pompey, his enemy. These actions, I suggest, evoke different phases of fetial war declaration, including the aforementioned *rerum repetitio* (stating one's complaints and demands at the enemy's frontier and swearing by a selection of gods that they are just), *testatio* (returning to the enemy's boundary and calling upon the gods to witness that people's injustice and the Romans' legitimate cause), and *indictio belli* (the official war declaration, a speech indicting the guilty party possibly accompanied by the throwing of a spear into the hostile territory). Just as in Livy, these phases of war declaration are conflated both with each other and with additional fetial rituals, including the solemnisation of treaties.[92] To start with, Caesar begins his speech with an invocation of several gods (Luc. 1.195–200):

> mox ait: 'o magnae qui moenia prospicis urbis
> Tarpeia de rupe, **Tonans**, Phrygiique penates
> gentis Iuleae et rapti secreta **Quirini**
> et residens celsa **Latiaris Iuppiter** Alba
> Vestalesque foci **summique o numinis instar**,
> **Roma, fave coeptis**.   200

> At last he speaks: 'O Thunderer, surveying great Rome's
> walls from the Tarpeian Rock; O Phrygian house-gods of Iulus' clan
> and mysteries of Quirinus, who was carried off to heaven;
> O Jupiter of Latium, seated in lofty Alba,
> and hearths of Vesta; O Rome, the equal of the highest

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[92] Cf. Liv. 1.24.4–9, 32.6–10: see also n. 85 on p. 37.

deity, favour my plans. 200

First, in an act reminiscent of the oaths by Jupiter sworn in the *rerum repetitio*, Caesar addresses Jupiter *Tonans*, who looks out over the city walls from the Tarpeian Rock (Luc. 1.195–6). The reference to the Tarpeian Rock recalls an historical paradigm of treachery, since notorious criminals were hurled off the Rock to their deaths.[93] Clearly, Caesar has understood *Patria*'s warning and is aware of what awaits him, should he transgress the law. Moreover, the Temple of Jupiter, which was close to the Tarpeian Rock, played an important role in the fetial ritual of solemnising a *foedus*, a treaty.[94] The invocation of Jupiter *Tonans*, combined with the reference to the Tarpeian Rock and its associations of solemnising and entering into treaties, make it likely that Jupiter is called upon here as a witness to Caesar's speech in his capacity as the divine law-maker.[95] Caesar is here as Rome's *miles* (Luc. 1.202), for the benefits of the state: may Jupiter strike him down with his thunderbolt, a common punishment for breaking a fetial treaty, if he is not.[96]

Caesar also calls upon Quirinus (Luc. 1.197). The mention of this god, in addition to the other gods invoked in Caesar's speech, such as the Trojan *penates*, is usually interpreted as Caesar emphasising his claim to Aeneas' heritage.[97] Additionally, Quirinus also featured in fetial war declarations as well as in treaty solemnisations: he is called upon in the fetial *testatio* as an epithet of Janus, and features in Polybius' account as one of the gods by whom the treaty

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[93] Roche (2009) 212.

[94] During the early Principate, there were in fact two temples to Jupiter close to the Tarpeian Rock on the Capitol hill: a temple to Jupiter *Feretrius*, first established during the early Kingdom and one of the first temples restored by Augustus (Nep. *Att.* 20.3, *RG* 19, see also Prop. 4.10), and a temple to Jupiter *Tonans*, built by Augustus and dedicated in 22 BCE to thank Jupiter for not striking him with lightning (*RG* 19, Suet. *Aug.* 29.1). For the history and potential locations of these temples, see Carandini (2017) 150–6, 171 with tables 20, 30, and 269. See also Varro *Ling*. 5.41.

The temple of Jupiter *Feretrius* was specifically associated with the fetial cult: the fetial priests appear to have stored their ritual objects there, including the sceptre by which they swore and the flint with which they sacrificed pigs: see Springer (1954) 27–32, Fears (1981) 24–5, Richardson (1992) 219, Carandini (2007) 79–82. Although Caesar here calls upon Jupiter *Tonans*, not Jupiter *Feretrius*, the distinction between these two epithets seems to have been negligible to Lucan's protagonists: in book 8, Pompey refers to an evidently fetial treaty sworn by Jupiter *Tonans* (Luc. 8.218–9: *foedera ... / mihi per Latium iurata Tonantem*, 'the pact I swore by the Thunderer of Latium'). I discuss this passage in more detail below (pp. 45ff.).

[95] A similar invocation of Jupiter *Tonans* is found in book 8, where Pompey refers to his seemingly fetial treaty with the Parthians (Luc. 8.218–20): see p. 46.

[96] The priest would swear that the Romans would not break the treaty, and if they would, Jupiter should smite them – just as the priest then struck a pig with a flint. Cf. Liv. 1.24.7–9. The thunderbolt imagery is of course particularly appropriate for the general, who was compared to the destructive phenomenon only 45 lines earlier (Luc. 1.151–7).

[97] Roche (2009) 212.

between the Romans and Carthaginians was sworn in 279 BCE (Polyb. 3.25).[98] The invocation might also have evoked memories of Janus Quirinus, whose temple doors – the so-called Gates of War presumably dating back to early Rome – were closed by Augustus to signal the pacification of the Empire through his victory in the civil war with Mark Antony and Cleopatra, as he famously announces in *Res Gestae* 13. In his discussion of Janus Quirinus, Schilling suggests that the god was associated with the *milites*' (victorious) return from war to the Roman community of citizens.[99] This aspect of Janus Quirinus, peace through victory, would have been particularly welcome to Augustan Rome after generations of (civil) wars. Lucan's Caesar here anticipates an idea that is specified later in his speech: the Republic needs to be pacified through Caesar's victory in this civil war, just as Augustus' victory paved the way for a pacified Principate (Luc. 1.200–3: see p. 43). Thus, Quirinus' name with its connotations evokes a concern with the proper (ritual) beginnings and endings of wars that date back to early Roman times and were particularly present in Roman society since Augustus' embracement and revival of them. As such, Lucan's Caesar anticipates and recalls Augustus' strategic employment of war rituals.

Caesar also invokes Jupiter *Latiaris*. This invocation calls to mind the general's personal history with and exploitation of the deity's cult, and underlines his connection to the god through his ancestor Iulus, who founded both Caesar's *gens* and Alba Longa.[100] The cult title *Latiaris* belonged to Jupiter as he was worshipped on Mons Albanus, as the god of the Latin

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[98] Cf. Liv. 1.32.9–10: '*audi, Iuppiter, et tu, Iane Quirine, dique omnes caelestes, vosque terrestres, vosque inferni, audite; …*', 'Hear, o Jupiter, and you, Janus Quirinus, and all heavenly gods, and you, gods of the earth, and of the lower world, hear: …'; and Polyb. 3.25: ἐπὶ μὲν τῶν πρώτων συνθηκῶν Καρχηδονίους μὲν τοὺς θεοὺς τοὺς πατρῴους, Ῥωμαίους δὲ Δία λίθον κατά τι παλαιὸν ἔθος, ἐπὶ δὲ τούτων τὸν Ἄρην καὶ τὸν Ἐνυάλιον, 'In the case of the first treaty the Carthaginians swore by their ancestral gods and the Romans, following an old custom, invoking Jupiter in the ceremony of the stone, and in the case of this latter treaty by Mars and Quirinus.' Livy's manuscripts read *Iuno Quirine*, which has been emendated to *Iane Quirine*, since *et tu* indicates only one other god rather than two, and since the god Janus Quirinus is attested in several sources (cf. *RG* 13, Hor. *Carm*. 4.15.9, Suet. *Aug*. 22, Macrob. *Sat*. 1.9.16). For discussion, see Schilling (1960), Holland (1961) 60, Ogilvie (1965) 131–2. We only have limited and problematic evidence of the epithet Quirinus' combination with Janus before Augustus' time (see Liv. 1.32.10, and Lactant. *Div*. *Inst*. 4.3.12, quoting Lucilius), but Holland argues that its appearance in the *Res Gestae* suggests that it already was a familiar combination: it is likely that the emperor would have used a name with long traditional associations for a monument intended to be seen and read by many future generations (Holland (1961) 108–11).

[99] Schilling (1960) 120–9. He bases this suggestion on an analysis of the Salian priesthood, which, divided into two groups of 12 priests dedicated to Mars and Quirinus respectively, held processions at the beginning of the war season on 1 March and the end of the war season on 19 October. This procession would move from the temple of Quirinus inside the *pomerium* to Mars' temple outside the *pomerium*, near the *porta Capena*, and mimic the passage from peace to war and vice versa: hence, coming back from warfare, the soldiers would return from Mars to Quirinus, their community, and peace.

[100] Roche (2009) 212.

League. In his honour, the League annually celebrated the *feriae Latinae*, a festival common to ancient Latin communities who then reinforced and honoured their ancient treaty through ritual sacrifice and a common meal.[101] In Republican times, consuls were in charge of the festival: enacting the rituals properly bestowed them with authority and divine sanction and allowed them to leave Rome for provinces or to undertake military campaigns.[102] Caesar himself had a special relationship with the *feriae Latinae*, not in the least because the festival took place on Mons Albanus, of which the *gens Iulia* was the custodian. Despite being in a hurry to chase Pompey to Greece in 49 BCE, Caesar took the time to celebrate the festival.[103] Lucan refers to this celebration of the *feriae Latinae* later in the *Civil War* as well. The reference follows a passage about Caesar's abuse and acquisition of a range of powers and offices, including the consulate, and underlines the subjugation of Latium to the general's every wish (Luc. 5.381–99). The passage is concluded with a description of Caesar's celebration of the *feriae Latinae*, which, Lucan says, Jupiter Latiaris did not even deserve after being subdued by the general.[104] As such, Caesar's invocation of Jupiter *Latiaris* anticipates and proleptically evokes memories of his conquest of Italy and rise to power through civil war, which stands in stark contrast to the god's original association with the ancient treaty between the members of the Latin League.

Next, Caesar calls upon Vesta. The invocation of Vesta and her hearth (*Vestalesque foci*, Luc. 1.199) further reminds us of the early Roman times evoked by the consecutive appeals to Jupiter Tonans, Quirinus, and Jupiter Latiaris, and shows Caesar's apparent concern with Rome's safety. Vesta's fire was carefully tended to by the Vestal Virgins, and its survival was traditionally tied to the *salus*, the safety and security, of the Roman people.[105] Caesar's invocation of Vesta's *foci* might therefore be interpreted as a reassurance that he intends no

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[101] See Fowler (1899) 95–7, Pasqualini (1996), Grandazzi (2008) 517–729, Simón (2011) 95–7, and cf. e.g. Varro *Ling*. 6.25, Liv. 32.1, Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom*. 4.49, Plin. *HN* 3.68, Macrob. *Sat*. 1.16.16.

[102] Simón (2011) 116–8, 124–6. If the consuls would not do so, they would be subject to failure, as befell C. Flaminius in 218 BCE and the consuls Aulus Hirtius and Vibius Pansa in 43 BCE: cf. respectively Liv. 21.63.5–9, 22.1.4.7, and Cass. Dio 46.33–4.

[103] Caes. *BCiv*. 3.2. On Caesar and the *feriae Latinae*, see Pasqualini (1996) 251, Smith (2012) 275ff., Luke (2014) 125ff. This was not the only occasion on which Caesar celebrated the *feriae Latinae*: he did so in 44 BCE too, after which he returned to Rome. At this point, he was honoured with an *ovatio*, a type of triumph that was associated with bloodless victory: cf. Plut. *Vit. Marc*. 22, Gell. *NA* 5.6.20–1. Luke (2014) 125ff. argues that Caesar exploited the festival by connecting it symbolically to the anticipated construction of a new Senate house through the customary procession back to Rome at the end of the festival.

[104] Luc. 5.400–2: *nec non Iliacae numen quod praesidet Albae, / haud meritum Latio sollemnia sacra subacto, / vidit flammifera confectas nocte Latinas*, 'and the deity presiding over Trojan Alba / saw the Latin Festival performed in flame-lit night, though, with Latium quelled, he did not deserve the sacred rites.'

[105] Beard *et al*. (1998) 52–4, Greenfield (2011) 1–9.

harm to the Roman people, and perhaps also as an indication of Caesar's cunning navigation of Roman law: although crossing the Rubicon would mean breaking the *lex Cornelia maiestatis*, as *Patria* pointed out, this crime will not involve a diminishment of the Roman people's *maiestas*.[106] At the same time, Vesta's invocation alerts the audience of the event's far-reaching consequences: the fate and safety of the Roman people were indeed crucially connected to Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon, which was considered as the beginning of the end of the Republic.

Finally, Caesar calls upon Rome in what can be seen as the second important invocation of the fetials' traditional *rerum repetitio* – in addition to Jupiter's invocation – namely that of the boundaries of the respective people.[107] The invocation of Rome also suggests the transition from Republic to Principate: as Feeney has noted, 'It is the Patria of the Republic who speaks to the invading army, but it is his own Imperial Roma whom Caesar addresses in reply.'[108]

So Caesar, standing on the border of Italy, invokes a selection of gods that, in addition to prefiguring the Julio-Claudian dynasty, recalls early Roman times in which there was a great concern with (fetial) ritual war preparations, negotiations and treaty solemnisations. Caesar seems to be evoking these rituals in order to justify his 'enterprise' (*coeptis*, Luc. 1.200): his civil war against Pompey and the Roman Republic. Caesar then continues this diplomatic effort by stating his complaints and demands, an action typically part of the *rerum repetitio*.[109]

The second part of his speech consists mostly of a justification for his imminent attack on Rome, an (implied) demand to continue as *miles* rather than as citizen, and an assignment of guilt to Pompey, who, Caesar complains, is the one who has made him into Rome's enemy (Luc. 1.200–3):

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[106] Caesar's invocation of Vesta is in line with his association with the Vestal Virgins, who are believed to have helped Caesar when he was prosecuted by Sulla. Moreover, Caesar appears to have been the first *pontifex maximus* to entrust his will to a Vestal Virgin: Greenfield (2011) 173–176. Caesar may also have been associated with Vesta in later times due to the location of his funerary pyre, where Augustus later had the temple of Divus Julius constructed for him. This temple was situated right between the circular temple of Vesta and the Regia, which was originally Numa's house and eventually became the headquarters of the *pontifex maximus*, where Caesar himself had lived: see Beard *et al*. (1998) 189.

For discussion of the *lex Cornelia maiestatis* in relation to *Patria*'s request, see p. 33 above.

[107] Cf. Liv. 1.32.6–7: *'Audi, Iuppiter', inquit; 'audite, fines' – cuiuscumque gentis sunt, nominat –; 'audiat fas.'* [*...*] *Peragit deinde postulata. Inde Iovem testem facit,* 'Hear, Jupiter,' he says, 'hear, you boundaries of' – naming whichever people they belong to – 'let righteousness hear' […] and then he recounts his demands, after which he takes Jupiter as his witness.'

[108] Feeney (1991) 294.

[109] Cf. Liv. 1.32.6–7, Dion. Hal. 2.72.6: see p. 36 above.

<div align="center">

non te furialibus armis   200

</div>

persequor: en, adsum **victor terraque marique**

Caesar, **ubique tuus (liceat modo, nunc quoque) miles.**

ille erit ille nocens, qui me tibi fecerit hostem.'

<div align="center">

Not with impious weapons   200

</div>

do I pursue you – here am I, Caesar, conqueror by land and sea,

your own soldier everywhere, now too if I am permitted.

The man who makes me your enemy, it is he will be the guilty one.'

Caesar actively refrains from a belligerent attitude whilst justifying his war declaration. He emphasises the defensive nature of his actions: he is not attacking his *Patria* in frantic warfare (1.200), but Pompey is forcing him to declare war on Rome (*ille nocens*, 1.203). Thus, in reaction to *Patria*'s emphasis on Caesar's impending transgression of the law (Luc. 1.190–2, see p. 32), Caesar's speech contains legal language too. By calling Pompey *nocens*, a legal word that indicates the doing of harm, he transforms himself from an active agent waging an unlawful war to a man forced to embark on this war justifiably.[110] Simultaneously, however, his language is militant and betrays his intentions: he describes himself as *victor* (Luc. 1.201) and *miles* (Luc. 1.202).

Yet Caesar is still concerned with fighting a just war. The words *victor terraque marique* (Luc. 1.201) evoke the *Res Gestae*'s description of Augustus' practice of assuring peace through military victory.[111] This, in addition to Caesar's invocation of Quirinus earlier (Luc. 1.197), suggests that Lucan's Caesar proleptically seeks to justify his actions by aligning his advance on Rome with Augustus' later pacification of the Roman Empire. The essential difference is that Caesar's empire has not been pacified yet. Rather, Caesar is on a mission to achieve this goal, and now he indirectly asks *Patria* for permission (*liceat modo*, Luc. 1.202) to continue his quest by marching on Rome as a soldier, which could be seen as a justifying demand characteristic of the *rerum repetitio*.

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[110] Cf. *EDRL* s.v. *nocere* (as opposed to *innocens*). Cf. also *OLD* s.v. *nocens* 2. Willis (2011) 62 explains that 'the illegality of the act proceeds not from his act itself, but from the 'ille' who renders that act illegal.'

[111] Aug. *RG* 13: *[Ianum]* **Quirin[um**, *quem cl]aussum ess[e maiores nostri voluer]unt, cum [p]er totum i[mperium po]puli Roma[ni* **terra marique** *e]sset parta* **victoriis** *pax*, 'Our ancestors wanted Janus Quirinus to be closed when peace had been achieved by victories on land and sea throughout the whole empire of the Roman people.' Cf. also Liv. 1.19.3 (Augustus closing the Gates of War).

In the second part of his speech, then, Caesar represents himself as serving the interests of Italy and his actions as necessary for the pacification of the Republic. Soon after, however, he abandons his diplomatic efforts. At first, he appears to cross the river hastily (Luc. 1.204–5): he carries his military standards across the Rubicon, explicitly going against *Patria*'s request and signalling that he is going to war. Caesar does not allow *Patria* to reply anymore, either: through his engagement with fetial war and treaty rituals, he has provided himself with the position of authority and justification typical of the Romans' (fetial) relations with other peoples: *ille*, Pompey, is endangering the Republic, and therefore Caesar is authorised to wage his war.[112]

As mentioned earlier, diplomacy affects the pace of the narrative in Caesar's own works in different ways: diplomatic efforts are often accompanied by long speeches, but there is more emphasis on physical actions when negotiations are finished, or when they seem pointless from the start.[113] Lucan's Caesar behaves rather similarly: his speech dramatically slows down the rapid narrative tempo with which he passed over the Alps, and his behaviour at the Rubicon can be seen as a diplomatic effort. When his diplomatic 'negotiation' is finished – at least from Caesar's point of view – he undertakes action by physically crossing the Rubicon. Lucan's Caesar therefore corresponds to Caesar's Caesar in the sense that both are characterised by a diplomatic approach to problems and *celeritas*. This enables them to represent war as efficient and manageable, thereby selling war as a necessity.[114] In Caesar's *Civil War*, however, Caesar does describe further communication between him and Pompey through legates, and he emphasises his willingness to settle the dispute and solemnise their potential agreement with an oath (*Civ.* 1.8–9).[115] Lucan's revision of Caesar's narrative here minimalises and complicates Caesar's diplomatic efforts and underlines the closed nature of Caesar-the-protagonist's negotiation with *patria*, which in turn highlights the difficulties associated with the justification of this civil war.

Lucan's Caesar does not have the final say: the Italian landscape voices its concerns as well, as the Rubicon protests Caesar's crossing by swelling up (*tumidumque per amnem*, Luc. 1.204). So *Patria* protests Caesar's advance through the medium of landscape, in addition to her

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[112] A war would be considered just when a formal war declaration had been made by the *fetiales*, but the Romans generally allowed their enemies little or no opportunity to negotiate on this decision: see Ager (2009) 21–2, Cornwell (2015) 335–7.

[113] Adema (2016) 225, (2017) 236–9: see p. 37 above.

[114] Adema (2017) 238.

[115] Cf. also Cass. Dio 41.5–6.

apparition's earlier appeal through legal and verbal means. But the Rubicon's swelling does not hinder Caesar, and rivers will not form an obstacle to the general in the rest of the poem. As a result, at least from Caesar's point of view, spatial boundaries no longer make the legal distinction between Rome's *hostes* and *cives*: Rome has lost her power to organise space, and incidentally, her spatial model of identity.[116]

Thus, by applying these diplomatic rituals to the Roman state as if she were a foreign enemy, and by crossing the Rubicon despite *Patria*'s appeal, Caesar confirms *Patria*'s fears and breaks down Roman ways of understanding the world through polarities of self and other, causing a collective crisis of Roman identity. This crisis is not limited to this particular event, but prompts and follows a recurring pattern of behaviour affecting Romans both within the limits of this epic poem and beyond.

Caesar versus Pompey: Perpetuating Transgression

So far, I have focused on the spatial, legal, and diplomatic aspects of Lucan's Rubicon crossing. As Masters has demonstrated, there is a metapoetic quality to this passage too.[117] On the one hand, Lucan aligns himself with Caesar: Caesar's dismissal of *Patria*'s appeal and his undertaking of civil war means that Lucan will get to keep composing the *Civil War*. At the same time, by creating a delay through *Patria*'s appearance and the swelling Rubicon's attempts to halt Caesar's advance, Lucan sympathises with Pompey, who, throughout the epic, is characterised by his attempts to delay the inevitable collapse of the Republic. As such, the Rubicon passage metapoetically exemplifies the internal discord that characterises the poem's civil war. In this section, I offer further support to Masters' interpretation by exploring how the Rubicon passage's programmatic internal discord is also expressed through parallels between Caesar's fetial speech at the Rubicon and Pompey's speeches in Parthia in book 8. I argue that these parallels set up acts of transgression and the accompanying collapse of oppositions between Roman and non-Roman as not unique to Caesar, but characteristic of both parties partaking in this civil war.

Following Pompey's request to Deiotarus, king of Galatia, to deliver a request for assistance to the Parthian king (Luc. 8.202–40), Pompey addresses an assembly of senators in an attempt to legitimise his plan to enlist the Parthians' help against Caesar (Luc. 8.259–327). In his

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[116] Willis (2011) 58–78.
[117] Masters (1992) 7–10.

address, Pompey adapts Caesar's formula *numinis instar* and replaces *numinis* with *patriae* (compare Luc. 8.262–3: *comites bellique fugaeque atque **instar patriae***, 'My companions both in battle and in flight, / the essence of our fatherland', with Luc. 1.199–200: *summique o numinis **instar**, / Roma, fave coeptis*, 'O Rome, the equal of the highest deity, favour my plans').[118] Pompey's adaptation of Caesar's formula equates the remaining senators with *Patria* and introduces his argument that the senate still represents Italy despite having left Italy, their geographic and legal territory.[119] Thus, Pompey's address of the senators as *instar patriae* demonstrates Caesar's success in voiding space of its legal properties and attaching (il)legality to individuals instead (see p. 43), and illustrates his attempts to adapt Roman systems of law and politics to the disordered and decentralised world caused by Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon.

In his attempts to mobilise the Parthians and enthuse the Roman senate about his plan, Pompey follows and adapts Caesar's behaviour at the Rubicon in other ways too. Just as Caesar drew on fetial war declaration and treaty solemnisation to justify his undertaking of war against Pompey, so too Pompey resorts to a fetial treaty in order to request the Parthians' help. His proposition to the Parthians includes a reminder of the ancient treaties sworn between him and the Parthians (Luc. 8.218–20):

> si **foedera** nobis
> **prisca** manent mihi **per Latium** iurata **Tonantem**,
> per vestros astrica magos, …   220

> If your former pact
> with me remains in force – the pact I swore by the Thunderer of Latium,
> the pact your holy men ratified, …   220

Whether this treaty was historically sworn or not, Pompey's reference to Jupiter *Tonans* suggests a fetial *foedus*, and the additional reference to Latium evokes Caesar's invocation of

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[118] Roche (2009) 212–3 notes Pompey's adaptation of Caesar's formula.

[119] On this passage, and on geographic disorder in the *Civil War* more generally, see Ahl (1976) 170–3, Masters (1992) 93–9, Rossi (2000), Bexley (2014).

both Jupiter *Tonans* and Jupiter *Latiaris* (see p. 39).[120] Pompey's request to the Parthians ends with an appeal to Parthia to burst from her bounds and cross the Euphrates (Luc. 8.235–7):

> tot meritis obstricta meis nunc Parthia ruptis   235
>
> excedat claustris **vetitam** per saecula **ripam**
>
> Zeugmaque Pellaeum.

> Now let Parthia, bound by all my services, break through   235
>
> her boundaries and cross the bank forbidden through the centuries
>
> and pass beyond Pellaean Zeugma.

Pompey's words evoke Caesar's Rubicon crossing (Luc. 1.223–4):

> Caesar, ut adversam superato gurgite **ripam**
>
> attigit, Hesperiae **vetitis** et constitit **arvis** …

> When Caesar had crossed the flood and reached the opposite
>
> bank, on Hesperia's forbidden fields he took his stand …

The intertext suggests a parallel between the Rubicon and the Euphrates, with both rivers representing the boundaries of the Roman Empire with Gaul and Parthia respectively.[121] The connection between the two episodes is established further by the words with which Pompey ends the speech to the Senate, identical both in wording and position to Caesar's final invocation: *Roma, fave coeptis*, 'Rome, favour my plans' (Luc. 1.200 and 8.322). Their repeated invocation of Rome evokes Propertius' response to Horos' advice not to write

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aetiological poetry about Rome's greatness (Prop. 4.1.67–8),[122] and confirms the programmatic importance of both scenes for Lucan's *Civil War*.

Both rivals' enterprises cross multiple boundaries. Caesar's quest crosses moral, political and legal boundaries and allows civil war to enter the state. Pompey, on the other hand, suggests resorting to barbarian troops to fight his war for him, thereby potentially enabling them to defeat the Romans. The perilous aspect of Pompey's proposal is emphasised by Lentulus, who perceives Pompey's request to enlist the stereotypically barbarian Parthians as a danger not only to the Roman Empire itself, but also to what makes the Romans Roman.[123] Pompey's proposal is, for the Roman Empire and its values, as dangerous as, if not more dangerous than, Caesar's initial invasion of Italy. Both generals are positioned on boundaries between outside and inside space and threaten to collapse them: Caesar by breaking the law and bringing his army into Italy, and Pompey by bringing in the Parthians, thereby endangering the Republic and its values and habits. As such, Pompey mirrors and perpetuates the transgressive behaviour modelled by Caesar at the Rubicon, continuing the disintegration of oppositions between Roman and non-Roman.[124]

Through its intratextual connections with Pompey's behaviour in book 8, then, the Rubicon passage illustrates internal discord: if we look closely enough, we can already detect the traces of Pompey's later conduct in Caesar's words at the Rubicon. Ultimately, Caesar and Pompey form two sides of the same coin that is civil war. But while this particular civil war had transformative consequences for the constitutional structure of the Roman state, as Lucan emphasises in the epic's proem (Luc. 1.33–45), Caesar's and Pompey's actions are not unique to this moment in the history of Rome. On the contrary, Lucan sees the repeated undertaking of violent actions that threaten the stability of Rome and spatial models of Roman identity as a characteristically Roman activity. This is illustrated by the Rubicon passage's interaction with Virgil's *Aeneid*.

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[122] Masters (1992) 8, citing Prop. 4.1.67–8: ***Roma, fave****: tibi surgit opus; date candida, cives, / omina; et **inceptis** dextera cantet avis*, 'Rome, smile on me, my work rises for you; citizens, give me a fair omen, and let a bird on the right augur success for my undertaking.'

[123] Rossi (2000) discusses Pompey's journey from Italy to the East in the *Civil War* as an inverted parallel of Aeneas' journey from the East to Latium, one of several ways in which the poem shows geographical disorder.

[124] I also discuss this Lucanian collapse of space between the Roman Empire and the East as caused by Pompey's behaviour in chapter 2, where I examine Statius' ambiguous construction of Campania in *Silvae* 4.3.

After Caesar's speech, fetial war and treaty rituals continue to be implicitly present in the passage. Caesar's hurried crossing of the river is followed by a simile in which he is compared to a lion that, opposed by an enemy, gathers his rage and attacks his foe despite being wounded (Luc. 1.205–12).

<div style="text-align:center">sicut squalentibus arvis   205</div>

aestiferae Libyes viso leo comminus hoste

subsedit dubius, totam dum colligit iram;

mox, ubi se saevae stimulavit verbere caudae

erexitque iubam et vasto grave murmur hiatu

infremuit, tum torta levis si lancea Mauri   210

haereat aut latum subeant venabula pectus,

per ferrum tanti securus vulneris exit.

<div style="text-align:center">Just so in torrid Libya's   205</div>

barren fields the lion, on seeing his enemy at hand,

crouches in hesitation till he has concentrated all his anger;

next he goads himself with fiercely lashing tail,

his mane is bristling, from his massive jaws

deep he roars – then if a lance, hurled by a swift Moor,   210

or hunting-spears pierce and stick in his broad chest, ignoring

such a terrible wound he rushes onward, driving the weapon deeper.

This simile is part of a tradition of epic similes wherein a (wounded) lion opposes a foe and becomes angrier.[125] A wounded lion particularly relevant to my argument is found in Virgil's *Aeneid*. Following his ally Camilla's death and the subsequent bloodbath between the Trojans and the Latins, Turnus approaches king Latinus with a request for single combat between himself and Aeneas. He is then compared to a wounded lion (Verg. *Aen*. 12.4–8):

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[125] Masters (1992) 2 n. 5, Roche (2009) provide overviews: cf. e.g. Hom. *Il*. 5.136–43, 20.164–73; Verg. *Aen*. 9.792–6, 12.4–9; Luc. 1.205–12; Val. Fl. 3.587–9.

<div style="text-align: center;">Poenorum qualis in arvis</div>

saucius ille gravi venantum vulnere pectus   5

tum demum movet arma leo, gaudetque comantis

excutiens cervice toros fixumque latronis

impavidus frangit telum et fremit ore cruento:

haud secus accenso gliscit violentia Turno.

Just as a lion in the fields round Carthage, who does not move into battle till he has received a great wound in his chest from the hunters, and then revels in it, shaking out the thick mane on his neck; fearlessly he snaps off the shaft left in his body by the ruffian that threw it, and opens his gory jaws to roar – just so did the violent passion rise in Turnus.

The lion to which Turnus is likened only becomes properly angry and keen to join battle once he has been wounded. Turnus' lion and Caesar's lion have several things in common: they are both located in the north of the African continent, they both get wounded in their chests, and they both roar deeply from their huge and gory jaws. The similes function similarly too: they work to describe the emotion that motivates the protagonist's action, they forewarn a battle, and they foreshadow the protagonist's death.[126] But Caesar's lion differs from Turnus' lion too: although Turnus' lion is wounded throughout the simile, his anger growing steadily, Caesar's lion has been gathering his anger for a while, and is prompted to attack only when he is wounded at the end of the simile.[127] Thus, Lucan escalates Virgil's lion simile, thereby emphasising the force of Caesar's anger as well as the self-destructive consequences of his entrance into Italy: the civil war he embarks on wounds himself, too.

This is, however, not the only way in which Turnus' lion simile may inform our reading of Lucan's Rubicon passage. The positioning of both lion similes suggests that their wider contexts is relevant too: Lucan's lion simile concludes the first proper scene of the *Civil War*, in which Caesar draws on fetial ritual to justify his civil war with Pompey, where Turnus' lion introduces the first scene of the final book of the *Aeneid*, in which Turnus proposes a battle between himself and Aeneas and requests that this proto-civil war is formalised through the

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[126] Masters (1992) 2 n. 5: 'Lucan's lion … is pointing up Caesar's *suicide*.' See also Albrecht (1999) 240–241: 'the morale of the Caesarians reflects Turnus' readiness to die.'

[127] Albrecht (1999) 240–1 discusses how Lucan's adaptation of the Virgilian lion simile 'enhances the drama' (p. 240).

solemnisation of what appears to be a fetial treaty: *fer sacra, pater, et **concipe foedus***, he says, 'Bring out the sacraments, father, and draw up the terms of the treaty' (Verg. *Aen*. 12.13). Turnus' phrase *concipe foedus* evokes verbal formulas required for striking (fetial) treaties and making vows.[128]

Although Latinus is initially unwilling to grant Turnus' request for single combat with Aeneas, he does agree eventually, and the requested treaty is drawn up to formalise the agreement. This treaty is solemnised through a ritual that recalls a similar treaty in Homer's *Iliad* as well as the fetial swearing of a treaty as described by Livy (Liv. 1.24.4–9). In the *Iliad*, Agamemnon solemnises a treaty with the Trojans, swearing that the winner of the single combat between Menelaus and Paris will win Helen (Hom. *Il*. 3.273–301). Virgil's passage and the subsequent narrative are clearly modeled after Homer's narrative.[129]

The solemnisation of the treaty between Latinus and Aeneas also contains several specifically Roman elements. In addition to a few aspects that evoke relatively ordinary Roman animal sacrifice, the ritual features technical details specific to Livy's fetial ritual of swearing a treaty.[130] Firstly, the ritual's participants show up with 'their foreheads bound with holy leaves' (Verg. *Aen*. 12.120: *verbena tempora vincti*). Their *verbena* are reminiscent of the fetial *pater patratus*, who was ordained by another fetial, who would touch his head with *verbena* or

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[128] Cf. *OLD* s.v. *concipio* 12b, *TLL* 4.55.6–80 (Burger). In his commentary, Tarrant (2012) 89 notes that *concipere foedus* as 'striking' a treaty only occurs here and at Verg. *Aen*. 12.158 (*conceptumque excute foedus*: 'Dash from their hands this treaty they have drawn up', referring to the same treaty). Tarrant argues that it could be a legitimate technical term, following the expression *concipere bellum*, but does not mention the *fetiales*. Instances of *concipere* suggesting a connection with the fetial priesthood include Varro *Ling*. 5.86 (*iustum conciperetur bellum*, in a discussion of fetial war declaration); Liv. 1.32.8 (*paucis verbis carminis concipiendique iuris iurandi mutatis*, when describing *rerum repetitio*), 5.25.7 (*conceptum votum*, when describing a vow), 7.7.5 (*quae ipse concepisset verba iuraret*, again when describing a vow).

[129] In the *Iliad*, Paris proposes to end the war by fighting single combat with Menelaus. A treaty is sworn to formalise the agreement between the Trojans and the Greeks, but the treaty is broken when Pandarus wounds Menelaus with an arrow and there is an outbreak of general fighting. Eventually, Achilles kills Hector in single combat. In the *Aeneid*, Turnus' request to end the war through single combat is likewise formalised with a treaty, and this treaty too is broken by someone who throws a spear at the Trojans, thereby causing a similar outbreak of general fighting during which Aeneas is wounded by an arrow. Ultimately, Aeneas kills Turnus in single combat.

[130] Cf. Liv. 1.24.4–9. Examples of elements of relatively ordinary Roman animal sacrifice include representations of various stages of the sacrificial ritual, such as purification (*puraque in veste*, Verg. *Aen*. 12.169), a procession (the priest and animals approach the altar, Verg. *Aen*. 12.169–71), the *immolatio* and the libation of wine (Verg. *Aen*. 12.172–4) and the removal of internal organs (Verg. *Aen*. 12.214–5). Hahn (1999) discusses the Greek, Roman, and specifically fetial elements of the oath ritual in this Virgilian passage.

Ogilvie (1965) 112 has noted that the battle of champions following Livy's first record of the fetial treaty ritual owes much in its conception to the treaty making and single combat between Menelaus and Paris in *Iliad* 3 – the same single combat that is the model for our current Virgilian passage.

sagmina taken from the citadel with some earth attached to it.[131] Secondly, before they state the conditions of their treaty, Aeneas and Latinus prepare an offering to the gods (Verg. *Aen.* 12.169–74). One of the animals that will be sacrificed is a pig (*saetigeri fetum*, 'the young of a breeding sow', Verg. *Aen.* 12.170). This is the animal that was typically struck during fetial treaty solemnisations: in the final phase of the ritual, the Romans would swear that they would not break the treaty, and if they would, Jupiter should smite the Romans, as the priest himself then struck a pig with a flint.[132] This flint was kept in the Temple of Jupiter Feretrius (see p. 39 n. 94) and represented the deity's thunderbolt, whereas the pig symbolised the perjurer.[133]

Once the offering is prepared, Aeneas and Latinus call upon the gods to witness their recital of the conditions of their treaty. They both appeal to several gods who are customarily invoked in fetial rituals or at least strongly associated with them. Where Aeneas, in addition to many other deities, invokes the *numina* in the heavens (Verg. *Aen.* 12.181–2), Latinus calls upon the earth, Janus (*Ianumque bifrontem*, Verg. *Aen.* 12.198), the gods of the underworld (Verg. *Aen.* 12.199), and Jupiter (Verg. *Aen.* 12.200). Latinus' invocation of Jupiter is particularly evocative of fetial ritual through its reference to Jupiter's role as divine punisher of broken treaties: 'Let the Father himself, who sanctions treaties by the flash of his lightning, hear these my words' (*audiat haec genitor qui foedera fulmine sancit*, Verg. *Aen.* 12.200). Latinus' phrasing here further strengthens the association with fetial ritual: Latinus' *audiat* is in line with Livy's *audire*, used in prayers exclusively pertaining to fetial ritual.[134]

Together, then, Aeneas and Latinus invoke the gods as they feature in descriptions of the fetial war declaration, namely Jupiter, the celestial, terrestrial, and infernal gods, and Janus.[135] However, these gods were typically not called upon in fetial treaty rituals, when the *pater patratus* would typically invoke Jupiter, the other people, and their *pater patratus*: thus, Aeneas and Latinus appear to use elements from both fetial rituals.

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[131] Liv. 1.24.6, 30.43.10; Plin. *HN* 22.3; Serv. *ad Aen.* 12.120. Ogilvie (1965) 111 and Rüpke (1990) 101–3 suggest that the domestic earth would protect the *fetialis* from foreign influences when travelling outside of his own country, and that the *verbena* would identify him as an ambassador.

[132] Hahn (1999) 27–9, 33–4; Tarrant (2012) 135. See Liv. 1.24.7–9. Servius (*ad Aen.* 12.170) refers to Verg. *Aen.* 8.641, where, on the shield of Aeneas, the treaty between the Romans and the Sabines is also established by the sacrifice of a pig.

[133] Ogilvie (1965) 112.

[134] Hickson (1993) 115–7. Cf. e.g. Liv. 1.24.7, 1.32.6, 32.10.

[135] Cf. Liv. 1.32.10, Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.72.8. See p. 36 above.

Furthermore, in the second half of his speech, following his invocation of gods, Latinus swears by his sceptre, which he elaborately describes to be infertile.[136] This sceptre thus evokes the spear that was hurled at the enemy after the war had been officially declared: as mentioned earlier, this spear was typically fashioned from infertile cornel (see p. 36). Maybe Latinus' oath already hints at the treaty's eventual failure: soon after the treaty's solemnisation, war breaks loose when the Rutulian Tolumnius hurls a (fetial) spear towards the Trojans and there is an outbreak of fighting between both parties (Verg. *Aen*. 12.257–86).[137]

Thus, this Virgilian treaty, leading to the eventual fusion of the Trojans and Latins into one Roman people – but only *after* the treaty is broken by a proto-civil war – comes across rather ambiguously. Although Tarrant suggests that Virgil does not follow the fetial ritual for making a treaty too closely because he might have wished 'to avoid pedantry or blatant anachronism',[138] I propose that the conflation of elements of several fetial rituals reflects the unjustifiable aspects of the proto-civil war between the Trojans and the Latins as opposed to a *bellum iustum* between Romans and an enemy. Lucan's simile, in which Caesar is likewise compared to an angered and injured lion, recalls this Virgilian lion simile and its associated narrative of war beginnings and broken treaties. Perhaps, then, Lucan's simile suggests that the civil war between Caesar and Pompey is comparable to the proto-civil war between Trojans and Latins: necessary for the unification of the Roman people, but emblematic of the violence upon which this unification is based.[139]

This notion is confirmed through Caesar's next speech, in which the Roman general definitively rejects treaties. Following a description of the Rubicon that emphasises its nature as a boundary,[140] Caesar announces that he is abandoning peace and seeking war instead (Luc. 1.225–7):

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[136] Verg. *Aen*. 12.206–11: '… just as this sceptre … will never sprout green or cast a shadow from delicate leaves, now that it has been cut from the base of its trunk in the forest, leaving its mother tree and losing its limbs and leafy tresses to the steel. What was once a tree, skilled hands have now clad in the beauty of bronze and given to the fathers of Latium to bear.'

[137] The hurling of the spear also recalls Pandarus' breaking of the treaty with the Greeks (Verg. *Aen*. 5.496–7, Hom. *Il*. 4.68–126), and Laocoon throwing a spear at the Trojan Horse's belly (Verg. *Aen*. 2.50–2 – not mentioned in the *Iliad*). Tarrant (2012) 156–7 notes that Tolumnius' spear is 'almost certainly' an allusion to the fetial practice of declaring war by casting a spear into the enemy's territory. Tolumnius' name also recalls Lars Tolumnius of Veii, who broke a treaty with the Romans by killing four of their legates and was consequently killed by Cornelius Cossus: see Liv. 4.17–9 and Holland (1935) 211, Tarrant (2012) 155.

[138] Tarrant (2012) 132.

[139] On the unifying role of violence in the Roman state in Lucan, see Connolly (2016).

[140] Luc. 1.213–22, especially 215–6: *et Gallica certus / limes ab Ausoniis disterminat arva colonis*: 'and [the Rubicon] separates the Gallic / fields from the farmers of Ausonia, a fixed boundary.' I discussed the Rubicon's nature as a legal boundary above (p. 30).

‘hic,’ ait, ‘hic pacem temerataque iura relinquo;   225

te, Fortuna, sequor. procul hinc iam foedera sunto;

credidimus satis \<his\>, utendum est iudice bello.’

and [he] said: ‘Here I abandon peace and desecrated law;   225

Fortune, it is you I follow. Farewell to treaties from now on;

I have relied on them for long enough; now war must be our referee.’

Caesar rejects treaties and officially declares war in what appears to be an *indictio belli*. He justifies his hurried action by pointing out that legality has been scorned already anyway (*temerataque iura*, Luc. 1.225).[141] What does it matter, then, if Caesar himself does not follow proper ritual procedures of treaty solemnisation and war declaration?

Crucially, Caesar denounces treaties with a phrase that recalls the aforementioned treaty between Aeneas and Latinus (compare *procul hinc iam foedera sunto*, Luc. 1.226, with *nulla dies pacem hanc Italis nec foedera rumpet, / quo res cumque cadent*, 'The day shall not come when men of Italy shall violate this treaty or break this peace, whatever chance will bring', Verg. *Aen*. 12.202–3).[142] We have seen that, in the *Aeneid*, this day came very soon after the solemnisation of the treaty, and now another such day has arrived in Lucan's *Civil War*. Thus, through intertextual interaction with this episode in *Aeneid* 12, Lucan suggests that Caesar's behaviour is not unique to the civil war between Caesar and Pompey, but that it in fact follows an established pattern of violent actions against fellow Romans(-to-be). It is precisely the Romans' repeated rejection of treaties and their self-directed violence that facilitate the continued existence of the Roman state through prompting political and constitutional changes: in the case of the *Aeneid*, by forming the foundation and beginning of the Roman Kingdom, and in the case of Lucan's *Civil War*, by instigating the transition from Republic to Principate.[143]

I have demonstrated that, in the *Civil War*, the epic protagonists attempt to justify this self-directed violence through engagement with fetial ritual. Caesar and Pompey's employment of

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[141] Perhaps Caesar is referring to the disintegration of the triumvirate, or to the Senate's manoeuvres, including the expulsion of Antony and Curio on 7 January in 49 BCE. See Roche (2009) 220–1 for an overview of possible interpretations.

[142] Roche (2009) 221.

[143] Fucecchi (2018) 27, on Lucan: 'Making readers relive … the collapse of the Roman Republic … is a paradoxical way to problematize the topicality of civil war, which is controversially presented as the hard but necessary premise of political change and the inevitable step towards the instauration of monarchy.'

traditional Roman ritual illustrates their conviction that they are fighting in the name of the fatherland and exemplifies their attempts to de-Romanise their opponent. Consequently, both Caesar and Pompey come across as simultaneously Roman and non-Roman. This concurrence of Romanness and non-Romanness is also illustrated by the simile that follows Caesar's speech of dismissal and propels us into the *Civil War* proper (Luc. 1.228–30):

> sic fatus noctis tenebris rapit agmina ductor
> impiger, et torto Balearis verbere fundae
> ocior et missa Parthi post terga sagitta …   230

> With these words, the leader pushed his army through night's darkness
> tirelessly, swifter than the whirled thong of Balearic sling
> or the Parthian's arrow shot over his shoulder …   230

Keeping in mind the recurring elements of fetial ritual and the concern with proper beginnings and endings of war in the Rubicon passage, the reader might think of the ritual casting of the spear that completed the fetial war declaration and officially opened the war. Although Caesar is not compared to a spear directly, the bullet and arrow are comparable images that fulfil a similar purpose, especially since the simile accompanies the general's war opening and advance on Ariminum. Perhaps Caesar is likened specifically to a Balearic sling and a Parthian arrow rather than a spear not only because they move much faster than a spear, but also because the *hasta* was a quintessentially Roman weapon.[144] Caesar's Roman identity is complicated throughout book 1 anyway: he has just spent a decade in Gaul, and the inhabitants of Ariminum soon complain that they are always the first to witness the attacks of barbarians (Luc. 1.248–58).[145] As such, Lucan's simile underlines Caesar's status as Rome's enemy – although Caesar himself has just characterised *Pompey* as Rome's enemy – and complicates his Roman identity. Caesar claims to be fighting in the interest of the fatherland, but what does being Roman even mean anymore now that he has crossed the Rubicon and set in motion civil war and the decentralisation and collapse of the Republic?

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[144] Helbig (1908), Alföldi (1959), Rüpke (1990) 108.
[145] For Caesar's attack on Rome as an attack by barbarian peoples, cf. also Luc. 1.479–84.

I have shown that Lucan's Rubicon passage shows Caesar briefly slowing down to negotiate with *Patria* by evoking Roman rituals of war and treaty solemnisation in order to justify his crossing of the Rubicon and his undertaking of civil war. From the perspective of the Romans, these rituals typically justified their wars against others, but in this case, the rituals are applied to a war between Romans. The application of these Roman rituals of war to a civil war – both by Caesar in this passage, but also by Pompey in book 8 – therefore illustrates a great problem. If both parties are Roman, which side is more justified in its actions?

For Lucan, it is impossible to know who took up weapons more justly: *quis iustius induit arma, / scire nefas* (1.126–7). Both Caesar and Pompey act in the name of preserving the traditional order and its laws, but in this war, *ius* has lost meaning, for it has been conferred onto crime (*ius datumque sceleri*, 1.2).[146] Thus, although there is no right side of history, this civil war forms part of Rome's history regardless. Not only do the two generals play a role in the war's execution, but the Romans themselves participate too: the greatness of Caesar is in their hands, as the general reminds his own troops before the battle of Pharsalus, and their fortunes are at stake here (Luc. 7.253, 264–6). Just as the proto-civil war between the Trojans and Latins, and just as the civil conflict between Octavian and Mark Antony, then, this civil war between Caesar and Pompey is an undeniable and foundational part of the history of the Roman state, a history in which the reiterative violence of leaders and people repeatedly plays a unifying role.[147]

This notion is not only illustrated by the protagonists' resort to fetial ritual and their attempts to thereby de-Romanise fellow Romans, but also through Lucan's engagement with intertextual models. We have seen that Lucan's Caesar contains multitudes: Caesar's crossing of the Alps and his speedy advance into Italy remind us of Hannibal, *Patria*'s apparition implicitly casts Caesar as Catiline, and Caesar's comparison to a vicious lion recalls Virgil's irate Turnus. At the same time, we can already see Pompey's outline in Caesar's behaviour at the Rubicon through intratexts with *Civil War* 8. These inter- and intratextual models do not work solely to characterise Caesar as Rome's enemy. Rather, Lucan's association of Caesar with this cast of characters and his connection of the Rubicon passage to earlier Roman (proto-)civil wars underline that all of these people and all of these wars, Roman and non-Roman alike, form part

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[146] Connolly (2016) 280 to whom I owe my understanding of violence in Lucan. On the powerlessness of law in wartime, cf. also Luc. 1.277, 1.348–9.

[147] On Lucan's poetics of repetition, see Dinter (2012) 119–54.

of the story and history of the Roman Empire. Thus, when Lucan turns empire inside out by letting Caesar cross his Rubicon, thereby advancing his composition of the *Civil War*, he performs the very act that he sees as fundamental to Romanness: just as Caesar's undertaking of civil war, Lucan's composition of the *Civil War* represents the self-directed violence that facilitates the continued existence of Roman narratives of empire.

Chapter 2

(De)Legitimising Rulership and (De)Stabilising Empire

in Statius, *Silvae* 4.3

Introduction

In poem 4.3 of the *Silvae*, Statius lauds the emperor Domitian by celebrating the completion of a new road, the Via Domitiana, in 95 CE. This major construction project made travel and transport between Rome and Naples much faster and easier and should be seen in the context of other imperial, propagandist engineering projects in Campania, such as the general Agrippa's construction of the *portus Iulius* in 37 BCE, the construction of three tunnels near Naples around the same time, and Nero's failed building projects in the mid-1st century CE, including his attempt to construct a canal from Lake Avernus to Ostia. The Via Domitiana was therefore constructed partially on the site of Nero's failed project.[148]

In order for the Via Domitiana to be built, several obstacles had to be conquered in a typical act of Roman mastery of nature.[149] This was a notoriously swampy area, and the river Volturnus was challenging to cross. Statius' poem describes how Domitian successfully deals with all these difficulties on the road's way to the Bay of Naples. As the poem guides the reader along the road through the Campanian landscape, the Via Domitiana works as a structural device for the poem itself.[150] Once Statius has described the construction of the road, he gives voice to the transformed and subjugated Campanian landscape, which expresses gratitude to Domitian for this improvement. As such, the poem features a strong connection between the road, Campania, and Domitian. Moreover, these notions are all inextricably connected with the medium of poetry. Perhaps most obviously, the poem itself functions as a visual monument, akin to an epigraphic record: the poem's hendecasyllabic metre not only indicates the speed that this new road enables, but it also gives the poem a long and slim shape, reflective of the shape of a road.[151]

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[148] The Via Domitiana ran along the banks of the *fossa Neronis* for part of its route: see Coleman (1988) 102, Caputo, Morichi, Paone, and Rispoli (1996) 115–7.

[149] See Pavlovskis (1973) on man's triumphant subjugation of nature in Flavian-era literature. This notion is also important to chapter 4, in which I discuss Statius' laudation of Pollius Felix for the transformation of his Surrentine villascape in *Silvae* 2.2.

[150] Cancik (1965) 108–15, Coleman (1988) 104, Morgan (2001) 114ff.

[151] Morgan (2001) 114ff., (2011) 52–9. For other examples of monumental poetry, cf. most famously Hor. *Carm.* 3.30 with Gibson (1997).

But on our way to the Bay of Naples, we encounter many more genres. The river god Volturnus is a particularly good example of this. As a personification of the Campanian landscape, the god praises Domitian for canalising him and preventing him from flooding, and claims that his servitude to the emperor is worthwhile (*Silv*. 4.3.67–94). His speech evokes tropes of Callimacheanism, epic, and epigraphy, drawing, like the rest of the poem, on multiple genres.[152]

In this chapter, I examine the poem's key themes, namely the euergetism of exceptional men, their benefit to humanity, and their potential reward, deification, and I explore how they relate and apply to Domitian. To this end, the chapter is divided into two parts.

The first part of this chapter follows the evolution of poem and road. Through my analysis of this evolution, I show how, as a panegyric poem, Statius' *Via Domitiana* engages with genres and media that deal with the legitimation and deification of Roman emperors, from epic and lyric poetry to satire, epigraphy, and historical prose. By considering the potential contradictions between these genres and the ways in which Statius navigates them, I explore the generic diversity of this poem and its reflection on the nature of Domitian's rulership and (impending) divinity.

In the second part of this chapter, I examine how Statius comments on Domitian's rulership and divinity by locating this poem in Campania, a site of transgressions and contradictions. I show that Statius arranges Campania's manifold associations to construct two overlapping versions of Campania: firstly, Campania-as-the-West, and secondly, Campania-as-the-East. These coexisting renditions of Campania testify to the Via Domitiana's collapse of space between the centre of the Empire and the East, which seems counterintuitive and in contradiction with the Empire's logic of expansive becoming.[153]

At a first glance, these two readings might seem paradoxical. Why would Campania deliberately be set up as simultaneously Roman and non-Roman, especially when its Romanness is arguably ambiguous already due to its affinities with Greek culture? In this chapter, I show how these readings work together to construct a distinct imperial persona for Domitian and to establish his continued legitimacy and suitability for rulership in an empire that constitutes both West and East. Ultimately, this analysis facilitates further understanding

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[152] On the *Silvae* and their *Kreuzung der Gattungen*, see e.g. Vollmer (1898) 25–6; Newmyer (1979) 59ff.; Hardie (1983) 83–91; van Dam (1984) 5–9, (2006) 185 n. 1; Gibson (2006); Mariscal (2006); and, most recently, Bonadeo (2017).

[153] Rimell (2015) *passim*: see p. 23 of the introduction.

of Statius' formulation of laudatory poetry and sheds light on the complex relations of power between poet, emperor, and empire.

Contextualising Campania

Considering the poem's inextricable connection between the road, the Campanian landscape, and Domitian, my analysis focuses on the poem's depiction of the Campanian landscape and the transformation that it undergoes as the road is constructed. Because Campania's presence and associations are not fixed but vary throughout Statius' *Silvae*,[154] it is instructive to briefly consider the Campanian aspects and memories that Statius engages with in this poem in order to construct an explicitly Domitianic Campania in praise of the emperor.[155]

The Campanian landscape was one of stark contradictions.[156] On the one hand, its great fertility – owed to the area's volcanic activity – and other distinctive features, such as hot springs, made the area an attractive place to be.[157] On the other hand, the landscape was marshy in places and constantly under threat by Vesuvius.[158] This complexity can be recognised in Statius' *Silvae* as well: while Vesuvius, following its eruption in 79 CE, had not yet ceased its threats, Statius repeatedly praises and asserts his confidence in the recovery of Campania.[159] Here we should remember the poet's Campanian origins: as I discuss in chapter 4, as someone native to the area, Statius maintained a special affinity with Campania throughout his life and poetry.[160]

Moreover, the distinct features of the Campanian landscape fascinated ancient authors. Inspired by the area's geological forms, authors located mythical stories in the volcanic Campanian landscape.[161] This mainly includes the location of entrances to the underworld in

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[154] Bessone (2019), Esposito (2019).

[155] The *Silvae*'s landscapes (or villascapes) are typically closely related to the *laudandi*, the people who are being praised. Cf. e.g. *Silv.* 1.3 (Manlius Vopiscus' villascape), 2.2 and 3.1 (Pollius Felix' villascape, which I discuss in chapter 4).

[156] Augoustakis (2015), Fielding and Newlands (2015), Augoustakis and Littlewood (2019a) 1–5.

[157] De Pippo, Donadio, Grottola, and Pennetta (2004), Palmentieri (2007) 731–3, Connors (2015) 121–5. On the area's association with luxury and excess, see e.g. D'Arms (1970), Frederiksen and Purcell (1984), Stärk (1995), Connors (2000), Lomas (2011), Leonard (2015) 139–40.

[158] Connors (2015) 121–7.

[159] Newlands (2010) 111–6. Cf. especially *Silv.* 3.5.72–104, 4.4.78–86.

[160] On Statius as poet between Rome and Naples, see Rosati (2011), Newlands (2012). Notable especially is *Silv.* 3.5, in which Statius attempts to convince his spouse to relocate to the Bay of Naples.

[161] See e.g. Strabo 5.4.4–6, 5.4.9; Diod. Sic. 4.22–3; Hor. *Carm.* 3.4.42ff.; Sil. *Pun.* 12.104–57. See Connors (2015) for an in-depth analysis of observational and mythical accounts of Vesuvius and the Phlegraean Fields and the ways in which these accounts inform each other.

the Phlegraean Fields and the area's association with gigantomachy.[162] The gigantomachy not only involved Hercules' fight with the giants, but also featured an infrastructural modification of the Campanian landscape.[163] Some ancient writers, including Strabo and Propertius, mention that Hercules supposedly filled the gap where Lake Avernus flowed to the sea and built a road there, the so-called Via Herculanea.[164] This was only the first engineering project in this area. In 37 BCE, Octavian's general Agrippa constructed a harbour, the *portus Iulius*, by connecting Lake Lucrinus with Lake Avernus and joining both lakes with the sea near Misenum. Both Strabo and Propertius mention Hercules' building activities in association with Agrippa's project.[165] Hercules' undertakings in this region therefore typically function as a precedent for Agrippa's harbour construction,[166] which could be seen as a 'Romanisation' of Hercules' Greek landmark.[167] The area now served as a war harbour in Octavian's war against Sextus Pompey and as a basis for Roman expansion on the Mediterranean. Thus, the Campanian landscape was marked by Herculean and Octavianic changes to it.

In the early imperial period, such infrastructural projects became an increasingly prominent way to legitimate imperial power and show off the superiority of Roman technological skills, and functioned as a means of distinguishing yourself from your imperial predecessors.[168] In practice, this meant that building projects grew increasingly daring and lavish and that, as such, they were open to criticism of luxury and decadence and negative comparison to hubristic endeavours by Hellenistic and eastern predecessors.[169] Nero, for example, undertook several

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[162] Campania's ruggedness and bradyseism – that is, the gradual subsidence or uplift of the ground due to volcanic activity – were understood in antiquity as traces of this gigantomachic battle: see Connors (2015), Fielding and Newlands (2015) 86. Strabo (5.4.6), for example, notes that some people believe that the wounds of the fallen giants cause the Campanian streams of fire and water.

[163] Most narratives of the myth locate the story in Chalcidicean Phlegra in Greece, but writers with a more Roman focus describe how Hercules fought the giants in Campania as part of his journey back from Iberia, when the hero was herding Geryon's cattle back to Greece. For Hercules fighting the giants in Greece, cf. e.g. Pind. *Nem*. 1.67, *Isthm*. 6.31–4; Apollod. *Bibl*. 1.6; Diod. Sic. 4.15.1. For Hercules fighting the giants in Campania, cf. Strabo 5.4.4, 5.4.9; Diod. Sic. 4.22; Sil. *Pun*. 12.143–4.

[164] Cf. Strabo 5.4.5–6, Diod. Sic. 4.22, Prop. 1.11, Sil. *Pun*. 12.117–9. Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Ant. Rom*. 1.44.1) does not mention Hercules' construction of a Via Herculanea near Lake Avernus, but he does describe Hercules' foundation of Herculaneum.

[165] Strabo explicitly connects Agrippa's activities with those of Hercules in this area (5.4.6). Propertius' description (1.11) is less explicit and associates Hercules' *semita* with recent changes to the area. This description has been commonly accepted as referring to Agrippa's construction of the *portus Iulius* in 37 BCE. See Saylor (1975) 130, Camps (1977) 70, Richardson (1977) 176, Leonard (2015) 142.

[166] In fact, Connors (2015) 130 has suggested that these activities are reminiscent of those of a Roman general, specifically the exploration of an area and its strategic (re)building.

[167] Leonard (2015) 142–3.

[168] Schneider (2014).

[169] Elsner (1994).

major building projects. Some of these were explicitly criticised – especially by post-Neronian writers – for their lavishness and luxury, such as Nero's Golden House, and for their *hubris*, such as Nero's Xerxes-like attempt to cut a canal through the Isthmus of Corinth. Yet much of his engineering work benefited the public too.[170]

The Campanian landscape also bore marks of some of Nero's building projects. Most notably, this includes Nero's attempt to construct a canal from Lake Avernus in the Bay of Naples to the harbour Ostia near Rome, in order to improve the supply of goods from the Mediterranean to Rome. Although archaeological evidence suggests that work on this canal might have been more advanced than previously thought, post-Neronian historiography typically characterises these enterprises as excessive and unsuccessful in the context of their depiction of Nero as a tyrant, intervening in nature for his own gain.[171] Whether these imperial building projects were successful or not, they formed only one aspect of contemporary activity in Campania. For while Nero made the most of Campania's recreational opportunities, and while some people profited from his generosity, the area also functioned as a place of 'leisured resistance' for those who distanced themselves from Rome – and from Nero.[172] As such, Campania was not unified in its loyalties to the emperor.[173]

When the Flavian emperors came to power, they therefore had to manage a Campania that was marked by and associated with Nero, and negotiate the region's place in their own ideology and politics. This negotiation appears to have been markedly tactical: the wealthy and conveniently located harbour city Puteoli, for example, was secured by the Flavians quickly and efficiently, while not all neighbouring cities developed similar relations with the new imperial family (see pp. 75ff.). Following the infamous eruption of Vesuvius in 79 CE, however, Titus supposedly did visit and offered consolation and help to rebuild Campanian cities.[174] And under Domitian, the region's associations with luxury and extravagance appeared to have become more prominent again. From this point of view, Domitian's rather sober construction of the Via Domitiana in an area mostly associated with luxury and decadence is quite noteworthy: rather than contributing to Campania's (private) sites of leisure, Domitian –

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[170] See Elsner (1994) 119ff. with references.

[171] Longobardo (2004). This brief overview of Neronian and immediately post-Neronian Campania owes much to Augoustakis and Littlewood (2019a) 4–6, Ginsberg (2019) 26–30.

[172] D'Arms (1970) 70–2, Dewar (2014) 27–49.

[173] This complexity only became more pronounced following Nero's murder of his mother Agrippina. In her discussion of Campania as a site of Neronian decadence and resistance to Nero, Ginsberg (2019) remarks that Campania's people were not unified in the orientation of their memory of Agrippina.

[174] Suet. *Tit*. 8.3.4, Dio Cass. 66.23–5.

seemingly in tandem with Augustus' policies and those of his Flavian predecessors, and somewhat at odds with those of Nero – is presented here to initiate a successful building project that directly benefited the public, and that resulted in Vitruvius' and Frontinus' ideals of beauty, utility and health by improving the area's accessibility, minimising its swampiness and clearing up the muddiness of the Volturnus river.[175] As such, he is building on the footprints of Nero for public benefit, just as the Flavians did elsewhere.[176] In Rome, for example, they built the Flavian amphitheatre over Nero's pools, thereby returning Rome to its people, as Martial famously proclaims.[177]

Just as the Flavian emperors negotiated Campania's place in their politics and building projects, so contemporary writers explored and refashioned the region's image in response to its recent geographical and political events – and the result of this is not monolithic at all.[178] As Bessone and Esposito have recently demonstrated, Campania's presence and associations are not fixed but vary throughout Statius' *Silvae*.[179] This makes it imperative to consider Statius' construction of Campania in poem 4.3.

Statius' Domitianic Campania in *Silvae* 4.3

So far, we have seen that the Via Domitiana was situated in a landscape mythologically and historically associated with and physically marked by heroic and imperial infrastructural and aquatic engineering work. In poem 4.3 of the *Silvae*, Statius links into these precedents and showcases the construction of the Via Domitiana as a transformative imperial building project. At the end of the poem, the Sibyl rewards Domitian with the highest of praises: apotheosis (*Silv*. 4.3.128). As such, the poem ties in with the by then familiar notion that exceptional

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[175] This sobriety is also reflected in Statius' technical descriptions of the construction of the Via Domitiana (*Silv*. 4.3.40–60), which emphasise this move away from luxury. I discuss this passage in more detail below: see p 82. On ancient water sourcing and infrastructure, see Vitr. *De arch*. 8.1ff.

[176] On the Flavian dynasty and their negotiation of Nero's memory in their policies and building projects, see e.g. Ramage (1983), Darwall-Smith (1996), Levick (1999) 73, Moormann (2003), Gallia (forthc.), Raimondi Cominesi (forthc.).

[177] Mart. *Spect*. 2.11–2: *reddita Roma sibi est et sunt te praeside, Caesar, / deliciae populi, quae fuerant domini*, 'Rome has been restored to herself, and with you in charge, Caesar, what used to be the pleasure of a master is now the pleasure of the people.' Cf. Coleman (1988) 14–36. Martial's sentiment might well be an exaggeration: perhaps Nero perceived (part of) the area of the *stagnum* as a space for the entertainment of the *populus*. On the accessibility of this area to the general public, see Moormann (2003) 387, Raimondi Cominesi (forthc.).

[178] The recent volume, edited by Augoustakis and Littlewood (2019b), on *Campania in the Flavian Poets' Imagination* demonstrates the diversified construction of Campania in a range of Flavian poets.

[179] Bessone (2019), Esposito (2019).

mortals could be rewarded for their euergetism with divinity.[180] This idea had become increasingly popular during the late Republic and found manifold expression in Roman literature and material culture, especially since the deifications of Julius Caesar and Augustus. Unsurprisingly, it appears in panegyric discourse too, which typically praises a patron or emperor for achieving something that exceeds conventional expectations or that was previously unthinkable.[181] As such, the motif of transgression is a recurring and expected aspect of panegyric. At the same time, there is an inherent ambiguity to such transgressive language and imagery. While an emperor might be praised for revolutionary achievements during his lifetime, such actions could be considered excessive and immoderate after his death, depending on how his successor and the new political environment dealt with his memory.[182] As such, these types of laudatory discourse contributed to the legitimation of an emperor's power and suitability for rulership, but could also play a role in the legitimation of his successor(s). Statius' poem 4.3 exemplifies this development.[183]

In this section, I show how Statius' *Via Domitiana* engages with genres and media that deal with the legitimation and deification of Roman emperors, including Augustus' *Res Gestae*, Horace's *Odes*, and Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis*. While it might seem contradictory and quite risky for a panegyric poem to draw on satiric discourse, panegyric and satire in fact complement each other. As Pliny the Younger points out in *Panegyricus* 53.2, no one can really appreciate a good ruler if he does not sufficiently hate a bad one (*neque enim satis amarit bonos principes, qui malos satis non oderit*). Comparison, whether good or bad, is fundamental both to eulogy and satire.[184] What these texts have in common, then, are their topics: styles and legitimation of imperial rulership, and the prospect of deification post-mortem. In *Silvae* 4.3, Statius engages with several of these genres simultaneously, from epic and lyric poetry to satire, epigraphy, and historical prose. By considering the potential contradictions between these

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[180] Taylor (1931), Fishwick (1987), Bosworth (1999), Gradel (2002), Cole (2006).

[181] In antiquity, there was a long tradition of praise-giving to autocratic rulers across prose and verse, from Simonides, Bacchylides, and Pindar to Isocrates' *Euagoras* to for example Callimachus' eulogies of the Ptolemies and Theocritus' 17th *Idyll*. For brief overviews of panegyric, see e.g. Struthers (1919), Coleman (1988) 63–5. In Rome, panegyric became particularly prominent during the late Republic and further evolved under the Principate (Rees (2012)). See also Braund (1998), who discusses the origin and development of Roman prose panegyric.

[182] For such 'Rekodierung', see Cordes (2017) *passim*. For 'good' and 'bad' emperors, see Nauta (2014).

[183] For praise as generically inherent to the *Silvae* as laudatory poems, see e.g. Coleman (1988), Geyssen (1996). For more subversive readings, see e.g. Garthwaite (1984), Newlands (2002).

[184] Cf. also Plin. *Pan.* 53.6: *meminerintque sic maxime laudari incolumem imperatorem, si priores secus meriti reprehendantur*, 'never forgetting that an emperor is best praised in his lifetime through criticism of his predecessors according to their deserts.'

genres and the ways in which Statius negotiates them, I explore how this daring navigation of genres reflects on Domitian's rulership and divinity.

More specifically, I show how, through interacting with these genres and generic tropes, Statius constructs a distinct imperial persona for Domitian and positions him in relation to his predecessors, and especially their actions in Campania. This includes Hercules, Augustus, and Nero. The latter, of course, comes with ambiguity: because of his failure to complete the *fossa Neronis*, Nero appears to be a different type of predecessor than the successful Hercules and Agrippa. Yet, as we have seen, Nero was an outstanding builder elsewhere.[185] By close reading and interpreting key passages of poem 4.3 of the *Silvae*, I now consider how Statius posits Domitian in relation to his mythological and Julio-Claudian predecessors. To do so, I focus on the poem's depiction of the construction of the Via Domitiana and the accompanying changes to the Campanian landscape, as these are crucial to the poem's depiction of Domitian and his reign. As we will see, Statius creates an impression of Domitian as the culmination of his predecessors by deftly negotiating tropes associated with them. While geographically following the same path as his precursors and maintaining continuity as such, Statius' *Via Domitiana* ends up in a different destination.

Creating Expectations

The first lines of the poem immediately introduce the reader to Statius' Campanian landscape (*Silv*. 4.3.1–8):

> Quis duri silicis gravisque ferri
> **immanis** sonus aequori propinquum
> saxosae latus Appiae replevit?
> certe non Libycae sonant catervae
> nec **dux** advena peierante bello   5
> Campanos **quatit inquietus agros**,
> nec **frangit** vada **montibusque caesis**
> inducit Nero sordidas **paludes**, …

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[185] Elsner (1994): see p. 62 above.

> What monstrous sound of hard flint and heavy iron has filled the side of the paved Appia that comes close to the sea? It is certainly not Libyan hordes thundering, nor is a foreign commander who cannot keep at peace making the lands of Campania quake with perfidious warfare, nor is Nero breaking the lagoons and channelling the mire of marshes through cloven mountains …

The reader is introduced to the Campanian landscape not by a visual description of its attractive qualities, but through a description that speaks to the reader's sense of hearing: the poet-narrator mentions a loud sound of flint and iron. This sound is described as *immanis* (*Silv.* 4.3.2), 'monstrous', a word that typically indicates cruelty or enormity,[186] and that would therefore create mostly negative expectations, especially in a landscape associated with gigantomachy. Statius then guides the reader's interpretation of this sound by naming specific and similarly loud memories that it could have evoked: the Carthaginian general Hannibal and his army's stay in Campania and Nero's failed attempt to construct a canal from Lake Avernus to Ostia. Both occasions are remembered for their disruptive impact on Campania: Hannibal shook the area with perfidious warfare against the Romans (*peierante bello / Campanos **quatit** … **agros***, *Silv.* 4.3.5–6),[187] and Nero demolished lagoons and mountains (***frangit** uada montibusque caesis*, *Silv.* 4.3.7). The descriptions of these men recall several intertexts that contribute to their characterisation. Firstly, Statius strengthens the negative characterisation of these men and their activities in Campania by alluding to one of Horace's *Odes* (*Carm.* 3.3.1–6):

> iustum et tenacem propositi virum
> non civium ardor prava iubentium,
>   non vultus instantis tyranni
>   mente **quatit** solida neque Auster,
>
> **dux inquieti** turbidus Hadriae,   5

[186] Cf. *OLD* s.v. *immanis* 1, 3, *TLL* 7.1.439.16ff. (Labhardt).

[187] Statius' phrasing shows parallels with Silius Italicus' portrayal of Hannibal in *Punica* 1, where the Carthaginian general is depicted as quaking the land as he makes his way towards Rome. Cf. Sil. *Pun.* 1.296–7: *admovet abrupto flagrantia foedere **ductor** / Sidonius castra et latos **quatit** agmine **campos***, 'The Carthaginian leader broke the treaty and brought his camp-fires close and shook the wide plains with his marching host.' While Silius' depiction relates to Saguntum in Spain and not Campania, the notion of Hannibal on his way to Rome carries connotations of disruption and reminds us of his stay in Campania regardless.

nec fulminantis magna manus Iovis:

si fractus illabatur orbis,

impavidum ferient ruinae.

The man of integrity who holds fast to his purpose is not shaken from his firm resolve by hot-headed citizens urging him to do wrong, or by the frown of an oppressive despot, or by the South Wind, that unruly lord of the restless Adriatic, or by the mighty hand of thundering Jove. If the firmament were to split and crash down upon him, he will still be unafraid when hit by the wreckage.

In this *Ode*, Horace describes through which qualities mortal men can achieve divinity, namely integrity and steadfastness. Such men include Pollux, Hercules, Augustus, Bacchus, and Quirinus (*Carm.* 3.3.9–16). They all performed transgressive actions as they crossed boundaries during their mortal lives, including, for example, explorations of the edges of the known world, and then became gods because of their services to mankind.[188] By depicting Hannibal and Nero as threats to such men of integrity (compare ***dux / Campanos quatit inquietus** agros*, *Silv.* 4.3.5–6 with ***quatit***, ***dux***, and ***inquieti*** in Hor. *Carm.* 3.3.4–5), Statius explicitly excludes them from Horace's divinised company. Moreover, by depicting them both as having caused loud sounds in this area, Statius also equates Nero to Hannibal, in line with the contemporary tendency to depict fellow Romans who are perceived to be dangerous as foreigners.[189]

At the same time, Statius' description of Nero also introduces an example of euergetism that is particularly appropriate in this context. In poem 68b, Catullus describes the channel dug by Hercules when he was in Arcadia to kill the Stymphalian birds (Catull. 68b.109–18):

quale ferunt Grai Pheneum prope Cyllenaeum

siccare emulsa pingue **palude** solum,   110

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[188] See Nisbet and Rudd (2004) 30–1 for a discussion of this poem's participation in the trope of attaining immortality due to services to mankind. Horace's third book of political *Odes* features more themes that occur in Statius' poem: in the immediate context of poem 3.3, for example, *Carm.* 3.2.21–4 focuses on (military) *virtus* opening up a path to heaven, while *Carm.* 3.4.37–42 emphasises the importance of (imperial) *clementia* and the civilising and pacifying power of poetry.

[189] Stocks (2014) 7 discusses the power of the *nomen* Hannibal, noting Cicero's characterisation of Verres as *iste Hannibal* (Cic. *Verr.* 5.31) and Velleius Paterculus' labelling of Mithradates as Hannibal (Vell. Pat. 2.18.1). See also Giusti (2018) on the construction of Carthaginians as the enemy in Virgil's *Aeneid*.

> quod quondam **caesis montis** fodisse medullis
>
>   audit falsiparens Amphitryoniades
>
> …
>
> pluribus ut caeli **tereretur** ianua divis, …   115

[deep as that gulf] which (say the Greeks) near Cyllenian Pheneus drains away the swamp, and dries up the rich soil which of old the false-fathered son of Amphitryon is said to have dug out, cutting away the heart of the hill, … , that the door of heaven might be frequented by more gods, …

Catullus compares the depth of Laodamia's love for Protesilaus to the depth of the channel that Hercules cut through the swamp and hills near Pheneus. This impressive feat is then connected to the result – or perhaps: goal – of Hercules' labours: deification (Catull. 68b.115).[190] Statius' description of Nero's *fossa* project evokes Hercules' engineering work (compare *montibusque caesis* and *paludes* in *Silv.* 4.3.7–8 with *palude* and *caesis montis* in Catull. 68b.110–11), and we have already seen that the promise of deification is lurking under the poem's – and Campania's – surface.

   Thus, at the poem's very start, before the reader finds out the cause of the loud sound, Statius layers intertexts that introduce some of the poem's key themes: the euergetism of exceptional men, their benefit to humanity, and their potential reward, deification. These intertextual layers result in ambiguity: Statius' depiction of Nero at *Silv.* 4.3.7–8 compares the emperor both to a threat to Horatian men of integrity such as Hercules, as well as to Hercules himself. This ambiguity is indicative of the extent to which mythological figures such as Hercules had been appropriated by or were associated with rulers,[191] and it characterises Statius' approach to these associations; that is, he had to negotiate and redefine these heroes in relation to Domitian.

   By guiding the reader's interpretation of the poem opening's loud sound, then, both through referring to specific local memories as well as by evoking certain intertexts and tropes, the poem here raises the question to which group Domitian and his transgressive building project belongs: is he a man of integrity who could become a god, just as Hercules, or is he similar to Hannibal and Nero, men who harmed Campania specifically and the Romans more generally?

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[190] I discuss this phrase in more detail below: see p. 81.

[191] Bosworth (1999) discusses apotheosis as a reward for world conquest and euergetism, especially in the context of Alexander the Great's imitation and amelioration of Bacchus and Hercules and Augustus' participation in this sequence of deified heroes.

And perhaps more specifically: would Domitian be a successful Hercules, or would he follow Nero's example and be a failed Hercules?[192] In other words, what kind of deified hero would Domitian be?

The question is answered immediately in the following lines (*Silv.* 4.3.9–10):

> **sed** qui limina bellicosa Iani
> iustis legibus et foro coronat, …   10

> No, it is he who encircles Janus' warlike threshold with just laws and a forum …

Domitian is explicitly opposed to Hannibal and Nero through *sed*, 'no' (*Silv.* 4.3.9): the loud sound is not caused by these disruptive men, but by a praiseworthy emperor. This impression is confirmed when Domitian is lauded with an almost hymnal description of his deeds as an emperor (*Silv.* 4.3.9–26).[193] The brief laudation includes firstly an overview of some of his public building projects, such as the construction of the *Forum Transitorium* and the *Templum Gentis Flaviae*, his reconstruction of the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, and his completion of the *Templum Pacis*, and secondly a selection of his legislation, including his law against castration in 82 CE and his vine-edict of 92–3 CE.[194] Statius' description of Domitian's deeds and restorations here is reminiscent of Augustus' epigraphic *Res Gestae*, as both of the emperors' deeds and building projects focus on moral reforms and pacification.[195] Taking into account the *Res Gestae* as a justification of Augustus' rulership, Statius' laudation of Domitian's deeds here introduces the poem's emphasis on legitimation of rulership, thus suggesting that Domitian is a good emperor, just as Augustus.

If we consider Statius' evocation of the Horatian *Ode* and its focus on deification, we may push the significance of the *Res Gestae* for Statius' poem even further. Scholars have pointed out the resonances of the *Res Gestae* with Hellenistic discourse on apotheosis, attainable through euergetism and world conquest.[196] The most obvious example is of course Alexander

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[192] The comparison between Nero and Hercules is particularly piquant as Nero did not manage to finish his own herculean construction project, the *fossa Neronis*, and he was never deified, yet in this *Silvae* his failure is indirectly compared to Hercules' successful accomplishment and deification.

[193] For a discussion of the hymnal aspects of this summary of Domitian's *res gestae*, see Coleman (1988) 106–7.

[194] Chinn (2017) 115–7 discusses the construction of the Via Domitiana in the context of Domitian's legislation, arguing that both construction work and legislation are connected to restoration of the natural order.

[195] Jones (1993) 99–103, Johnson (1997), Henriksén (2002).

[196] Wilamowitz-Möllendorff (1886) 625 argued that the *Res Gestae* functioned as a justification for Augustus' apotheosis. This proposal was rejected by Mommsen (1887), whose assessment became *communis opinio* until

the Great, who traditionally emulated and surpassed both Hercules and Bacchus in his conquests.[197] Augustus himself was associated with these heroes as well, for example in the Horatian *Ode* discussed above, but also in the *Aeneid*, when Anchises predicts the future and presents Augustus as the beneficent architect of Empire (Verg. *Aen*. 6.788–807).[198] The *Res Gestae* also participate in this discourse, focusing on Augustus' euergetism and on his expansion of Empire. Notably, the violent aspects of this expansion are often suppressed: instead, the focus is on the resulting peace. Particularly significant here is the *Res Gestae*'s engagement with the eastern parts of the world, which are represented as seeking friendship with the Romans (*RG* 31–3).

It has been suggested that this emphasis on peaceful expansion of Empire can be traced back to Ennius' translation of Euhemerus' *Sacra Historia*, in which (a mortal) Zeus travels around the world, binding peoples to him in hospitality and friendship and ordering shrines for himself to be set up in the name of the host, thereby essentially establishing his own institutionalised cult.[199] Although the influence of this text on the *Res Gestae* specifically has not been universally accepted, Ennius' translation of Euhemerus was certainly known in late republican and early imperial Rome,[200] and its narrative and concepts resonate both with the *Res Gestae* as well as with Statius' *Via Domitiana*. Statius' poem gives us an example of Domitian's euergetism, and we will see that this beneficent construction project has transformative ramifications for the entire Empire in ways that remind us of Augustus, Alexander the Great, Hercules, and Bacchus among others, and that thereby implicitly suggest the possibility of deification.

As I have shown in this section, the potential reward of apotheosis is set up at the beginning of the poem through the evocation of Horace's *Ode*, Catullus' poem 68b, and the *Res Gestae*. The poem's opposition between Domitian on the one hand and Hannibal and Nero on the other,

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Bosworth (1999) brought nuance to the matter and suggested the *Res Gestae*'s claims of immortality through connections with Ennius' translation of Euhemerus. Bosworth was followed by Cooley (2009), but not as much by Winiarczyk (2013) 146–7, who admits to analogies with the concept of euhemerism, but is not willing to go as far as claiming that Ennius' *Euhemerus* was one of the sources of the *Res Gestae*.

[197] Anderson (1928), Nock (1928), Scott (1929), Bosworth (1996). Spencer (2002) discusses the importance of Alexander the Great as a Roman model for power and imperialism, and examines Alexander's obsession with surpassing Hercules and Bacchus throughout her monograph (see especially, but not exclusively, pp. 77–8, 152–3, 194).

[198] Norden (1899) 468–70, Bosworth (1999), Horsfall (2014) 537ff..

[199] Bosworth (1999) 14–6 with Lactant. *Div. Inst.* 1.22.21–7 = Euhem. 64a.

[200] Cole (2006) discusses how, filtered down to late republican Rome through Ennius' translation of Euhemerus, as apparent from Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis* in particular, the concept of apotheosis became increasingly accepted.

as well as its implicit comparison between Augustus and Domitian, suggest that Domitian can be seen as fitting in with Horace's divinised men of integrity. What is more, Statius' description of Domitian's own *res gestae* explicitly suggests apotheosis as well: Domitian's construction of the *Templum Gentis Flaviae* and the deification of his father, brother, and sister is referred to as a Flavian heaven (*Flaviumque caelum*, *Silv.* 4.3.19). We will see that the prospect of apotheosis as set up in the poem's opening is made explicit in the Sibyl's speech at the end of the poem, where the prophetess exclaims that Domitian is in fact a god, and where further allusions to the same texts and discourses can be found.[201]

The Cause of the Sound

At this point in Statius' poem, however, the reader has not yet found out the source of the loud sounds in Campania. An indication has been given, however: the brief but pointed reference to the Via Appia in the poem's first lines suggests the nature of Domitian's euergetism (*Quis ... immanis sonus aequori propinquum / saxosae latus Appiae replevit*, 'What … monstrous sound has filled the side of the paved Appia that comes close to the sea?', *Silv.* 4.3.2–3). Following the description of Domitian's *res gestae*, we finally find out the direct cause of this loud sound (*Silv.* 4.3.20–6):

> hic segnes populi vias gravatus   20
> et campos iter omne detinentes
> longos eximit ambitus novoque
> iniectu **solidat** gravis harenas,
> gaudens Euboicae domum Sibyllae
> Gauranosque sinus et aestuantes   25
> septem montibus **admovere** Baias.

> He [Domitian], resenting the people's weary travels and the plains that held up every journey, is removing the long detours and stabilising the heavy sand with a new dumping of earth, delighting to bring the Euboean Sibyl's home, the inlets of Gaurus, and steaming Baiae closer to the seven hills.

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[201] See pp. 87ff.

Although the loud sound evoked memories of Hannibal and Nero, the reason for this clamour comes from a place of beneficence: Domitian wishes to shorten and improve people's travels between Rome and the Bay of Naples.[202] Whereas Hannibal and Nero had a disruptive impact on the Campanian landscape (*quatit*, *frangit*, and *caesis*, *Silv.* 4.3.6–7), Domitian's road work is depicted as a stabilising form of construction (*solidat*, *Silv.* 4.3.23). As such, his work reminds us of Titus' similarly stabilising restorations of the Campanian region following the eruption of Vesuvius, and should be seen in the context of an ongoing Flavian commitment to Campania.[203] At the same time, Statius represents Domitian's road construction as an enhancement of the existing road network in Italy: the Via Domitiana brings Campania and the Bay of Naples closer to Rome (*admovere*, *Silv.* 4.3.26).

In fact, the shift in spatial relations caused by the construction of the Via Domitiana is anticipated in the first lines of the poem, when the reader hears a loud sound near the Via Appia (*aequori propinquum / saxosae latus Appiae*, 'the side of the paved Appia that comes close to the sea', *Silv.* 4.3.2–3). This draws the attention to the already existing network of roads and brings in a comparison between the new Domitianic road and the ancient Via Appia, that had also changed the spatial conceptions of Italy.[204] The comparison to and competition with the Via Appia recurs throughout the poem, both explicitly, as here, and implicitly, through evocation of some of the Via Appia's associations. After all, the ancient road was loaded with memories and stories, from the Samnite Wars and the Second Punic War to its more recent associations with rulership and apotheosis in Roman satire.

In the *Apocolocyntosis*, Seneca recounts Claudius' death and quest for apotheosis as the deceased emperor travels to Olympus and persuades Hercules to let the gods listen to his case for deification, which is ultimately deflected by Augustus' delineation of Claudius' horrific crimes. Crucially, the very concept of the satire, that is, an emperor striving for apotheosis, is introduced in relation to a Roman road, and the most major road of them all, the Via Appia (Sen. *Apocol.* 1):

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[202] It is ironic, then, that poem 4.3 is in fact rather long (the longest poem in *Silvae* 4), and that the reader travels back and forth the Via Domitiana throughout the text: Smolenaars (2006) 225–7.

[203] For Titus' activities in Campania, see p. 62 above.

[204] Spencer (2010) 99ff. discusses the construction of the Via Appia as an event with similar transformative consequences. See also chapter 4, where I discuss Statius' conceptualisation of the Via Appia as a road connecting Rome and the bay of Naples in *Silvae* 2.2 (p. 190).

Velit nolit, necesse est illi omnia videre quae in caelo aguntur: Appiae viae curator est, qua scis et divum Augustum et Tiberium Caesarem ad deos isse.

Whether he wants to or not, he [*sc.* the narrator's source of information] has to see everything that goes on in heaven: he's in charge of the Appian Way, along which, as you know, both the deified Augustus and Tiberius Caesar ascended to the gods.

The first two Julio-Claudian emperors died in Campania and had to be carried back to Rome along the Via Appia, Augustus for consecration and divine honours and Tiberius for execration.[205] The association between roads and apotheosis may be traced back to Varro's *Menippean Satires*, where Hercules' apotheosis is described in terms similar to Augustus' and Tiberius' ascension in Seneca (***vias*** *... **qua Hercules ad deos isse** diceretur*, 'ways: … [the one] along which Hercules is said to have gone to the gods', Varro, *Sat. Men.* 560). Eden has suggested that Roman satire here expands on the idea of astrological ascension to the heavens, particularly familiar from Hellenistic discourse, with 'terrestrial precision'.[206] In other words, Seneca extends the Roman road network to include an imperial stairway to heaven. Over the course of this chapter I suggest that, in poem 4.3 of the *Silvae*, Statius further develops this notion and positions Domitian in relation to imperial predecessors by creating a competition between the Via Domitiana and the Via Appia. Through navigating canonical texts on apotheosis, then, including an infamous and negative example of an emperor pursuing deification in Roman satire, Statius emphasises his confidence and daring in the composition of panegyric.

But how exactly did the specific route of the Via Domitiana change the existing road network, and how did this development change the profile of Domitian's reign and the Flavian dynasty? Previously, travellers to the Bay of Naples followed the Via Appia from Sinuessa inland to Capua and then travelled southwards to Puteoli and Naples (see Map 1 on p. 74). The construction of the Via Domitiana made it possible for travellers to leave the Via Appia in Sinuessa and travel in a straight line along the coast to Puteoli, thereby avoiding the detour via Capua. As such, this new road collapsed the travel distance between Rome and Puteoli and changed the perceptions of spatial relations on the Italian peninsula. This change in spatial perceptions should be seen in the context of how Romans typically conceptualised and represented space: that is, in a linear mode as opposed to our bird's-eye view, for example by

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[205] See Suet. *Aug.* 100.2, *Tib.* 75.3.
[206] Eden (1984) 66.

means of *itineraria*, descriptions of networks of roads over land as if along an itinerary.[207] Statius' *admovere* (*Silv*. 4.3.26) suggests that the construction of the Via Domitiana positively changed this network of roads and thereby renegotiated the relation between Rome and the rest of Italy and the Roman Empire.

Map 1: The Via Domitiana (depicted in red) facilitated fast travel directly towards Cumae and Puteoli by leaving the Via Appia in Sinuessa. This was a major improvement over travellers' previous journey towards Naples, Puteoli, and Cumae via Capua (depicted in purple).

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[207] Cf. e.g. Janni (1984), Nicolet (1991), Brodersen (1995), Adams and Laurence (2001). For Roman roads and mobility in particular, see Laurence (1999).

A similar indication that the road construction and its accompanying spatial reorganisation was initially seen as a positive development by local inhabitants of Puteoli can be found on an inscription featuring the colony of Puteoli thanking Domitian for bringing their city closer to Rome (*admota*).[208] Despite the erasure of the inscription due to memory sanctions following his death, Domitian's spatial reorganisation of this area remained and constituted part of the remembrance of his reign.

More generally, the construction of the Via Domitiana contributed to the imperial profiling of the Flavian dynasty. Statius depicts Domitian as delighting to bring Cumae, the lakes at the foot of Mons Gaurus, and Baiae closer to Rome (*Silv.* 4.3.24–6). Around the corner, however, lay Puteoli. This wealthy harbour town was favoured by Nero, who renewed its colonial status, and maintained a special affiliation with the Flavian emperors after Nero's death.[209] The town supported Vespasian's claim for rulership from the eastern Mediterranean, an area with which they traded frequently.[210] Puteoli received many rewards in thanks, including new territory, and acquired the name *Colonia Flavia Augusta Puteolana*, a name superimposed on its previous brief identity as *Colonia Claudia Neronensis (Augusta) Puteoli*, and a name that lasted for several centuries.[211] As such, Puteoli is another example of the Flavians' successful memory sanctions against Nero, covering Nero's space and building their own dynasty in the process.[212] Puteoli's continued association with the Flavian emperors is also evidenced by building projects financed by their own funds, such as the colony's construction of its second permanent amphitheatre, which shows affinity with Rome's new Flavian amphitheatre, the Colosseum.[213]

The Via Appia, on the other hand, continued from Sinuessa inlands towards Capua, which declared for Vitellius instead.[214] Capua historically had a complicated relationship with Rome anyway, having betrayed Rome both during the Second Samnite War and during the Second

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[208] Cf. *AE* (1973) 137: initially, because the inscription was later erased. For discussion of the inscription and its life and contexts, see Flower (2001). For interaction between the inscription and *Silv.* 4.3, see Coleman (1988) 110, Smolenaars (2006) 227.

[209] Beloch (1890) 91–2, D'Arms (1974) 111–3, Frederiksen and Purcell (1984) 335, Flower (2001) 631–2, Benefiel (2004) 353, Ginsberg (2019) 26–30.

[210] Warmington (1928) 89–90 discusses the economic benefits of the Via Domitiana in the context of warehouses for spices that Domitian built in Rome.

[211] Benefiel (2004) with Tac. *Ann.* 14.27. For a brief overview of this transition with epigraphic references, see Flower (2001) 104 n. 30.

[212] Flower (2006) 197–232, with a discussion of Domitian at Puteoli and Misenum on pp. 256–61.

[213] See Dubois (1907) 115ff., 139–40, Maiuri (1955), D'Arms (1974) 119, Bomgardner (2002) 72ff. for a discussion of the dating and construction of Puteoli's second amphitheatre. For the epigraph boasting about Puteoli's self-funded construction of its new Flavian amphitheatre, cf. *CIL* X 1789 (= 2541) with Maiuri (1955) 85–89, Sommella (1978) 52–68, Johannowsky (1993) 101–3.

[214] Beloch (1890) 91–2, D'Arms (1970) 101, Flower (2001) 631 with Tac. *Ann.* 3.57.

Punic War, when the city defected to Hannibal and the Carthaginians.[215] By constructing a fast road from the bay of Naples to Rome that avoided Capua, the 'fallen rebel with no status',[216] Domitian explicitly avoided association with Vitellius, his father's rival for rulership, as well as any associations with Hannibal.[217] Instead, the trajectory of the Via Domitiana from Puteoli to Rome emphasises the Flavian dynasty's rise to power: Puteoli is not only where Vespasian arrived in Italy after being acclaimed emperor, but also where Titus landed after his conquest of Judaea, and from where he travelled to Rome to support Vespasian and to celebrate his triumph.[218] Domitian's new road would allow him to do the same, should he follow his father's and brother's footsteps and return victoriously from the East at some point – a notion that Statius plays with and anticipates in this poem, as I suggest below. By starting his panegyric poem to Domitian in this particular place, then, and by evoking the stories that he does, Statius deals with Campania's diverging memories and imperial affinities through emphasising those supportive of and beneficial to the Flavian dynasty.

Thus, at the beginning of *Silvae* 4.3, Statius introduces the reader to the Campanian landscape by describing a sound that evokes bad memories. He then eases the reader's rising concerns by noting that the loud sound is not caused by war or failed engineering projects, but by Domitian, who has already accomplished quite a few good deeds. Statius' evocation of 'good' and 'bad' transgressive rulers introduces two topics that are important to the rest of the poem: (the legitimacy of) Domitian's rulership and its relation to his predecessors, and Domitian's prospect of divinity.

Constructing the Via Domitiana and transforming the Campanian landscape

Next, Statius describes the nature of the journey south from Rome to Campania before the Via Domitiana was constructed (*Silv*. 4.3.27–39):

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[215] This Hannibalic association with Capua was still current at the time. In *Punica* 12, Silius Italicus describes how, having relaxed in Capua for a while, Hannibal moves through this particular area of Campania and fails to conquer Naples, Cumae, and Puteoli, who hold strong against him. He then goes on a tour of the area (*Pun*. 12.113–57) that features many stories we know from *Silv*. 4.3: the Via Herculanea, the swamps and their access to the underworld, and the giants conquered by Hercules and their remains in the volcanic landscape.

[216] Frederiksen and Purcell (1984) 332.

[217] Although Capua too acquired the adjective *Flavia* at some point, this town benefited significantly less from Flavian euergetism: Rigsby (1976) 319–21, Frederiksen and Purcell (1984) 337.

[218] Suet. *Tit*. 5.3.

hic quondam **piger** axe vectus uno
nutabat cruce pendula viator
sorbebatque rotas **maligna tellus**
et plebs in mediis Latina campis   30
 horrebat mala **navigationis**;
nec cursus agiles, sed impeditum
tardabant iter orbitae tenaces
dum pondus nimium querens sub alta
repit languida **quadrupes** statera.   35

Here once the sluggish traveller, borne along on a single axle, used to sway on a precarious cross, while the spiteful earth sucked down his wheels, and the people of Latium in the middle of the land shivered at the miseries of a sea-voyage; their progress was not nimble – instead, the sticky furrow encumbered their course and slowed it down, while their enfeebled beast, complaining of its excessive load, crept along under the towering yoke.

The journey used to be arduous and slow through a swampy landscape.[219] The Campanian earth is described as *maligna tellus*, 'spiteful earth', words that typically describe unproductive or unfertile soil, but that seem to indicate deliberate hostility here.[220] The spitefulness of the soil is emphasised by allusions to similar swampy situations in the *Thebaid*: *sorbebat* (*Silv*. 4.3.29), for example, also describes the treacherous earth that swallowed Amphiarus and his chariot (*sorbet* in *Theb*. 8.141).[221] Later in the *Thebaid*, *sorbebat* describes the river Ismenus' waters that suck down and drown Campetus (*Theb*. 9.276).[222] These intertexts portray the Campanian

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[219] Such slow journeys in the context of obstructive environments are not exclusive to the periphery, they take place in the centre of the Empire too. In *Epigram* 1.117, for example, Martial depicts the distance between Lupercus and himself in Rome as rather long and not worth the trip. Ultimately, the poet constitutes what slowness means.

[220] *OLD* s.v. *malignus* 1b versus 3, *TLL* 7.183.72ff. (Hey); Coleman (1988) 111. Cf. e.g. Verg. *G*. 2.179, Plin. *Ep*. 2.17.15.

[221] Stat. *Theb*. 8.141–3: *currus humus impia **sorbet** / armaque bellantesque viros; fugere ecce videtur / hic etiam, quo stamus, ager*; 'The accursed soil sucks in chariots and arms and fighting men. Even this field on which we stand seems, see, to be in flight.' Coleman (1988) 111 notes the intertext, also in Verg. *Aen*. 3.422: [Charybdis …] ***sorbet** in abruptum fluctus*; 'sucks [great] waves into the abyss.'

[222] Stat. *Theb*. 9.276–8: *surgentem dextra Capetum vulnusque minantem / **sorbebat** rapidus nodato gurgite vertex; / iam vultu, iam crine latet, iam dextera nusquam, / ultimus abruptas ensis descendit in undas*; 'Capetus rises with

landscape before the construction of the Via Domitiana as infertile and untrustworthy, even dangerous, and associate it with the underworld – an association prevalent in antiquity, as mentioned earlier.[223]

On top of this underworldly layer, the Campanian mud may also remind the reader of famous travel writings. Specifically, we might think of Horace's *Iter Brundisium* (*Sat*. 1.5), in which the author describes his slow and arduous journey south along the Via Appia, characterised by mosquito-ridden swamps, frogs, foul water, and tumultuous visits to inns. Horace points out that his travel company, being lazy (*ignavi*, *Sat*. 1.5.5), takes two days to complete the first stretch of the journey to Forum Appii, as the Via Appia is easier taken slowly (*minus est gravis Appia tardis*, *Sat*. 1.5.6). From there, Horace travels by boat through the Pomptine marshes over a canal alongside the road, a trip that takes a lot longer than it should. And as it happens, this journey is also evocative of satirical trips to the underworld through its engagement with Aristophanes' *Frogs*.[224] Statius' poem here evokes the slow pace of Horace's traveller and poem. Prior to the construction of the Via Domitiana, the traveller is sluggish (*piger*, *Silv*. 4.3.27) and the muddy tracks slow him down (*tardabant*, *Silv*. 4.3.33). Statius also engages with Horace's nautical imagery, for the Campanian landscape is so swampy that the wobbly chariot journey is compared to a sea-voyage (*navigationis*, *Silv*. 4.3.31). Only in this case, the boat trip takes place on the road itself, not on the canal next to it.

Moreover, in his engagement with themes of heroism and immortality, Statius takes on different genres. The multi-generic composition of his poem reflects on these themes, and causes us to ask what kind of hero Domitian would be: is he an epic Bacchus or Hercules, or does he embody more satiric versions of these transgressive men? Can he look forward to apotheosis, or will he fail, just as Seneca's Claudius in the *Apocolocyntosis*? And how does Statius' poetic ambition fit into this discourse?

To further contextualise the multi-generic identity of Statius' poem, it is instructive to briefly consider how Horace's *Iter Brundisium* interacts with existing satiric discourse, which had become established relatively recently through Lucilius' work. This Campanian author used the traditionally epic hexameter for mundane content and harsh criticism in a light, informal tone, thus causing him to be perceived by Romans as the *inventor* of the satiric

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his right hand and threatens to strike, but a swift eddy sucks him in its knotty whirl. His face, his hair is hidden, gone now his right hand, last of all his sword descends into the hurrying waters.'

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[224] Cucchiarelli (2001) 25–33. Sommerstein (2011) convincingly argues that both Horace's *Iter Brundisium* and Lucilius' *Iter Siculum*, its model, are extensively indebted to Aristophanes' *Frogs*.

genre.[225] Among other things, Lucilius wrote a long poem describing a journey from Rome to Sicily via the Bay of Naples, the *Iter Siculum*, which was seen as Horace's model for *Satire* 1.5 already in antiquity.[226]

In an article on *Satire* 1.5, Gowers discusses the pace, route, and genre of Horace's poem in relation to Lucilius' satire. Horace's poem is relatively short in relation to his eventful journey, whereas Lucilius' satire appears to have been rather lengthy.[227] Elsewhere, Horace in fact criticises Lucilius' style, saying that his satires run along far too speedily and that they are muddy, dragging along things that ought to have been removed.[228] The first aspect of this criticism relates to the pace of Lucilius' satires. Lucilius' satire is fast-paced, living up to the speed of the hexameter, and his style of writing poetry is compared to a coachman driving horses across a Campanian plain.[229] Horace's own preferred pace, however, is that of the more moderate *musa pedestris*: he slows down Lucilius' satiric horses and their suppressed epic potential.[230] The second aspect of Horace's criticism obviously evokes neoteric principles, going back to Callimachus: poetry ought to be a pure stream, not a bloated epic river, and it should stay away from the beaten track.[231]

Yet, while he accuses Lucilius of writing bloated poetry, Horace does not fully subscribe to these neoteric principles either. Rather, he appears to define himself as someone who adheres to its standards, but who does not follow them slavishly.[232] This self-definition, Scodel suggests, takes place in conversation with another Callimachean poem. In *Iamb* 13, Callimachus defends his πολυείδεα, his generic diversity, against literary critics, answering the

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[225] Hor. *Sat.* 1.10.48, Quint. *Inst.* 10.94.

[226] Porphyrio *ad* Hor. *Sat.* 1.5.1: *Lucilio hac satura aemulatur Horatius iter suum a Roma Brundesium usque describens, quod et ille in tertio libro fecit, primo a Roma Capuam usque et inde fretum Siciliense*. On Lucilius' *Iter Siculum* as a model for Horace's *Iter Brundisium*, see Fiske (1920) 306–316, Braund (1992) 19–20, Gowers (1993) 49, Poccetti (2018) 123–5.

[227] Gowers (1993) 53: 'He [Horace] is showing Lucilius that he has a different approach to getting through material; he can make a slower journey faster on paper.'

[228] Hor. *Sat.* 1.10.1–2: *inconposito ... pede currere versus*; and 1.10.50–1: *fluere ... lutulentum, saepe ferentem / plura quidem tollenda reliquendis*. See also Quint. *Inst.* 10.94, who disagrees with Horace and admires Lucilius' style for its *eruditio*, *libertas*, *acerbitas* and *sal* – while conceding that Horace is the best of all satirists due to his *tersus* and *purus* style.

[229] See Goh (2015) 95–100 for a discussion of 'horse jokes as part of satire's Campanian inheritance'. Cf. e.g. Juv. 1.19–21.

[230] Hor. *Sat.* 2.6.16–7 with Gowers (1993) 55–6.

[231] Callim. *Aet.* frs. 1–2, *Hymn* 2.105–12. Scodel (1987) discusses Horace's poetic relation to Lucilius and Callimachus.

[232] Scodel (1987) *passim*.

question: 'how far dare you go?' (τ[ε]ῦ μέχρι τολμᾷς; Callim. *Ia*. fr. 203.19).[233] Horace's *Iter Brundisium* is a good example of his own generic navigation of the tension between lighter poetry and epic: his poem does follow the track beaten by Lucilius, but only partially, and while it is a highly polished piece of work whose slow pace seemingly opts out of epic, the narrative itself evokes Odysseus' epic travels in many ways.[234]

Statius' poem interacts with this discourse and its connotations of generic self-definition. Before the construction of the Via Domitiana, his poem reads as an arduous and time-consuming journey that is reminiscent of Horace's pedestrian trek.[235] We may detect a Lucilian influence too: Statius' *quadrupes* (*Silv*. 4.3.34) suggests a galloping horse evocative of Lucilius' *Campanus sonipes*,[236] yet here this magnificent steed with its epic potential is exhaustedly creeping along under a heavy yoke. Post-construction, however, Statius picks up a much faster pace. This speed becomes especially apparent later in the poem, but we get a little preview here (*Silv*. 4.3.36–9):

at nunc quae solidum diem **terebat**

horarum **via** facta vix duarum.

non tensae volucrum per astra pennae

nec velocius ibitis carinae.

What used to waste a whole day is now a journey of scarcely two hours. Ships will not go faster, nor the outstretched wings of birds through the heavens.

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[233] Scodel (1987) 206ff., who focuses on the use of mixed dialects, the theme of poetic rivalry, and the refusal to adhere to generic conventions.

[234] Gowers (1993), Connors (2005) 131–4.

[235] A more recent example that may also be kept in mind when reading Statius' poem is the journey that Seneca describes in letter 57 of his *Epistles* (referred to but not discussed further by Coleman (1988) 111). In this letter, Seneca describes his journey from Baiae back to Naples. Keen to avoid another sea journey like his recent disastrous passage in *Epistle* 53, he opts to travel by road instead (*Ep*. 57.1): *et tantum luti tota via fuit ut possim videri nihilominus navigasse*, 'but there was so much mud all along the road that you might think I had floated my way there after all.' Seneca thus picks up on the muddiness of Campanian roads and the nautical imagery. He also assumes a mock-epic style, and during his journey through one of the area's dark and underworldly tunnels, he undergoes a transformation from stoic *proficiens* to *sapiens* while considering the immortality of the soul. In her article on this letter, Motto (1972) discusses the trip's infernal connotations with the initiatory rites of the mystery cults of apotheosised heroes, and she notes how this brief letter, describing a multi-generic journey through a confined tunnel, 'may serve virtually as a paradigm of Alexandrian form and art, Callimachean fulness in a little place' (p. 33).

[236] Cf. Lucil. 506–8 (507: *Campanus sonipes successor*), Juv. 1.19–21.

The slow and onerous journey now takes much less time: it no longer wears away a whole day (*diem terebat / ... via*, *Silv.* 4.3.36–7). This conflation of time and space is found elsewhere in a similar fashion and a similar context, namely in *Silv.* 2.2.11–2:

> flectere iam cupidum gressus qua limite noto
> **Appia** longarum **teritur** regina **viarum**.

> Although I was already eager to bend my steps where Appia, queen of long highways, takes the traveller along her familiar track.

In this passage, Statius reports how he was about to take the Via Appia, the queen of long highways. The verb *teritur* (literally: 'is worn away') suggests that the Via Appia is being used very intensively and that its route is time-consuming.[237] The completion of the Via Domitiana as anticipated in the last lines of this passage, however, presents a wholly different picture: not even ships at sea will go faster than travellers on this new road (*Silv.* 4.3.38–9). Already prior to its construction, the Via Domitiana-to-be is depicted as superior to the existing network of roads and alternative modes of travel (that is, by sea).

This superiority takes place on another level too. Earlier, I noted the relevance of the Via Appia as a route to deification. Where Seneca expanded the Roman road network by depicting the Via Appia as a stairway to heaven in the *Apocolocyntosis*, Statius here continues this notion. At the beginning of the poem, Statius' reference to Nero's Campanian *fossa* evoked Hercules' construction of a canal as described by Catullus, a deed that would grant him access to heaven. It is tempting to see an allusion to Hercules' anticipated deification here, which features access to heaven granted by the same verb: *pluribus ut caeli **tereretur** ianua divis* (*Catull.* 68b.115). While the Via Appia was a rather time-consuming route to take, then, whether back to Rome or towards apotheosis, and while Hercules' journey from earth to heaven was famously long as well, it looks like Domitian's attainment of divinity might proceed much more smoothly (see pp. 87ff.).

By evoking underworldly scenes, then, as well as swampy travel writings and their multi-generic connotations, Statius causes the reader to question exactly how bloated this travel poem is going to be, and how his poem will navigate the tension between lighter poetry and epic. Notably, this poetic navigation is associated with legitimation of rulership and a quest for

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[237] *OLD* s.v. *tero* 4, 6. I discuss this passage in the context of *Silvae* 2.2 in chapter 4 (p. 188).

apotheosis through a complex web of intertexts and generic associations. The next section of the poem continues this notion by describing the construction of the new road in rather technical terms.

In order to improve the ambiguous situation where the Campanian earth is depicted as a liminal space between our world and the underworld, and as a muddy mixture of water and earth, the landscape has to be modified and controlled in an expression of Roman mastery of nature (*Silv*. 4.3.40–8):

> hic <u>primus labor</u> incohare <u>sulcos</u>   40
> et rescindere limites et alto
> egestu <u>penitus cavare terras</u>;
> mox haustas aliter replere fossas
> et <u>summo</u> gremium parare <u>dorso</u>,
> **ne nutent sola, ne maligna sedes**   45
> det pressis dubium cubile saxis;
> tunc umbonibus hinc et hinc coactis
> et crebris iter alligare gonfis.

The first task here was to start on furrows and cut out borders and hollow out the earth far down with a deep excavation. Next, to fill the trenches they dug with other material and prepare a basin for the raised spine, so that the foundations do not wobble nor a spiteful bottom offer a treacherous bed for the packed stones. After that, to knit the road with blocks close set on either side and with frequent wedges.

Much of the language used here has agricultural connotations: the underlined words can be found in agricultural treatises, including Virgil's *Georgics*, Varro, and Columella.[238] The agricultural language works to represent Domitian's transformation of the Campanian countryside as a systematic reorganisation that civilises the landscape's wild and disorganised features, such as the swampiness of the fields and the repeated flooding of the Volturnus. Campania will no longer be marshy or spiteful (*ne nutent sola, ne maligna sedes*, *Silv*. 4.3.45).

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[238] For *primus labor*, cf. Verg. *G*. 3.182; for *sulcus*, cf. *OLD* s.v. *sulcus* and e.g. Ov. *Fast*. 4.825; for *penitus cavare terras*, cf. Cato *Agr*. 5.66.14, 34.1.41, 161.1.114; Verg. *G*. 2.290; Varro *Ling*. 5.31.136; Columella *Rust*. 3.18.4; and for *summo … dorso*, cf. Columella *Rust*. 11.3.

As such, Domitian's landscape reorganisation was in line with many Roman building projects. Romans had always had to actively manage and control their immediate environment due to their location in a considerably marshy landscape near the flood-prone Tiber.[239] Domitian had already shown his capabilities in this regard. Following the fire of 80 CE that destroyed large parts of the Campus Martius, Domitian set up many restoration and building projects in this swampy area, including a Stadium and the Odeon.[240] Such projects benefited the city of Rome, and, especially when clearly attributed to the emperor, contributed to the legitimation of his rulership. The Via Domitiana should be seen in the context of this building programme – and as an extension of it that would enable many more peoples to enjoy the advantages of Rome.

While Roman literary landscapes are typically disturbed by interventions and enforced transformations,[241] Statius' Campania is obediently domesticated and subjugated. At the very most, parts of it are amazed at the sounds (*Silv.* 4.3.61–6).[242] As such, the Campanian landscape responds differently to Domitian's engineering project than it did to Agrippa's and Augustus' construction of the nearby *portus Iulius* in Virgil's *Georgics*, where the sea reacted to this building project *indignatum magnis stridoribus*, 'resentful with its great screams' (*G.* 2.162). This Virgilian description therefore portrays Agrippa's and Augustus' engineering project as simultaneously unnatural, disturbing, and necessary to enable the Romans' securing of peace and domination of the Mediterranean.[243] Statius' depiction of the obedient Campanian landscape, which seems to be happy to be organised by Domitian, suggests that Domitian's engineering project is not only an imitation, but an improvement of his predecessors' activities

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[239] Purcell (1996). For Rome's (self-)image as a community of farmer-citizens whose identity was rooted in working the land, see p. 29 in chapter 1. For a discussion of the agricultural aspects of this passage and an interpretation of the Via Domitiana as an agricultural road towards a new Golden Age, see Chinn (2017) 117–9. Chinn argues that the passage engages with the portrayal of the first institution of agricultural labour in a work written by the Augustan-era poet Virgil, namely the *Georgics*. In Virgil's work, *labor* ('labour') offers a path to agriculture (*colendi / ... viam*, Verg. *G.* 1.121–2) that represents a way out of the desperation created by the loss of the Golden Age. Chinn suggests that, through the construction of the Via Domitiana, Statius literalises Virgil's metaphorical road to agriculture. Statius thereby anticipates the prophesying Sibyl's references later in poem 4.3 to the Golden Age that will take place under Domitian's rule.

[240] Cf. Sen. *Dom.* 5. For Domitian's Stadium, see Colini (1941), Darwall-Smith (1996) 221, and for the Odeon, see Buzzeti (1989), Coarelli (2007) 265, 295–6.

[241] Man improving upon nature is a recurring theme in literature and is often associated with the disturbance of nature, especially in Augustan poetry, including Lucretius, Virgil's *Georgics*, and Horace (e.g. *Carm.* 2.18, 3.1, 33ff.): see Heinen (2011). For improving on nature in Statius, see Pavlovskis (1973), van Dam (1984) 227–8.

[242] This amazement has been interpreted as negative due to the passage's interaction with *Aeneid* 4: see Newlands (2002) 292–5. Smolenaars (2006) 228–9, on the other hand, considers the effect of the intertextual play to be 'mildly humorous'.

[243] Leonard (2015) 143.

in this area. We may also consider the idea that the Campanian landscape does not protest Domitian's intervention because the construction of the Via Domitiana reduces its associations with past traumatic wars. This brings me to a voice that exemplifies Campania's response to Domitian's construction work, namely that of the river god Volturnus.

Following the description of the road works, the river-god Volturnus appears himself, as a personification of nature, and he elaborately thanks Domitian for organising his current, which regularly flooded the fields through which he flows (*Silv*. 4.3.67–94). The initially swampy Campanian landscape has been successfully reorganised into earth and water as separate elements. The river god's subjugation through Domitian's act of engineering is represented in both his flow and his words: his muddy, flooding streams have now been curtailed into a strict channel, and likewise his epic and bloated nature has taken on a Callimachean purity (from *turbidux minaxque* to *puro gurgite*, *Silv*. 4.3.76, 94).[244] In other words, the Volturnus' transformation suggests its adherence to Callimachean poetics. Yet simultaneously, the well-travelled Via Domitiana itself is the perfect example of Callimachus' disliked busy highway.

This tension has been interpreted in different ways. Newlands argues that the river god's abandonment of an epic model, as well as his 'assumption of a new, less ambitious poetics that lacks a moral or political voice', represents a reformulation of Callimacheanism for the Roman Empire. For her, Volturnus' new and suspiciously subservient voice is an example of safe, courtly speech under Domitian – yet even this safe speech testifies to Statius' poetic aspirations, as it is through Statius' epigraphic poem that Domitian's road construction will be remembered.[245] Smolenaars, on the other hand, finds the clash between the poem's subject matter and Volturnus' poetics humorous, and suggests that Volturnus' new style is in line with the type of *parvus* poetry for which Horace advocates in *Ode* 4.2, while leaving grandiloquent poetry in praise of emperors to others. Statius, he claims, thereby 'manifests himself as the new *vates* who is perfectly capable of phrasing Domitian's high achievements in a like modern style'.[246]

While their interpretations are markedly different in tone, then, both scholars argue that Volturnus' speech reflects on Statius' composition and style of panegyric. This is certainly the case. This passage of the poem continues the tension between lighter and grander discourse that was set up earlier in the poem. While the general transformation of the landscape from

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[244] Newlands (2002) 306–8, Smolenaars (2006) 231–3.

[245] Newlands (2002) 300–9. On the epigraphic aspects of Volturnus' speech, see Coleman (1988) 123, 125, 127–8, and on the metrical confinement of the Volturnus into hendecasyllables, see Morgan (2011) 56–9.

[246] Smolenaars (2006) 231–3.

swampy to pure suggests adherence to neoteric poetics, the construction of the new highway implies the very opposite. As such, the poem's generic diversity here simultaneously contributes to Domitian's image as a capable and beneficent ruler, sorting out the landscape's negative aspects, and also shows off Statius' hyper-Callimachean skill in turning a potentially prosaic poem about a well-travelled road into an exquisite work of art.

Additionally, it is important to consider the river Volturnus' literary and historical connotations, exploring how they are affected by Domitian's transformation of the Campanian landscape. The Volturnus' associations up until this point in time appear to have been predominantly military. As Newlands points out, the river separated the Romans from the Carthaginians in Campania during the Second Punic War.[247] In fact, the Volturnus played a rather ambiguous role. Sometimes, its flooding benefited the Romans by enabling them to provide food to their companions, but other times, Hannibal strategically used the famously dusty winds of Volturnus' area to his advantage, thus causing the Romans to lose in battle.[248] We might therefore deduce that curtailing the floods of the Volturnus and constructing a handy bridge over it would be militarily advantageous to the Romans and avoid any similar hindrances in the future. At the same time (and in the opposite direction), this speedy road and its easy crossing of the Volturnus might enable enemies to progress to Rome much more quickly and easily. Luckily, as the reader finds out now, they do not have to fear an *alter Hannibal*. Instead, foreign peoples will come to Rome in *amicitia*.

Next, Statius presents us with the image of someone travelling over the new road after it has been constructed (*Silv*. 4.3.101–110):

> illic flectit iter **citus** viator,
> illic **Appia se dolet relinqui**.
> tunc velocior acriorque cursus,
> tunc ipsos iuvat impetus iugales,
> ceu fessis ubi remigum lacertis   105
> primae, carbasa ventilatis, aurae.   106
> qui primo Tiberim relinquit ortu   112

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[247] Newlands (2002) 302.

[248] We know Volturnus' sandy waters and dusty winds from Verg. *Aen*. 7.729; Ov. *Met*. 15.7; Vitr. *De arch*. 1.6.10; Sen. *QNat*. 5.16.4; Plin. *HN* 6.106.1, 18.338.3–39.3, 36.194.5. Its various roles in the Second Punic War are described by Livy (22.43, 46; 23.14–9; 23.35–9; 26.5–13) as well as by Pliny the Elder (*HN* 17.7.3), Frontinus (*Str*. 2.2.7, 3.14.2) and Silius Italicus (*Pun*. 9.486–523, 10.202–7, 12.521–3).

primo vespere naviget Lucrinum.	113
nil obstat cupidis, nihil moratur:	111
ergo omnes, age, quae sub axe primo	107
Romani colitis fidem parentis,	
prono limite commeate, gentes,	
Eoae, citius venite, laurus.[249]	110

There the hastening traveller bends his path, there the [Via] Appia grieves at being abandoned. Then swifter and more eager is the journey, even the draught-animals delight in the speed, just as when, O breezes, the sailors' arms are weary and you begin to fan the sails. He who leaves the Tiber at early dawn can sail on the Lucrine when twilight falls. Nothing hinders the eager, there is no delay: so come, all you peoples beneath the oriental sky who owe allegiance to our Father in Rome, flock hither by an easy route, and, you laurels of the east, come faster.

The traveller on his chariot is now fast (*citus*, *Silv.* 4.3.101), no longer *piger*, slow, as before (*Silv.* 4.3.27). His journey is once again compared to a sea-journey – but a very smooth one (*Silv.* 4.3.105–6), as anticipated earlier (*Silv.* 4.3.38–9). This depiction shows that travel time and ease have been vastly improved by the construction of the Via Domitiana. The construction of this new road has transformed the road network too. As more people will now travel along the Via Domitiana rather than along the Via Appia, the latter grieves at being abandoned (*Silv.* 4.3.102): she is no longer the queen of long roads.

The final lines of the passage show that the construction of the Via Domitiana has consequences for spatial relations within the Empire more broadly as well: eastern peoples can now come to Rome faster and more easily (*Silv.* 4.3.107–10).[250] Increased accessibility of Rome to the East was typically seen as a rather ambiguous or even outright dangerous development, due to Romans' (negative) associations of the East with effeminacy.[251] Yet here it is framed as a positive change: eastern peoples will now be able to swear allegiance to Rome more easily (*Silv.* 4.3.108). Here, then, we recognise another Statian repurposing of

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[249] The order of verses in this passage is debated: I follow the order proposed by Coleman (1988) 129.
[250] Coleman (1988) 129.
[251] The decentralisation of Rome and the Roman world as prompted by collapsing of boundaries between the Roman World and the East features strongly in for example Lucan's *Civil War*. See e.g. Ahl (1976) 170–3, Masters (1992) 93–9, Rossi (2000), Bexley (2014).

traditionally transgressive imagery. Keeping in mind the poem's earlier evocation of euergetism and apotheosis in the context of the *Res Gestae* and its participation in Hellenistic and Republican deification discourse, we might also consider the possibility that Statius evokes Euhemerus' ideas here. Perhaps Statius is depicting Domitian as another Euhemeric Jupiter – but a better one. For while Jupiter was superior to other deified figures because he travelled around the world and expanded his Empire through *amicitia* rather than by battle and conquest,[252] Domitian does not even have to travel around himself. Instead, foreign peoples will come to him and to Rome in allegiance.

All in all, then, the Campanian landscape undergoes a rigorous transformation as the Via Domitiana is constructed. This metamorphosis is described in multi-generic language that made the reader question what direction this road and this poem would follow, and what their destination would be. The transformation of the initially malignant and swampy area associated with the underworld to a cleaner and imperial Campania, neatly divided into earth and water, suggests that perhaps the Via Domitiana does not lead to the Cumaean underworld, but will end up elsewhere. I will now discuss the final part of the poem, in which Statius frames the road construction as part of a more elaborate eulogy on Domitian's rule that draws together the varying genres and their connotations with legitimation of rulership and apotheosis.

Prophesying Domitian's Divinity

When the poem nears the end of the Via Domitiana in Cumae, the town's most famous inhabitant, the Sibyl appears.[253] The poet-narrator makes a point of withdrawing upon her sight (*cedamus*, *Silv.* 4.3.119) as the Sibyl fully takes up the space of the road (*viamque replet*, *Silv.* 4.3.122) and thereby that of the poem.[254] In a move similar to his allocation of a miniature panegyric to Volturnus, Statius hereby rids himself of full authorial responsibility, thus justifying the extravagance of the Sibyl's eulogy that might have seemed out of place

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[252] Lactant. *Div. Inst.* 1.22.21–7 = Euhem. 64a: *Nam cum terras circumiret, ut in quamque regionem venerat, reges principesve populorum hospitio sibi et amicitia copulabat et cum a quoque digrederetur iubebat sibi fanum creari hospitis sui nomine, quasi ut posset amicitiae et foederis memoria conservari*, 'For when he was making the round of the world, the kings or chiefs of the peoples of every region, wherever he had come, bound themselves in hospitality and friendship with him; and whenever he was departing from any place, he ordered that a shrine should be built in the name of his host, so that the memory as it were of friendship and agreement should be preserved.'

[253] For discussions of the Sibyl's vicinity to the Via Domitiana, see Coleman (1988) 129–30, Longobardo (2004) 288–9, Smolenaars (2006) 234–5.

[254] Smolenaars (2006) 244.

otherwise.[255] Statius' description of the road construction and the accompanying landscape transformation therefore ends here, at the end of the new road (**fine viae** *recentis imo*, *Silv.* 4.3.114). Not coincidentally, this phrasing also evokes the end of Horace's *Iter Brundisium* (*Sat.* 1.5.104): *Brundisium longae* **finis** *chartaeque* **viae***que est*, 'Brundisium is the end of a long story and of a long journey.'[256] While the poem's swampy description of Campania prior to Domitian's construction work evoked satiric discourse, and created the possibility that Domitian's quest for apotheosis might not succeed,[257] this possibility is now shut down by the completion of the Via Domitiana and the conclusion of the poem's satiric discourse. In Statius' place, the Sibyl now guides the reader not downwards into the underworld, and not horizontally along the road, but vertically upward – towards Domitian's sublime and divine future.

Inevitably, the Cumaean Sibyl brings with her a lengthy past of stories and connotations. As has been widely recognised, Statius' Sibyl phrases her prophecy for Domitian in idiom familiar from prophetic language in Virgil's *Eclogue* 4 and *Aeneid* 6.[258] Virgil's Sibyl guides Aeneas to and through the underworld and introduces him to key characters of Rome's story, including of course Augustus.

In comparison to Virgil's Sibyl, Statius' Sibyl is rather unusual, for she conveys her prophesy in hendecasyllables rather than in the more traditional epic hexameters. Smolenaars has pointed out parallels between this Sibyl's lack of need for rotting papyrus rolls (*putribus ... chartis*, *Silv.* 4.3.141) and Catullus' programmatic first poem that propagates *ars* and *brevitas* (*tribus explicare cartis / doctis ... et laboriosis*, Catull. 1.6–7). Based on this resemblance among other untypicalities, he suggests that Statius' Sibyl represents a modern song, 'better adapted to the refined culture of Domitian's times'.[259] And indeed, in the Sibyl's unusual poetics as well as in her message itself, we recognise a continuation of Statius' navigation of genres in this poem and their relation to legitimation of rulership and apotheosis as a reward.

For a start, the tone of Statius' Sibyl is markedly different from that of her Virgilian counterpart. Whereas the Virgilian Sibyl warns Aeneas of future perils, such as (civil) war and

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[255] On the Sibyl as a mythological spokesperson, see Coleman (1999).

[256] The parallel is pointed out and briefly discussed by Smolenaars (2006) 243–4.

[257] Heroes and emperors did not always succeed in acquiring immortality in satiric discourse, at least not in the *Apocolocyntosis*, where Claudius ends up in the underworld instead, and not in Aristophanes' *Frogs* either, where Bacchus has to bring Aeschylus back to life rather than Euripides, as originally intended.

[258] Vollmer (1898) 459–60, Coleman (1988) 130–5, van Dam (1992) 202–6, Smolenaars (2006) 237ff. For discussions of Statius' Sibyl in relation to her epic predecessors, see Newlands (2002) 309–13, Smolenaars (2006) 236–7.

[259] Smolenaars (2006) 239–40.

the Tiber flowing with blood, Statius' Sibyl only prophesies blessings for Domitian – at least superficially.[260] In her eulogy, she represents the construction of the Via Domitiana as a fated example of the Domitian's supreme mastery of nature (*Silv*. 4.3.124–30, 134–8):

> dicebam, veniet (manete campi
> atque amnis), veniet favente caelo   125
> qui foedum nemus et putres harenas
> celsis pontibus et via levabit.
> en hic est deus, hunc iubet **beatis**
> pro se Iuppiter imperare **terris**;
> quo non dignior has subit habenas   130
> …
> hic paci bonus, hic timendus armis;
> natura melior potentiorque,   135
> hic si **flammigeros teneret axes**,
> largis, India, nubibus maderes,
> undaret Libye, teperet Haemus.

> I said it: 'He will come. Fields and river, wait! He will come by heaven's favour, he that shall raise the foul forest and powdery sand with lofty bridge and causeway.' See! He is a god, him Jupiter commands to rule the happy earth in his stead. None worthier has held these reins,
> …
> He is a friend to peace, formidable in arms. If he had the flaming sky in his keeping, better and mightier than nature, India would be damp with generous clouds, Libya watered, Haemus warm.

The Sibyl reveals that she has repeatedly prophesied Domitian's road construction, which she specifically represents as an improvement of the Campanian landscape (*Silv*. 4.3.124–7). The Sibyl's prophecy therefore works to support what might otherwise be seen as an unnatural transgressive disturbance of nature. Because Domitian's engineering project was predetermined by fate, the prophecy implicitly depicts him as a fated successor to those who

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[260] Parke and McGing (1988) 88.

successfully performed building works in this area earlier, namely Hercules and Agrippa. Notably, his predicted and now executed transformation of the landscape is represented as an alleviation (*levabit*, *Silv*. 4.3.127). No longer are the woods filthy and the sands loose and heavy with water: the construction work has neatly organised the liminal and underworldly Campanian earth into an easily navigable space. No longer either, then, is this lengthy journey reminiscent of the long-winded satiric travel poems discussed earlier. Domitian's road is now *levis*, as is the generic nature of Statius' poem. Perhaps correcting Virgil's prophecies for having stopped with Augustus.

The depiction of Domitian's human and technological achievement is immediately followed by the Sibyl's address to Domitian as a god: *hic est deus*, 'a god is he' (*Silv*. 4.3.128). This address evokes and ameliorates Anchises' introduction of Octavian to Aeneas in book 6 of the *Aeneid* (*hic, vir hic est*, Verg. *Aen.* 6.791). Although the Sibyl's speech is of a prophetic nature, her address still is quite shocking, for she speaks of the emperor's future deification while he is still alive. This notion is conceptually reminiscent of Horace's *Ode* 3.3, where the poet finds a similar way to praise the emperor Augustus with a future deification (see p. 67 above). This intertext soon becomes more explicit (see pp. 93ff. below). We may also think of Lucan's address to Nero at the beginning of the *Civil War* (Luc. 1.63–6):

> **sed mihi iam numen**; nec, si te pectore vates
> accipio, Cirrhaea velim secreta moventem
> sollicitare deum Bacchumque avertere Nysa: 65
> tu satis ad vires Romana in carmina dandas.

> But already to me you are deity, and if I as bard receive you
> in my breast, no wish have I to trouble the god who has control
> of Cirrha's secrets or to distract Bacchus from Nysa: 65
> you are enough to give me strength for Roman song.

Lucan concludes his elaborate imagination of Nero's future godhood – after his time on earth has ended (Luc. 1.45–62) – by returning to the present day, and gives the emperor the best compliment he can feasibly give without deifying him on the spot: to Lucan (*mihi*, Luc. 1.63), Nero is divine already. Clearly, then, writers from Augustan times onwards had been playing with the future deification of the emperor in an increasing crescendo. Under Domitian's rule,

this deification took unprecedented forms. For the Sibyl's prophetic address to Domitian as a god on earth ruling the world in Jupiter's stead (*Silv*. 4.3.128–9) is in line with the recurring association and identification between Domitian and Jupiter, the king of the gods, as expressed by several ancient writers.[261] Moreover, the Sibyl not only addresses Domitian as a god, but even commends his divinity by claiming that none worthier than he has taken up the reins since Aeneas (*Silv*. 4.3.130–3). Under Domitian's rule, the earth now is *beatis* (*Silv*. 4.3.128), 'happy', no longer *maligna* (*Silv*. 4.3.29). As such, Domitian is depicted as a successor superior to his predecessors.

Building on his assumption of the reins (*habenas*, *Silv*. 4.3.130), Domitian's superior and deserved rulership is then illustrated with a representation of the emperor as a charioteer, commandeering the chariot of the sun (*Silv*. 4.3.136–8). This notorious image of Phaethon was typically associated with imperial succession and (bad) leadership.[262] Here, however, the image is used in a positive way: by regulating the sun's behaviour, Domitian, who is 'better and more powerful than nature' (*Silv*. 4.3.135), will improve the extreme climates of these places on the edges of the empire.[263]

Undoubtedly, this image would have also recalled the *prooemium* to Lucan's *Civil War*. In its address to Nero, the poem hails the emperor as a successful future Phaethon, the son of the sun god Helios who stole his father's chariot, was unable to control it, and crashed to his death (Luc. 1.33–66, especially 45–50). Following Nero's suicide and the ending of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, however, it had become clear that Nero had failed and was in fact not a successful Phaethon after all. Statius' representation of Domitian as an extremely successful charioteer here therefore points out Nero's failure and depicts Domitian as superior to him.[264] At the same time, Domitian's excellent charioteering starts to bring the poem's repeated chariot imagery to a close. The Via Domitiana does not allow for chariots sinking into the Campanian underworld, or for wobbly journeys with satiric or tragic ends. Instead, its smooth surface

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[261] Scott (1933); Jones (1993) 99–100, 108–9. Some writers even note that Domitian was sometimes addressed as *dominus et deus* – but as most of these writers are post-Domitianic, we cannot be not sure to what extent these claims reflect contemporary political reality. Cf. e.g. Suet. *Dom*. 13.2, Dio 67.4.7. For associations and identification between Jupiter and Domitian, cf. e.g. Mart. 5.5, 8; 7.2, 5, 34; 8.2, 82; 9.28, 66; Stat. *Silv*. 1.6.25–7; 3.4.16ff.; 4.2.10–2, 18ff., 53ff.; 4.7.50; 5.1.37–40.

[262] Nauta (2002) 332–3, Rosati (2008) 187–92. For imperial chariot races in Statius' *Thebaid*, see Rebeggiani (2013). As Coleman (1988) 132 notes, *Silv*. 4.3.136 alludes to several passages featuring Phaethon and his chariot in the context of imperial succession: cf. Luc. 1.48, Val. Fl. 5.581.

[263] Coleman (1988) 132.

[264] Cordes (2017) 182–5 discusses the use and 'Rekodierung' of sun chariot imagery in Lucan and Statius.

allows for speedy navigation with imperial purposes and for a sublime yet controlled chariot ride to imperial and poetic immortality.

That brings us to the second part of the Sibyl's speech, which engages with Domitian's future exploits. The Sibyl not only foresees an unusually long life for Domitian, but she also expands on his future spatial explorations of the world and his expansions of the Empire (*Silv.* 4.3.153–63):

> iuravit tibi iam nivalis Arctus,
> nunc magnos Oriens dabit triumphos.
> ibis qua **vagus Hercules et Euhan**   155
> ultra sidera flammeumque solem
> et Nili caput et nives Atlantis,
> et laudum cumulo beatus omni
> scandes belliger abnuesque currus,
> donec Troicus ignis et renatae   160
> Tarpeius pater intonabit aulae,
> haec donec via te regente terras
> annosa magis Appia senescat.

Already the snowy north has sworn allegiance to you, soon the Orient will afford you great triumphs. Where roving Hercules went, and Bacchus, will you go, beyond the stars and the flaming sun, the source of the Nile and the snows of Atlas, and, blessed with every increment of honour, you will mount some chariots as warlord and decline others, as long as the Trojan fire burns and the Tarpeian god thunders in his resurrected palace, until, under your rule upon earth, this road will outlive the ancient Appian way.

Domitian, so the Sibyl predicts, will be able to move freely through the entire world, even where famous heroes and gods such as Hercules and Bacchus went. Scholars have noted that her speech engages with Anchises' prophecy predicting Augustus' expansion of Empire in the *Aeneid*.[265] Once again, then, we notice Domitian following the examples of Bacchus, Hercules,

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[265] Coleman (1988) 134, Newlands (2002) 319–21, Smolenaars (2006) 240, especially n. 27. Cf. Verg. *Aen*. 6.795–805, especially 795–8: *super et Garamantas et Indos / proferet imperium; iacet **extra sidera** tellus, / extra anni solisque uias, ubi caelifer Atlas / axem umero torquet stellis ardentibus aptum*, 'and [Augustus] will extend Rome's

and Augustus. This pattern is confirmed by the passage's interaction with Horace's *Ode* 3.3.9–16:[266]

> hac arte Pollux et **vagus Hercules**
> enisus arcis attigit igneas,   10
>   quos inter Augustus recumbens
>   purpureo bibet ore nectar;
>
> hac te merentem, **Bacche** pater, tuae
> vexere tigres indocili iugum
>   collo trahentes; hac Quirinus   15
>   Martis equis Acheronta fugit, …

It was through this quality [i.e. steadfastness] that Pollux and roving Hercules after a long struggle reached the fiery heights; reclining in their company, Augustus will drink nectar with rosy lips.

Through this, father Bacchus, your tigers deservedly carried you aloft, pulling the yoke with their wild necks; through this Quirinus was saved from Acheron by the steeds of Mars, …

Earlier, I discussed how the beginning of poem 4.3 interacts with the first two stanzas of this *Ode*. I argued that the poem's opening depicts Hannibal and Nero as potential threats to a Horatian man of integrity, while Domitian is anticipated to be included in the choice group of such men who became gods, which includes Bacchus, Hercules, and Augustus (see p. 67). In this passage, Domitian's future explorations of the world are specifically compared to those of Hercules and Bacchus.[267] Statius here engages with the *Ode*'s third and fourth stanzas: compare *vagus Hercules* and *Euhan* in *Silv.* 4.3.155 with *vagus Hercules* and *Bacche* in *Carm.* 3.3.9 and

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empire beyond the Indians and the Garamantes to a land beyond the stars, beyond the yearly path of the sun, where Atlas holds on his shoulder the sky all studded with burning stars and turns it on its axis.'

[266] Vollmer (1898) 460 briefly notes the allusion.

[267] So far, Domitian has only expanded the Empire northwards: *iuravit tibi iam nivalis Arctos*, 'already the snowy north has sworn allegiance to you' (*Silv.* 4.3.153), refers to Domitian's campaigns against the Chatti, Daci, and Sarmatae in the north of Europe.

13. As such, Statius' interaction with Horace's *Ode* at the end of this poem confirms that Domitian can indeed be included in the company of these men, who were divinised due to their (transgressive) benefactions to mankind. In poem 4.3, then, we see an example of how Statius repurposes Augustan laudatory discourse in order to praise the emperor: Domitian's revolutionary deeds are the good kind of transgressive, and he will be – or rather: has been – rewarded with deification.

The final lines of the poem return to the road itself. Smolenaars has convincingly pointed out that the length of Domitian's rule is tied to the continuing existence of the Via Domitiana – both that of the road itself and that of the literary road that Statius has created (this poem), if we read *haec via* (*Silv.* 4.3.162) metapoetically. The emperor's road and the author's poem coexist, resulting in a situation in which the eternal fame of Domitian and Statius are interdependent.[268] The very last two lines frame Domitian's rule and road construction in relation to the pre-existing, now inferior, Via Appia: Domitian will reign until his road outlives the latter. As this is impossible, both the emperor and his road will live forever.[269] In this way too, then, the Via Domitiana functions as a route to immortality, and is superior to the Via Appia, along which emperors travelled towards deification only after their death. So ends the competition between the two roads that runs throughout the poem, in favour of Domitian.

To summarise, then: so far I have shown that the *Via Domitiana* cleverly finds its way through a range of genres and media that deal with the legitimation and deification of rulers. Initially setting up an expectation of epic or lyric deification, Statius soon derails the reader with satiric discourse that makes us question whether this quest for apotheosis might end up in the underworld instead. The completion of the Via Domitiana ends this fear by concluding the poem's satiric discourse and giving voice to two mythological spokespersons, who eulogise the emperor in distinct poetic styles: the river god Volturnus through his skilful navigation of epigraphy, neoteric and epic principles, and the Sibyl through her equally untraditional address of Domitian that expresses lyric and epic subject matter in hendecasyllables. As such, Statius shows his expertise in writing multiple genres, while layering them into the narrow space of the *Via Domitiana*.

Moreover, Statius' engagement with the different generic discourses in this poem contributes to the impression that Domitian's transformative building project is exactly the type

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[268] Smolenaars (2006) 243–4.

[269] Smolenaars (2006) 243. Several scholars have suggested that this eternal rule is a reflection of and response to contemporary anxieties about Domitian's childlessness and the related problem of dynastic succession. See e.g. Newlands (2002) 316–9.

of euergetism that benefits humanity and that should be rewarded with apotheosis. He is indeed comparable with and even superior to his predecessors in this, most of whom are named explicitly or evoked very directly: Bacchus, Hercules, Augustus, and Nero. But another model is looming in the shadows, and that is Alexander the Great.

An Eastern Campania

So far, I have explored Statius' arrangement and reorganisation of Campania's stories in Campania itself, from its underworldly swamps and historical trauma to its newfound smooth highway towards imperial apotheosis. At the same time, however, there is an additional layer to this poetic landscape, which presents us with an eastern Campania.

Poem 4.3 of the *Silvae* explicitly evokes the East in several places. For one, the East features in a comparison: Domitian's construction work itself is compared (favourably) to similar ambitious eastern building projects, such as Xerxes' canal and the Isthmus of Corinth (*Silv.* 4.3.56–60). Towards the end of the poem, the East starts to become more prominent. The Via Domitiana is praised for enabling eastern peoples to come to Rome in allegiance to the emperor (*Silv.* 4.3.107–10), and Domitian's future explorations of the world also seem to be heading in eastern directions (*Silv.* 4.3.135–8, 153–4).

In the second part of this chapter, I explore how Statius builds up to this eastern culmination by depicting the construction work in Campania as taking place in the East. This addition to Campania's 'meeting-up of stories' indirectly presents Domitian with another model to follow, but one with a more complicated past: Alexander the Great.[270] After all, the outdoing of Bacchus and Hercules that is so prominent in poem 4.3 originally started with Alexander's attempts to do so, and was used as an argument for his deification (see p. 70 above). This notion then became a popular theme in Roman literature, for the Macedonian leader remained an attractive model of thinking about ruling and holding on to empire.[271] When reading a poem that so prominently depicts Domitian as outdoing Hercules and Bacchus, then, in a context of euergetism and apotheosis, it is nearly impossible not to think about their original outperformer, Alexander the Great. In fact, Alexander the Great's evocation here is not unique to poem 4.3.

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[270] For the conceptualisation of space as a 'meeting-up of stories', see my discussion of Massey (2005) in the introduction (pp. 19ff.).

[271] Spencer (2002) 77. Augustus himself, for example, is depicted as surpassing these deified heroes when Anchises introduces us to him in the *Aeneid* in a panegyric speech that is reminiscent of Alexander's feats: see Verg. *Aen*. 6.801–5 with Horsfall (2014) 547–50.

Before returning to the *Via Domitiana*, therefore, I consider Statius' constructions of Alexander and the East in the *Silvae* more generally.

Constructing the East in the *Silvae*

Imitating Alexander the Great comes with many risks, as Diana Spencer has pointed out in her book on *The Roman Alexander*.[272] Alexander does not only come with speed, military conquests, and good military leadership (the 'positive, expansive and empire-building elements of Alexander imagery'),[273] but also with dangers of degeneracy into the *mores* and luxury of defeated enemies, with excess, aspirations to divinity and early death. Alexander is therefore a particularly loaded model to be following, but, as mentioned earlier, he also formed a useful figure for the contemplation of rulership.

More specifically, use of the Alexander model raises questions about the ruler and his relation to the stability of his empire. For if an autocratic ruler is not subject to many or any external checks, the empire is very much dependent on the ruler's ability to keep his own – potentially transgressive – behaviour in check. This applies both to his personal behaviour and his imperial policies and actions. Does a ruler need to keep conquering to justify his position, for example? If not, then how does he maintain what he has built up? We know what happened when Alexander reached the Ocean and stopped conquering: he fell into luxury and vice, exhibited increasingly violent behaviour, and died very young, leaving his large and recently acquired empire to be fought over by potential successors. These issues about the ruler and the stability of his empire unavoidably come to the fore when Statius presents Domitian with Alexander the Great as a model.

Evocation of the East and engagement with Alexander the Great is not unique to *Silvae* 4.3. We encounter Alexander the Great throughout Statius' occasional poems, in different contexts and with different connotations. This might seem strange, but it is not all that surprising. As Spencer has pointed out, Roman discourses on Alexander the Great do not exactly leave us with a stable and consistent figure: rather, the many positive and negative anecdotes we encounter testify to the polyvalence of Alexander in Roman political and cultural discourse.[274] This diversity led to Alexander becoming a model that offered authors a way to comment on

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[272] Spencer (2002). The following two paragraphs are greatly indebted to her treatment of Alexander the Great in Roman discourse.

[273] Spencer (2002) 25.

[274] Spencer (2002) 119ff.

ideological changes in Roman politics and styles of leadership. Moreover, Alexander himself was very concerned with the representation and dissemination of his image and his stories, and this awareness of the power of media representation found its way to Rome too.

As such, it is important to consider how Statius' association between Domitian and Alexander the Great contributes to the construction of Domitian's imperial persona, and to what extent we could potentially detect the emperor's concern with his image in this. Before moving on to *Silvae* 4.3, I therefore briefly examine the association Statius creates between Domitian and Alexander in two very similar poems, *Silvae* 1.1 and 4.1. Both poems form important context for understanding the Alexander subtext in *Silvae* 4.3, as they deal with the imperial representation of Domitian at the very heart of the Empire, outlining the emperor's past exploits and future expectations whilst evoking Alexander the Great explicitly and implicitly.[275]

In the very first poem of the *Silvae*, Statius describes a new equestrian statue that has been erected for Domitian in the Forum.[276] Its rider, Domitian, is depicted as if he is on his expeditions in the north of the empire, where he has been waging wars against the Germans and the Dacians. These wars earned him his title, Germanicus, and that is how Statius addresses the emperor (*Silv*. 1.1.5). Near the very end of the poem, Domitian's equestrian statue is compared favourably to another famous horse in the Forum (*Silv*. 1.1.84–90):

> cedat equus Latiae qui contra templa Diones
> Caesarei stat sede fori, quem traderis ausus   85
> **Pellaeo**, **Lysippe, duci** (mox **Caesaris ora**
> mirata cervice tulit); vix lumine fesso
> explores quam longus in hunc despectus ab illo.
> quis rudis usque adeo qui non, ut viderit ambos,
> tantum dicat equos quantum distare regentes?   90

> Let that horse yield who stands in Caesar's Forum opposite Latian Dione's temple, whom you, Lysippus (so it is said), dared make for Pella's captain (soon it was amazed to bear Caesar's likeness on its neck); with your tired eyes you would scarcely discern how far

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[275] These three poems are also read alongside each other by Geyssen (1996).

[276] Geyssen (1996) discusses the poem in detail, exploring its physical as well as its conceptual setting (that is, its engagement with literary and mythological allusions).

down the view is from this horse to that. Who so unschooled as, seeing both, not to declare the horses as far apart as their riders?

Lysippus, the only artist allowed to depict Alexander, made this equestrian statue for Alexander the Great, but it now carries Julius Caesar's face instead. It is tempting to see Statius' verses here as a comment on the transience of monuments and of earthly power: as Newlands states, 'Alexander's fame did not prevent the quick erasure and change of the rider's identity.'[277] Whereas this is true, it should also be noted that Alexander has not simply been forgotten. He is still part of the layers of the Forum, and one of the predecessors to whom Domitian must relate himself in one way or another.

In this passage, Statius distances Domitian from Alexander and Julius Caesar: that is, Domitian towers over and surpasses both. But there is a certain likeness between Domitian and Alexander too. In his monograph, Geyssen discusses the self-referential quality of Lysippus' statue in relation to Statius' undertaking of the *Silvae*, suggesting that Statius commended Lysippus' endeavour to sculpt Alexander.[278] Statius, he argues, takes on a similar responsibility here, and as such is himself the Lysippus to Domitian's Alexander – who, in line with the superlative tendencies of panegyric discourse, is a greater Alexander than the original one. In addition to alerting us to the predecessors to whom Domitian has to be related, then, this passage, through its references to erasure and replacement, makes us aware of the moldability of models, thus causing us to question who has the authority and discernment to employ them. Book 4 of the *Silvae* also interacts with this notion.

In fact, *Silvae* 4.1 can be seen as a development of *Silvae* 1.1. Statius again praises Domitian in the very centre of the Empire, Rome's Forum, and the poem also features a spokesperson who praises Domitian, namely Janus. The god not only heralds the arrival of the new year, but also the beginning of Domitian's 17th consulship.[279] In his speech, Janus expands on the honours that have been offered to and still await Domitian. At the very end of his address, Janus foretells some of Domitian's deeds (*Silv*. 4.1.39–43):

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[277] Newlands (2002) 66. See Ahl (1984) 97–102, who discusses this poem as an excellent exercise in double-entendre.

[278] Geyssen (1996) 79–80, who compares Statius' description of Lysippus' daring feat (*quem traderis ausus*, *Silv.* 1.1.85) to his depiction of himself undertaking the *Silvae* (*tradere ausus sum*, *Silv*. 1.pr.19).

[279] Coleman (1988) 79, (1999) 67.

mille tropaea feres; tantum permitte triumphos.

restat **Bactra** novis, restat **Babylona** tributis   40

frenari; nondum gremio Iovis **Indica** laurus,

nondum **Arabes Seres**que rogant, nondum omnis honorem

annus habet, cupiuntque decem tua nomina menses.

You shall bear a thousand trophies, only permit the triumphs. Bactra and Babylon have still to be curbed with new tributes, not yet are Indian laurels <in> Jove's bosom, not yet do Arabs and Seres make petition, not yet does all the year have its honour, ten months still crave your name.

Domitian's future exploits are oriented towards the East – towards an Alexandrian East, to be more precise. The lands and peoples mentioned by Janus all feature in Horatian panegyric for Augustus, where they are meant to cast the emperor as a second Alexander.[280] Bactra and Babylon in particular are typically associated with the Macedonian leader from Augustan poetry onwards.[281] The relevance of Alexander the Great as a model here has also been pointed out by Coleman. She proposes that 'by exhorting Domitian to conquer these territories, Statius is prophesying for him the role of a second Alexander.'[282] This suggestion can be supported and taken further with a few more details that highlight the importance of Alexander imagery for Domitian both in this poem and elsewhere in book 4 of the *Silvae*.

We recognise the occurrence of the East already at the very beginning of this poem (*Silv.* 4.1.1–4):

Laeta bis octonis accredit purpura fastis

Caesaris insignemque **aperit** Germanicus **annum**

atque **oritur** cum **sole novo**, cum grandibus astris,

clarius ipse nitens et primo maior **Eoo**.

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[280] Geyssen (1996) 118–20, who refers to Hor. *Carm.* 1.2.21–41, 1.12, 1.35.29–40, and 4.5.25–8. On imperial panegyric in Horace, see Doblhofer (1966).

[281] See e.g. Prop. 3.11.22ff. (Semiramis), Curt. 4.6.2, as well as Luc. 8.928ff. and 8.422–26 (discussed in relation to Alexander's campaigns by Coleman (1988) 78–9, and discussed in more detail on p. 106 below).

[282] Coleman (1988) 79.

Joyfully does Caesar's purple join the twice eight entries in the Calender and Germanicus inaugurate a banner year. He rises with the new sun and the stars in their grandeur, himself shining more brilliantly than they, greater than Eous.

Coleman remarks that *annum aperire* (*Silv.* 4.1.2) is used to indicate the consular opening of the new year elsewhere too. She also notes that the phrasing appears to have been used as a technical term referring to the cycle of the planets.[283] As such, the line anticipates the astronomical imagery in *Silv.* 4.1.3–4, which compares Domitian's assumption of office to the rising of the sun in the east.

Domitian's association with the ascending sun here is richly evocative. Most obviously, we may think of Nero's association with the sun and its importance in Neronian propaganda. The last Julio-Claudian emperor loved both chariot racing and music, and, according to Suetonius, nourished associations between himself, Apollo, and Sol.[284] He was even called *neos Helios*, the new sun god, in inscriptions, coins, and contemporary literature.[285] As Rebeggiani has recently suggested, then, Domitian rising *cum sole novo*, almost as if on a chariot, might well make us think of his predecessor Nero, especially when we consider these lines' evocation firstly of Apollo's address to Nero as the rising Sun in Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis* (*Apocol.* 4.1.25–32), and secondly of Lucan's famous depiction of Nero as a successful Phaethon in the proem to Lucan's *Civil War* (Luc. 1.45–50, see p. 91 above).[286] Since Nero ultimately turned out to be an unsuccessful Phaethon after all, we might wonder what the rising sun imagery here means for Domitian. Evoking this kind of imagery might therefore seem rather risky business, and it is. But when is writing panegyric *not* risky?

Yet the rising sun imagery not only evokes Nero, but also Domitian's more immediate predecessors and the founders of the Flavian dynasty, Vespasian and Titus. As discussed earlier (see p. 76), the Flavians originally rose to power in the East, when Vespasian's troops declared him emperor during the Judaean wars. The East played a significant role in the early years of the Flavian dynasty: despite being acclaimed emperor in 69 CE, Vespasian only left for Rome in the year 70 CE. Once his son Titus had arrived in Rome too, they were rewarded for their

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[283] Coleman (1988) 66.
[284] Suet. *Ner.* 53.1.8–10.
[285] Griffin (1984) 210, 216–8 provides a brief overview of scholarship and evidence. For an in-depth discussion of solar symbolism in Neronian discourse and Statius' skilful navigation of Domitian's relationship with Nero through the use of solar imagery, see Rebeggiani (2018) 93–122.
[286] Rebeggiani (2018) 98–9.

victories in the East with a triumphal procession in 71 CE, which started at the Temple of Isis of all places. The triumph and its associated visual propaganda was of paramount importance in establishing the legitimacy of the Flavians' rule.[287] For the Flavians' military conquests in the East posed a stark contrast to Nero's ineptness in this region and played a role in the justification of their rule. Just like the sun, therefore, the Flavian dynasty rose in the east, and the time has now come for Domitian to live up to his father's and brother's powerful (military) examples in this regard.

The first lines of *Silvae* 4.1 reassure us that Domitian too is a soldier-ruler: he is addressed as Germanicus, thus reminding us of his many victories in the north of the empire. Yet we have seen that the final lines of Janus' speech at the end of the poem explicitly encourage Domitian to also undertake some campaigns in the eastern parts of the world (*Silv*. 4.1.39–43). Domitian is to follow his father's and brother's footsteps – and the reference to Bactra and Babylon in these lines suggests that Domitian also is to succeed Alexander the Great.

I have already briefly discussed the issues that the figure of Alexander the Great evokes: the fraught relation between continuous conquest and the stability of the empire, and the problem of succession in relation to the stability of the empire. I now discuss the ending of *Silvae* 4.1 (verses 39–43, cited on p. 99 above) in more detail by bringing in two passages that also explore these issues and thereby inform our understanding of Janus' prophecy.

As discussed in my first chapter, in book 8 of the *Civil War*, Lucan describes Pompey the Great's proposition of a treaty with the Parthians and Lentulus' refusal thereof. Lucan depicts Pompey, a Roman general who styled himself after Alexander the Great anyway, as proposing an unusual way of engaging with the East, namely to ask the Parthians' help with Rome's civil war. By doing so, he causes a collapse of space between the centre of the Empire and the East that is contradictory to the Empire's logic of expansive becoming. Lentulus rightly points out the problematic aspects of Pompey's proposal in the following passage (Luc. 8.420–6):

> nam quod apud populos crimen socerique tuumque   420
> maius erit, quam quod vobis miscentibus arma
> Crassorum vindicta perit? incurrere cuncti
> debuerant **in Bactra** duces et, ne qua vacarent

[287] On the triumph and its route, see initially Makin (1921). Following Beard (2003), who calls the triumph the 'press night of the Flavian dynasty' (p. 548), Vasta (2007) discusses the Flavians' establishment of their dynasty's legitimacy by means of visual propaganda and the importance of the triumph in transforming the Flavians from usurpers of imperial power to an established Roman imperial dynasty.

arma, vel Arctoum Dacis Rhenique catervis

imperii nudare latus, dum perfida Susa   425

in tumulos prolapsa ducum **Babylon**que iaceret.

Among the peoples what greater reproach will there be against   420

your father-in-law and you than that, while you are joining battle,

vengeance of the Crassi disappears? All our leaders

should have launched an attack on Bactra and, to keep the troops anywhere

from idleness, should have exposed the northern quarter of the empire

to the Dacians and the squadrons of the Rhine, until deceitful Susa   425

and Babylon lay low, collapsed as tombs for the generals.

Lentulus here expands on the failure of the Romans to attack Bactria and to prioritise revenging Crassus over sending expeditions to the north of the empire. This contrast between northern military explorations and expeditions to the east also underlies *Silvae* 4.1. Statius' engagement with Lucan here, if we take it to be that, is admittedly implicit, but plausible. Bactra and Babylon feature in Janus' speech (*Silv.* 4.3.40) as well as in Lentulus' address to Pompey (Luc. 8.423, 426). Moreover, Lentulus' speech evokes the proem to Lucan's *Civil War*, where the poet-narrator reproaches the Romans for engaging in civil war when 'proud Babylon was there to be stripped of Ausonian / trophies and when Crassus wandered with his ghost unavenged' (*cumque superba foret **Babylon** spolianda tropaeis / Ausoniis umbraque erraret Crassus inulta*, Luc. 1.10–1). We have already seen that the opening of *Silv.* 4.1 with its rising sun imagery evoked Lucan's proem too (see p. 100 above), so this text may already be on the reader's mind. If we therefore think of Lucan's anxious representation of Pompey's engagement with the East in the *Civil War*, we may read Statius' evocation of Lucan's discourse here as emphasising Janus' exhortation of Domitian to now prioritise eastern conquests over his repetitive military expeditions to the north, and to succeed where his predecessors – including Pompey the Great and Nero, both of whom can be considered as Roman Alexanders – had failed.

The second text that informs our understanding of the final lines of Janus' speech in *Silvae* 4.1 is a passage from Curtius Rufus, who wrote *Histories of Alexander the Great*. Curtius' identity is traditionally contested, as is the date of composition of his *Histories of Alexander*

the Great, but we do know that Pliny, Tacitus, and Suetonius refer to Curtii Rufii.[288] Recently, scholars have argued that a mid to late 1st century date is at least plausible and even likely.[289] I tend to agree with this judgement, because, as Spencer points out, Curtius' work fits with contemporary Roman concerns with the nature of monarchy, power, and discourses of expanding empire.[290] So while I am aware of the uncertainty regarding Curtius' identity and dating, I here explore some potential interactions between Statius and Curtius Rufus.

The final passage of Curtius Rufus' *Histories of Alexander the Great* reads as follows (Curt. 10.20):

> Ceterum corpus eius a Ptolomaeo, cui Aegyptus cesserat, Memphim et inde, paucis post **annis**, Alexandriam translatum est, **omnisque** memoriae ac **nomini honos habetur.**

> But Ptolemy, under whose control Egypt had come, transported the king's body to Memphis, and from there a few years later to Alexandria, where every honour was paid to his memory and his name.

Curtius' passage highlights Alexander's everlasting fame, which is tied to his memory and to his name – and which is handled by one of his successors. In *Silvae* 4.1, Janus prophesies Domitian's fame in similar phrasing (*Silv*. 4.1.42–3):

> nondum Arabes Seresque rogant, nondum **omnis honorem**
>
> **annus habet**, cupiuntque decem tua **nomina** menses.

> Nor yet do Arabs and Seres make petition, not yet does all the year have its honour, months still crave your name.

Respect is to be paid to Domitian, whose name is to be given to even more months of the year. The first Roman to have a month named after him, a divine honour, was Julius Caesar.

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[288] Plin. *Ep*. 8.27, Tac. *Ann*. 11.20–1, Suet. *Gram. et. rhet.* (*grammatici item rhetores*).

[289] Spencer (2002) 80–2. Baynham (1998) 7–14, 201–19 provides an overview of scholarship on Curtius Rufus' dating, and concludes that Curtius' laudation of a certain emperor as a *novum sidus* (Curt. 10.9) is likely to refer to Vespasian. Recently, see Power (2013), arguing for publication of Curtius' work under Vespasian, and Pastor (2018), who wishes to destabilise the use of the phrase *novum sidus* as an argument for Curtius' work as necessarily Vespasian.

[290] Spencer (2002) 80–2.

Following Augustus' subsequent success in this regard, emperors repeatedly attempted to follow or precede this sequence, often erasing each other's names in the process.[291] Domitian had already had September and October named after him, but evidently he is to surpass his predecessors in this area too.[292] Since Curtius' passage specifically deals with the use and appropriation of Alexander's fame, imagery, and memory by one of his successors, we might see Statius' engagement with Curtius here in a similar vein: we have seen many failed Roman Alexanders already who tried to imitate and use Alexander's name and fame, from Pompey and Mark Antony onwards. Perhaps, through evoking this passage, Statius is suggesting that he knows that he is engaging with an incredibly loaded model that has already been followed by a number of failed successors, while simultaneously suggesting that Domitian will be a successful Alexander: a better Alexander than (Lucan's) Pompey and Nero, and at least as much of a successful Alexander as Vespasian and Titus had been. At the same time, this draws our attention to the fact that it is Statius who is contributing to Domitian's fame here.

The importance of Alexander as a model for Domitian in this poem, and in the rest of *Silvae* 4, is brought home by Statius' address to the emperor in *Silv.* 4.1.46 as *rex magne*, 'great king':

> tunc omnes patuere dei laetoque dederunt   45
>
> signa polo, longamque tibi, **rex magne**, iuventam
>
> adnuit atque suos promisit Iuppiter annos.

> Then all the gods opened wide and gave signs in a joyful heaven, and Jupiter accorded you, great king, a long youth and promised years as many as his own.

Scholars have frowned upon this address, wondering about the connotations of *rex*, a loaded word to use in reference to a Roman emperor. Should the punctuation be changed, so that *rex* goes with *Iuppiter*? Are there textual issues here, and should we read *dux* instead?[293] However, Virgil has Venus address Jupiter as *rex magne* in the *Aeneid* (Verg. *Aen.* 1.240). Moreover, this emphasis on the noun *rex* has drawn attention away from its modifying adjective, *magne*. The

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[291] Coleman (1988) 80 briefly discusses the renaming of months by Julio-Claudian emperors.

[292] See Heslin (2007), (2019) on Domitian's restoration of the solar meridian initially set up by Augustus, after which Domitian claimed the same honour as the first Julio-Claudian emperor, that is, naming a month after himself.

[293] Coleman (1988) 81–2 gives a succinct overview of different approaches to *rex magne*, concluding that, throughout the poem, Statius has set up a situation in which Domitian's address as *rex* here is not out of line.

address therefore works to (further) equate Domitian to Jupiter, and nods at and evokes Alexander, the great king.

But although Statius' Janus encourages Domitian to go east now that he has successfully gone north several times, Domitian does not actually go east. Instead, he brings the East to the heart of the Empire – in *Silvae* 4.3. At this point, it should be noted that the pair of Bactra and Babylon feature in one of Statius' earlier *Silvae* too. In *Silvae* 3.2, Statius says farewell to Maecius Celer, who is headed to the eastern parts of the Empire. Upon Celer's return, Statius fantasises, Celer will tell him all about his adventures (another way of bringing the East to Rome): *tu rapidum Euphraten et regia **Bactra** sacrasque / antiquae **Babylonis** opes et Zeu⟨g⟩ma, **Latinae** / **pacis iter***, 'you [will tell me of] swift Euphrates and royal Bactra and the sacred wealth of ancient Babylon and Zeugma, highway of Latian peace' (*Silv*. 3.2.126–8). Putnam discusses the relevance of Alexander the Great for this passage (and the poem more generally), noting that the reference to Zeugma brings to mind 'Rome's conquering of so much of the near East and of the need for military wherewithal and political wisdom to maintain the resultant control.'[294] Thus, perhaps Statius' reference to Bactra and Babylon in *Silvae* 4.1 anticipates another *Latinae pacis iter*: the Via Domitiana.

Constructing the East in Campania

We have already seen that there are many layers to Campania in *Silvae* 4.3. In this section, I explore another version of Campania that we can detect in this poem. I suggest that, throughout this poem, Statius also depicts the construction work in Campania as surpassing the efforts of Alexander in the East. On a general level, Domitian's speedy construction of the Via Domitiana is reminiscent of Alexander's notorious speed in military engagements. But more specific associations between the emperor and the Macedonian leader can be recognised too. The descriptions of Domitian's engineering work in Campania evoke similar construction projects encountered by Alexander the Great and his troops in Curtius Rufus' East. We start with the beginning of the road construction (*Silv*. 4.3.40–2):

> hic primus labor incohare sulcos   40
> et rescindere limites et **alto**
> **egestu penitus** cavare terras; …

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[294] Putnam (2017) *passim*, but especially p. 132.

The first task here was to start on furrows and cut out borders and hollow out the earth far down with a deep excavation.

Hollowing out the earth to lay foundations for a road was necessary in an area as swampy in this part of Campania, where the muddy Volturnus river often flooded the fields (I noted the passage's use of agriculture language on p. 82 above). In Curtius Rufus' *Histories*, we find a few rivers having similar problems. The streams of the famous Euphrates, for example, are very muddy, which makes the stone bridge over the river one of the miracles of the East (Curt. 5.1.29):

> Pons lapideus flumini inpositus iungit urbem. Hic quoque inter mirabilia Orientis opera numeratus est: quippe Euphrates **altum limum** vehit, quo **penitus** ad fundamenta iacienda **egesto**, vix suffulciendo operi firmum reppererunt solum.

> The two parts of the city are connected by a stone bridge over the river, and this is also reckoned among the wonders of the East. For the Euphrates carries along with it a thick layer of mud and, even after digging this out to a great depth to lay the foundations, they could hardly find a solid base for supporting a structure.

Likewise, the river Oxus has problems comparable to those of the Volturnus. It is turbid and laden with mud (Curt. 7.10.13–4):

> Hic, quia limum vehit, **turbidus** semper, **insalubris** est potui. [14] Itaque puteos miles coeperat fodere, nec tamen humo **alte egesta** existebat humor.

> This [the river Oxus] is invariably dirty because of its silt content, and it is unhealthy as drinking water, [14] so the men had proceeded to dig wells. However, no water was forthcoming, although they dug down deep in the earth.

Both situations required digging as a potential solution, but ultimately, the problems were not actively dealt with by Alexander and his troops. The bridge over the Euphrates existed already: it was supposedly built by the legendary Semiramis, as Propertius describes in *Elegy* 3.11.[295]

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[295] Prop. 3.11.25: 'And she [Semiramis] channelled the Euphrates through the middle of the citadel she founded.'

Moreover, the lack of proper drinking water near the Oxus is solved by the miraculous appearance of a source (Curt. 7.10.14), not through the efforts of Alexander or his soldiers. This causes us to question if Campania's swampiness can in fact be mitigated through Domitian's construction work, however awe-inspiring it may be. The completion of the road works and the appearance of the river god Volturnus as a spokesperson of the Campanian landscape answer this question.

In his speech of thanksgiving to Domitian, Volturnus proclaims that he has been suffering from the same issues that the Euphrates and Oxus had been experiencing in Curtius' *Histories*, and he thanks Domitian for solving them (*Silv*. 4.3.72–8, 86–9):

> 'camporum bone conditor meorum,
> qui me, vallibus aviis refusum
> et ripas habitare nescientem,
> **recti** legibus **alvei** ligasti.   75
> et nunc ille ego **turbidus** minaxque,
> vix passus dubias prius carinas,
> iam **pontem fero** perviusque calcor;
> ...
> nec sordere sinis malumque late   86
> deterges sterilis soli pudorem,
> ne **me pulvereum gravemque caeno**
> Tyrrheni sinus obruat profundi, ...

> 'Kind orderer of my plains, who bound me in the law of a straight channel when I spread over distant valleys nor knew to keep my limits, see, now I, the turbulent bully, that in time past barely tolerated imperiled barks, I bear a bridge and am tramped by crossing feet.
> …
> Nor [do you] let me lie in squalor, and [you] broadly wipe away the sorry shame of barren soil, so that the gulf of the Tyrrhene sea does not bury my sandy, mud-heavy current, …

No longer does the Volturnus have to cope with floods, no longer is he turbulent and muddy (*turbidus*, *Silv*. 4.3.76; *me pulvereum gravemque caeno*, *Silv*. 4.3.88): he is now easily and

happily crossed via a bridge (*pontem fero*, *Silv.* 4.3.78). In other words, Domitian has successfully fixed problems similar to those encountered – but not fixed – by Alexander the Great in the East. We could even see the Volturnus as superior to the greatest of all the rivers of the East, the Ganges (Curt. 8.9.5):

> Ganges, omnium ab Oriente fluvius maximus, a⟨d⟩ meridiana⟨m⟩ regione⟨m⟩ decurrit et magnorum montium iuga **recto alveo** stringit; in⟨de⟩ eum obiectae rupes inclinant ad orientem.

> The Ganges, greatest of all the rivers of the East, flows in a southerly direction and, taking a direct route, skirts the great mountain ranges, after which it is diverted eastward by some rocky mountains which bar its course.

Just as the Ganges, the Volturnus now takes a direct route (*recti alvei*, *Silv.* 4.3.75),[296] but unlike the Ganges, the Volturnus is not diverted or barred by natural features. Instead, he challenges the sea and his neighbouring rivers with his streams (*Silv.* 4.3.93–4).

As a consequence of the construction of the emperor's new road, travel becomes a lot easier for the peoples of the Roman Empire, as Statius specifies (*Silv.* 4.3.107–10):

ergo omnes, age, quae sub axe primo	107
Romani colitis fidem parentis,	
prono limite commeate, gentes,	
Eoae, citius venite, laurus.	110

> So come, all you peoples beneath the oriental sky who owe allegiance to our Father in Rome, flock hither by an easy route, and, you laurels of the east, come faster.

I mentioned earlier that this image of eastern peoples travelling to Rome is in tension with the Roman Empire's traditionally expansive logic of becoming: it collapses space between the centre of the Empire and the East in a way that is counterintuitive (see p. 86). Yet Statius here

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[296] Otherwise, this combination of words only features in Pomponius Mela 3.38.2, where it describes the shape of the Caspian Sea (*recto alveo*) before it breaks up into three bays.

frames this collapse of space as a positive development: it will now be easier for eastern peoples to swear allegiance to the emperor. This positivity, I suggest, is supported by the following passage from Curtius Rufus, in which Alexander addresses foreign soldiers that have now become part of his forces (Curt. 10.3.9):

> Luxu omni[a] fluere credideram et nimia felicitate mergi in voluptates: at, hercules, munia militiae hoc animorum corporumque robore aeque inpigre toleratis et, cum fortes viri sitis, non fortitudinem magis quam **fidem colitis.**

> I had believed everything here to be swamped in luxury and, through excessive prosperity, submerged in self-indulgence. But, in fact, your moral and physical strength makes you just as energetic as anyone in the performance of your military duties; and yet, brave men though you are, your dedication to loyalty is no less than your dedication to courage.

Upon misbehaviour of his own Macedonian soldiers, Alexander tactically addresses his foreign troops with this speech, in which he claims that his preconceptions about the East are not founded in reality. Instead, these eastern peoples are no different than his Macedonian forces: 'those who are to live under the same king should enjoy the same rights', he continues to say (Curt. 10.3.14). This is a complex passage, because it takes place at the end of Alexander's story, when he has repeatedly lapsed into excessive behaviours. We might therefore wonder if this speech with its admiration of eastern peoples is to be read as an indication of Alexander's corruption.

On the other hand, the speech testifies to Alexander's strategic skills as a military leader, maintaining control over his large and by now diverse troops. That his troops, both Macedonian and Persian, still love him becomes clear in the two next chapters, when Alexander dies and Curtius describes how both peoples were indistinguishable in their grief.[297] Moreover, in his final assessment of Alexander the Great that immediately follows this passage, Curtius judges Alexander favourably overall.[298] I therefore tentatively suggest that Statius takes Curtius' idea

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[297] Curt. 10.4–5, especially 10.5.9.

[298] Curt. 10.5.26–37, in which Alexander's success is ascribed to his own qualities as well as to Fortune. Moreover, the author points out that Fortuna 'decided that his life and glory should have the same end' (*Vitae quoque finem eundem illi quem gloriae statuit*, Curt. 10.5.36), since he only died after he had reached the end of the world. Domitian surpasses this notion: his rule, just as his road, will be eternal (*Silv.* 4.3.160–3).

of the inclusion of fiercely loyal eastern peoples and that he improves on it by framing Rome's improved accessibility for easterners as a positive development. Domitian does not have to go East and fight endless wars. Instead, foreign peoples will come to him and to Rome in allegiance. This idea is in line with my earlier suggestion that Statius may be depicting Domitian here as another Euhemeric Jupiter, expanding the Empire by means of *amicitia* instead of war (see p. 87 above). While the opening up of Italy to the East therefore carries dangerous and loaded associations, it also reinforces Domitian's depiction as a skilful leader. In other words, Domitian can resemble a potentially problematic model such as Alexander the Great, but he proves himself capable of not making the same mistakes.

The Sibyl's prophecy continues the idea of Domitian as an unprecedented ruler who will be able to explore the world in a fashion similar to – or better than – Alexander the Great. Earlier, I discussed the relation between Statius' Sibyl and that of Virgil, pointing out how Statius' Sibyl diverges from her epic predecessors not only in terms of metre, but also in the tone of her prophecy (see pp. 87ff. above). We might also consider another epic Sibyl here, namely that of Silius Italicus. While we cannot be certain about potential directions of interactions between the two authors, there are parallels between *Silvae* 4.3 and Silius' Sibyl in the *Punica*, and both texts can be read together, as van der Keur has shown.[299]

In book 13 of the *Punica*, Scipio Africanus wishes to soothe his sorrows about the deaths of his father and uncle by speaking to their shades. Finding himself in the (swampy) area, he consults Apollo's priestess in Cumae, Autonoe, who helps him to summon the shade of the Sibyl as well as a cast of other characters.[300] Silius' Sibyl prophecies Scipio's future in a speech similar to the prophecy of Statius' Sibyl for Domitian: both had foretold the coming of their addressee prior to his arrival, and both predict his successes in life.[301] We saw earlier that Statius' Sibyl draws on Augustan panegyric, and on Anchises' laudation of Augustus – evocative of panegyric for Alexander the Great – in particular. Silius' Sibyl also takes on

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[299] See Augoustakis (2010b) 6–10, Lovatt (2010), Soerink (2013), van der Keur (2015) 477 for recent discussions of the relation between Statius and Silius Italicus, and the difficult, sometimes impossible, task of determining directions of interactions between the two authors. Van der Keur suggests that we should consider mutual influence as a real possibility. In his discussion of the *Silvae*, he considers it more likely that Statius would allude to the *Punica* than vice versa (p. 482). In fact, Statius might even be inviting comparison with the *Punica* in *Silv.* 4.3, for which see van der Keur (2015) 484–5.

[300] Sil. *Pun.* 13.381–895. Scipio is depicted as actively being encouraged by the area's swamps to go to Cumae and speak to the Sibyl (*Pun.* 13.397–400): *hortatur vicina palus, ubi signat Averni / squalentem introitum stagnans Acherusius umor. / noscere venturos agitat mens protinus annos. / Sic ad Cymaeam*, 'He was encouraged by the nearness of that swamp, where the stagnant water of Acheron marks the unsightly descent to Avernus. He was eager to learn at once the secrets of the future. Thus [young Scipio bent his steps] to Cumae.'

[301] Cf. Sil. *Pun.* 494–516 with van der Keur (2015) 483–6 on parallels with Stat. *Silv.* 4.3.

Anchises' role when she introduces Scipio to the shades of notable past men. This includes Alexander the Great, who is introduced by the Sibyl as follows (*Pun*. 13.763–6):

> '**hic ille est**, tellure **vagus** qui **victor** in omni
> cursu signa tulit, cui **pervia Bactra** Dahaeque,
> qui **Gangen** bibit et Pellaeo **ponte Niphaten**   765
> **adstrinxit**, cui stant sacro sua moenia Nilo.'

> 'That is he, who ranged in arms over every land, who found a way through Bactra and the Dahae, and drank of the Ganges – the Macedonian who threw a bridge over the Niphates, and whose city, named after himself, stands on the sacred Nile.'

Here we recognise parallels between Alexander's activities in the East and Domitian's construction work in Campania: *victor* (*Pun*. 13.763), *pervia* (*Pun*. 13.764), and *ponte Niphaten astrinxit* (*Pun*. 13.765–6) are similar to Volturnus' eulogy of Domitian as *victor* (*Silv*. 4.3.84), when he thanks the emperor for the bridge he now carries (*pontem fero perviusque calcor*, *Silv*. 4.3.78).[302]

More generally, the Sibyl here draws on the same Virgilian passage as Statius' Sibyl did in her prophecy (*Silv*. 4.3.128, 153–7). Domitian and Alexander are introduced in the same terms as Augustus in the *Aeneid*, for example, and both roam the very boundaries of the world, even more so than Hercules.[303] Alexander, then, is based on Virgil's Augustus, and notably Alexander functions as a role model for Scipio too. For Scipio is interested in everlasting and undisputed fame (*gloria ... indubitata*, *Pun*. 13.768–9) and asks Alexander for ways to acquire this. In his response, Alexander emphasises the importance of boldness and speed in any undertaking.[304] By following Alexander's advice, Scipio will not only be able to acquire fame,

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[302] van der Keur (2015) 415. Both may be following Verg. *Aen*. 8.728: *pontem indignatus Araxes*, 'Araxes chafing at his bridge', on Aeneas' shield.

[303] van der Keur (2015) 414. Respectively: *en! hic deus est* (Stat. *Silv*. 4.3.128), *hic ille est* (Sil. *Pun*. 13.763), and *hic vir, hic est* (Verg. *Aen*. 6.791). Domitian is compared to Virgil's roaming Hercules (*vagus Hercules*, Stat. *Silv*. 4.3.155 and Verg. *Aen*. 6.801) when Alexander himself is depicted as a *victor*, *tellure vagus* (Sil. *Pun*. 13.763).

[304] *Pun*. 13.772–5: *ille sub haec: 'turpis lenti sollertia Martis. / audendo bella expedias. pigra extulit artis / haud umquam sese virtus. tu magna gerendi / praecipita tempus. mors atra impendet agenti*', 'Alexander made answer: "Cunning and caution disgrace a general. Boldness is the way to win a war. Valour without speed has never risen triumphant over danger. When there is great work to be done, do it instantly; dark death hovers over your head while you are acting."'

but his defeat of Carthage in the Punic Wars will also establish the dominance of Rome in the Mediterranean.

Notably, Silius' Scipio is often read as a *proto-princeps* and as a paradigm for Domitian.[305] This makes his *imitatio Alexandri* all the more interesting, especially when we consider Jupiter's prophetic address to Domitian in *Punica* 3.607–29.[306] Following Domitian's victories in the north, the east now awaits him, and Domitian shall even surpass Bacchus in this regard (*Pun*. 3.612–5):

> huic laxos arcus olim **Gangetica** pubes
> summittet vacuasque ostendent **Bactra** pharetras.
> hic et ab **Arctoo currus** aget axe per urbem,
> ducet et **Eoos Baccho** cedente **triumphos**.   615

> The people of the Ganges shall one day lower their unbent bows before him, and Bactra display its empty quivers. He shall drive the triumphal car through Rome after conquering the North; he shall triumph over the East, and Bacchus give place to him.

The Ganges and Bactra also feature in the Sibyl's introduction of Alexander in *Punica* 13, and so it becomes clear that Domitian will follow Alexander's footsteps – and that he presumably will also heed Alexander's advice to be swift in his undertakings. But we can also recognise parallels between Jupiter's address to Domitian in the *Punica* and *Silvae* 4.1 and 4.3. In *Silvae* 4.1, Domitian rose with the sun, brighter than the morning star (*prima maior Eoo*, *Silv*. 4.1.4), and Bactra and triumphs await him (*tantum permitte **triumphos**. restat **Bactra** novis*, *Silv*. 4.1.39–40). Moreover, following the undeniably speedy construction of the Via Domitiana in an eastern Campania, the Sibyl makes a prophecy similar to that of the *Punica*'s Jupiter (*Silv*. 4.3.153–9):

> iuravit tibi iam nivalis **Arctus**,
> nunc magnos **Oriens** dabit **triumphos**.
> ibis qua vagus Hercules et **Euhan**   155
> ultra sidera flammeumque solem

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[305] Marks (2005) 242–4, 269ff., Stürner (2008), van der Keur (2015) especially xxxix–xli, 452–7.
[306] van der Keur (2015) 455 notes the juxtaposition of Scipio and Domitian here.

et Nili caput et nives Atlantis,

et laudum cumulo beatus omni

scandes belliger abnuesque **currus**, …

Already the snowy north has sworn you fealty; now the east shall give you great triumphs. You shall go where Hercules and Euhan wandered, beyond stars and flaming sun and Nile's fount and Atlas' snows. Warrior blessed with every pile of glory you shall ascend chariots and refuse them, …

Clearly, Domitian is to follow not only Bacchus and Hercules' footsteps, but those of Alexander too. All in all, then, we recognise a nexus of connections between Alexander the Great, Scipio, Augustus, and Domitian, in which Statius and Silius both participate.

When we take into consideration the emphasis on Domitian's apotheosis in both the *Punica* and *Silvae* 4.3,[307] the association between Scipio Africanus and Domitian may be pushed even further. During his life, Scipio was admired already, for example by Ennius, who wrote in praise of Scipio.[308] In addition to a work on Scipio, this includes epigrams too, namely Enn. *Var*. 19–20 V. (= Courtney (1993) fr. 43 = Cic. *Leg*. 2.57 and Sen. *Ep*. 108.33):[309]

hic est ille situs cui nemo civis neque hostis

quivit pro factis reddere opis pretium.

Here lies the man to whom no one, fellow country-man or foe, will be able to render for his pains a recompense fitting his services.

and Enn. *Var*. 21–4 V. (= Courtney (1993) fr. 44 = Cic. *Tusc*. 5.49):

a sole exoriente supra Maeotis **paludes**

…

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[307] Sil. *Pun*. 3.611 (Jupiter): *nam te longa manent nostri consortia mundi*, 'for in the distant future you will share with me the kingdom of the sky.'

[308] Winiarczyk (2013) 112–4 discusses the potential literary forms of this work with references to relevant scholarship. After his death, Scipio quickly became legendary, not unlike Alexander the Great, for which see Winiarczyk (2013) 110–2.

[309] On these fragments, see also the commentary by Russo (2007) 210–7.

> nemo est qui factis aequiperare queat.
>
> si **fas** endo plagas caelestum ascendere cuiquam est,
>
> > mi soli caeli maxima porta patet.

> From the rising of the sun and beyond the swamps of Maeotis
>
> …
>
> there is nobody who could match my [Scipio's] deeds. If it is right for anyone to go up into the region of heaven's dwellers, for me alone heaven's great gate lies open.

In these epigrams, we recognise the notion of apotheosis as a reward for world conquest and euergetism. In fact, scholars have pointed out that these epigrams and other Ennian encomiastic fragments on Scipio show parallels both with Hellenistic court epigram and with Ennius' translation of Euhemerus.[310] We have already seen that Ennius' *Euhemerus* played an important role in developing the notion of apotheosis in late Republican and early imperial Rome (see p. 70 above). Notably, Anchises introduces Augustus in terms reminiscent of Ennius' epigram on Scipio (compare *hic est ille*, Enn. *Var*. 19 V., with *hic vir, hic est*, Verg. *Aen*. 6.791), and we have seen that both Silius Italicus and Statius interact with this phrasing in their introductions of respectively the immortal Alexander and the deified Domitian too (see p. 111 n. 303). It is tempting, then, to see parallels here between Scipio Africanus and Domitian. Just as Scipio, Domitian – and his fame and legitimacy – rose with the sun (***oritur cum sole novo***, *Silv*. 4.1.3). Nobody could possibly match Domitian's deeds, not anywhere, whether in Campania or on the (eastern) edges of the world. Surely, then, it should be *fas* for Domitian too to ascend to heaven (*hic est deus*, *Silv*. 4.3.128). Finally, another honour for Scipio, as predicted in Ennius' work on Scipio, is applicable to Domitian too (Enn. *Var*. 1 V. = Courtney (1993) fr. 30 = *SHA* 25.7.7):

> Quantam statuam faciet populus Romanus, quantam
>
> **columnam**, quae **res tuas gestas** loquatur.

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[310] Bosworth (1999) 5–6, Winiarczyk (2013) 109–22. See also Morelli (2007) 526–30 on Ennius' relation to Hellenistic court epigram, here combined with Euhemeric apotheosis: Skutsch (1985) 148 suggested that Enn. *Var*. 21–4 V. = Courtney (1993) fr. 44 was modelled after *Anth. Pal.* 9.518, an epigram by Alcaeus of Messene in praise of Philip V of Macedon.

How great a statue the Roman people will make, how great a column to speak of your deeds.

Statius has provided Domitian both with a statue (*Silv*. 4.1) as well as with a great column that speaks of his *res gestae*: the *Via Domitiana*.

A Meeting-Up of Stories in Campania

We have seen that *Silvae* 4.3 tells many stories. In his multi-generic depiction of the construction and completion of the Via Domitiana, Statius evokes a range of tales, memories, and texts, from the mythical explorations of Bacchus and Hercules, Alexander the Great's campaigns in the East, and the Punic Wars to satiric journeys and Julio-Claudian construction work in Campania. As such, many different stories are brought together in the narrow space of the *Via Domitiana*: thus, this is truly a 'simultaneity of stories-so-far', to borrow Massey's phrase.[311]

If we look at Statius' Campania in *Silvae* 4.3 as such a meeting-up of stories, it becomes clear that Statius conceptualises this particular space as a hegemonic and static surface waiting for Domitian to arrive. Most obviously, we have seen that the Sibyl refers to her prophecy that Domitian would come to Campania and improve its swampiness (*Silv*. 4.3.124–7). While never actually depicting Domitian's arrival itself, Statius indirectly represents the emperor as conquering this space by taming its wild and transgressive nature through ordering its problems, stories, and histories in a particular way, that is, as teleologically leading towards its ultimate goal: Domitian's reorganisation and improvement of this problematic landscape, so that it functions more smoothly as part of the Roman Empire. After all, now foreign peoples can easily come to Rome and swear allegiance to the Emperor.

I have demonstrated that the poem's particular evocation and (re)arrangement of stories is rooted in a wider discourse on the legitimation of rulership and apotheosis as a reward for euergetism and world conquest, and that, according to Statius' poem, Domitian's construction of the Via Domitiana makes him a prime candidate for deification. In the first part of this chapter, I explored how Statius engages with specifically Campanian aspects and memories in order to construct an explicitly Domitianic Campania in praise of the emperor. At the same time, by constructing an East in this poetic Campania, as discussed in the second part of my

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[311] Massey (2005) 32: see pp. 19ff. of the introduction to this thesis.

chapter, Statius opens up a new playing field for Domitian to prove that he is also equal to and perhaps even better than Alexander the Great – without actually having to go east himself. To a Roman mind, this conflation of West and East perhaps seems a shocking collapse of space that is contradictory to the Empire's logic of expansive becoming. Yet it is precisely the fusion of these opposites that enables Statius to confirm and praise the legitimation of Domitian's rulership and the stability of his Empire as it continues to expand. And it is Campania's ambiguous nature as a space between Romanness and Greekness and as a space of transgression and contradictions more generally that facilitates this fusion.

Clearly, then, Statius shows enormous poetic skill in this poem. His expert navigation of many genres and stories is embedded in a range of discourses beyond panegyric. Statius' layering of stories enables him to construct a distinct imperial persona for Domitian that establishes his continued legitimacy and suitability for rulership. It is therefore instructive to think about the interrelation that characterises this poetic space: the relation between Statius as (Campanian) poet and Domitian as emperor. For while Domitian is the one who constructs this road and who is depicted as such, it is ultimately Statius who rewrites this landscape and orders its stories and histories in a specific way. In other words, Domitian's *gloria* and impending apotheosis are inextricably linked with the poet's work.

Here we might think of Silius Italicus' laudation of Homer in the *Punica*, where the poet's shade appears immediately after Alexander the Great has finished speaking. Silius' Sibyl reminds Scipio that Homer should be thought of as divine for revealing Achilles to the world and making him greater through his poetry.[312] Statius reminds Domitian of the power of poetry too, for, in a metapoetic move, he ties the permanence of his *Via Domitiana* to the duration of Domitian's rule on earth (*haec donec via te regente terras / annosa magis Appia senescat*, 'until this road grows older than ancient Appia, while you rule the earth', *Silv*. 4.3.161–2). If Domitian truly is an *alter Alexander*, then, he should be able to recognise and appreciate the power of his image as created by his personal Lysippus: Statius.[313]

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[312] Sil. *Pun*. 13.778–97, especially 786: *meruit deus esse videri*, 'he deserved to seem divine', and 796–7: *felix Aeacide, cui tali contigit ore / gentibus ostendi! crevit tua carmine virtus*, 'How fortunate was Achilles, when such a poet displayed him to the world! The hero was made greater by the poet's verse.'

[313] Perhaps we could also think of Statius as the Ennius to Domitian's Scipio. Through his poetry, Ennius contributed to the political prestige of the Scipiones. After his death, a statue of Ennius was believed to have rested in the tomb of the Scipiones (Cic. *Arch*. 22), an illustration of the reciprocity between poet and patron: see Martelli (2018).

In conclusion, poem 4.3 of the *Silvae* links the power of the poet to that of the emperor: Domitian's versatility as an emperor is connected to Statius' versatility as a poet.[314] We can now answer the question that literary critics posed Callimachus when questioning his generic diversity: 'how far dare you go?' (τεῦ μέχρι τολμᾷς; Callim. *Ia.* fr. 203.19). Statius dares to go the distance.

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[314] On such reciprocal legitimation between poet and patron in the Flavian age, see Nauta (2002), Zeiner (2005), Bessone and Fucecchi (2017a) 7.

Chapter 3

Home Away From Rome?

Weathering the Apocalypse in Seneca's *Agamemnon*

Introduction

'What joy – to return!' (*libet reverti*, *Ag*. 12), exclaims the ghost of Thyestes in the prologue of Seneca's *Agamemnon*. Having left the depths of the underworld, he has arrived at the threshold of his former family home in Argos/Mycenae to foretell Agamemnon's disastrous homecoming from Troy.[315] Yet Thyestes shivers at his presence in the world of the living and his task there. He would rather go back to the underworld, and – perhaps surprisingly – *that* is the return Thyestes' exclamation refers to, rather than his homecoming to his family's residence in the world of the living.

Thyestes' appearance sets up the action and thematic focus of the play on several levels. Most obviously, he explicitly announces Agamemnon's homecoming (*Ag*. 37–52). At the same time, Thyestes' act of travelling across worlds to come 'home' to a place where he does not fit in anymore, alongside his reflections on his misplacedness in his former home community,[316] make us question what homecoming will mean in this play. Just like Thyestes, Agamemnon is about to return to his family home after spending many years elsewhere. But what if, just as Thyestes' homecoming, which emphasises displacement rather than joy and belonging, Agamemnon's homecoming is not what we expect it to be?

In this chapter, I show how Seneca reconceptualises the genre of tragedy to encourage Stoic moral development in ways that address all spectators, not just students of Stoicism, and in ways that are informed by and designed to encourage the endurance of extreme and uncertain contemporary circumstances. I do so by examining the *Agamemnon*'s exploration of the idea of homecoming. Crucial to recognising and understanding Seneca's exploration of homecoming in the *Agamemnon* is Eurybates' messenger speech, set in the very middle of the play (*Ag*. 421–578).

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[315] Seneca calls Agamemnon's home community both Argos and Mycenae. Boyle (2019) 174–5 notes that Seneca conflates the cities throughout this play, and explains how each name comes with its own associations. Throughout this chapter, I refer to the city as Argos for brevity's sake, commenting on the chosen name only when it is directly relevant to my argument.

[316] See *Ag*. 1–4: 'Leaving the dark dens of infernal Dis / I'm here, discharged from Tartarus' deep cave, / unsure which place to hate more. I flee hell, / I put this world to flight – I, Thyestes.'

In the messenger speech, Eurybates describes the Greek fleet's troublesome journey back from Troy. This journey is characterised by a gigantic sea storm, which applies the displacement that defined Thyestes' return to Argos at the beginning of the play both to the geographic location of the Greek fleet and to the very fabric of the world itself, so that the sea storm becomes an apocalyptic event. Seneca underlines the apocalyptic features of the tempest by intricately conflating a range of genres and discourses. While the resulting extensive rhetoricity of Eurybates' messenger speech and its supposed (ir)relevance to the play's dramatic action have been criticised in the past,[317] the speech is in fact thoroughly integrated in the language, action, and thematic structure of the play,[318] and is key to understanding the *Agamemnon*'s exploration of homecoming.

Fundamental to my approach to Seneca's *Agamemnon*, therefore, are the literary, multi-generic construction of its dramatic world and the notion of Stoic critical spectatorship. It has been widely recognised that Senecan drama represents markedly verbal drama: through their self-referential focus on spectacle, the tragedies point to themselves as verbal and performative constructs.[319] This emphasis on the verbal matches the importance of language within Seneca's Stoicism more generally as a tool to construct, express, and command the self, and to explore the place of the self in the cosmos.[320] Notably, this practice was often expressed through theatrical language and imagery.[321] Thus, the verbal spectacle of Senecan drama should not be seen as self-indulgent elaborate rhetoricity, but rather as a key manner in which Seneca

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[317] See Pratt (1983) 113 and Tarrant (1976) 249 ('comprehensive but uninspired manipulation of familiar topics'). See also Morford (1967) 22, who notes that, while sea storms are part of the furniture of epic, the 1st century CE produced 'nothing greater than a Seneca or a Lucan'.

[318] Boyle (2019) 289. For example, some have pointed out that the speech's big sea storm reflects the emotional storm raging in Clytemnestra: see Shelton (1983) 168–9, Littlewood (2004) 65. These approaches build on Segal (1983), (1986), who views the landscapes of the characters' selves as directly related to the landscapes of their dramatic worlds.

[319] See e.g. Boyle (2006) 208–10.

[320] On the construction of the self in Seneca's work through language, see Fitch and McElduff (2002), Littlewood (2004), Star (2012), and the volume edited by Bartsch and Wray (2009).

[321] Theatrical language and imagery play an important role in Seneca's discussion of the practice of Stoic ethics: Seneca regularly employs the metaphor of role-playing and self-display, which is judged by the assessing gaze of the internal self and/or that of an idealised other in order to encourage self-improvement through (Stoically) correct behaviour – that is, behaviour in line with Stoic values, as opposed to behaviour motivated by the pursuit of so-called external matters, such as material wealth and socio-political prestige. As Boyle (2019) xx n. 14 summarises: 'Seneca's philosophical mode is essentially theatrical.' See e.g. *Tranq.* 17.1, *Ep.* 94.69. On metatheatre and the metaphor of role-playing in Seneca's works, see Curley (1986), Boyle (1997), Erasmo (2004) 122–39, Littlewood (2004) 172–258, Bartsch (2006) 182–229, Star (2012), Gunderson (2015) 105. On the theatricality of contemporary Rome, see especially Bartsch (1994), Boyle (2006) 160–88.

explores and conveys matters relating to the construction of the self and the place of the self in the world. As such, it is important to critically read and spectate Seneca's plays.

In my understanding of critical spectatorship, I follow Nussbaum and, more recently, Wagoner, who emphasise respectively that 'the Stoics hope to form a spectator who is vigilant rather than impressionable, actively judging rather than immersed, critical rather than trustful', and that the act of reading can help one achieve moral improvement.[322] In practice, this means examining Seneca's engagement with other texts, employing retrospective reading techniques, and rereading the play.[323] Doing so will reward a Stoic spectator with the opportunity to recognise and contemplate the plays' main themes, not only in relation to the stories of the plays themselves, but also in relation to the way they live their lives. But, as I will demonstrate, a non-Stoic spectator who does not approach the *Agamemnon* with the aim of improving their mind still benefits from observing the play, which is designed to be read and understood at more than one level, by readers and spectators with different abilities and in different stages of philosophical progress.[324]

In fact, the *Agamemnon* is not only informed by Stoicism, but it also features extensive interaction with Epicurean ideas, primarily through engagement with Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*. Recently, Schiesaro has noted that, in his works, Seneca combines 'respect for his [Lucretius'] poetic achievements with skepticism about the foundations of his system.'[325] I will show that this dynamic also underlies the *Agamemnon*. To this end, I begin with a discussion of Lucretius' and Cicero's approaches to the relation between poetry and philosophy,

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[322] Nussbaum (1993) 136–45 (citation from p. 137), Wagoner (2014) 248–50. I use the terms 'reader' and 'spectator' interchangeably in recognition of the notion that 'as tragedies, the plays were written for performance, whether real or imagined in the mind of the reader': see Trinacty and Sampson (2017b) 3 with recent bibliography on the 'performance debate' regarding Senecan drama.

[323] Trinacty (2014) has been particularly formative to my understanding of Seneca's engagement with other texts. See also Schiesaro (1992), Boyle (1997) 155–200, Allendorf (2013), Buckley (2013) 211–6, and, more recently, the 2017 *Ramus* issue on the poetics of Senecan tragedy, namely Trinacty and Sampson (2017a), including Cowan (2017) on satire and tragedy, Littlewood (2017) on grand poetic registers, and Trinacty (2017) on how intratextual repetitions of intertexts in Seneca's plays highlight certain motifs and themes.

[324] I follow Wagoner (2014)'s understanding of Seneca' teaching of Stoicism in the *Letters*, which endeavours to help a wide and diverse group of readers and takes seriously its practical aims, and I recognise this teaching in the *Agamemnon*. As such, I do not argue that the dramatic worlds as constructed in Senecan tragedy are exclusively Stoic by design, either ethically or physically, and I do not focus explicitly on Stoic linkage between human and cosmos in Senecan drama, as Rosenmeyer (1989) does. Instead, I suggest that the (sometimes non-Stoic) literary construction and texture of Seneca's plays invite and promote the practice of Stoic thinking about issues for which there are no dogmatic, straightforward, or politically safe answers. In other words, I see Senecan drama as a place where Seneca explores and questions difficult issues. As Hine (2004) 204 put it: Senecan drama is 'good to think with.'

[325] Schiesaro (2015) 248.

establishing the importance of *vestigia* or 'traces' as philosophical-didactic tools on the philosophy student's journey towards the highest good. I then move on to the *Agamemnon*, showing how, through engaging with Cicero's and Lucretius' philosophical-didactic discourse, Eurybates instructs the audience to look out for such *vestigia* that encourage the Stoic pursuit of *sapientia*. I then proceed to identify such *vestigia* in Eurybates' messenger speech itself, demonstrating that they present us with models that describe several ways in which (not) to face disastrous scenarios. The evocation of these models is part of Seneca's pedagogical strategy in this play, which confronts the Greek fleet and the *Agamemnon*'s audience with a local calamity which escalates into a cosmic disaster. This escalation not only highlights the shortcomings of the evoked models for the critical spectator, but strengthens *all* spectators against local trauma by encouraging them to abandon false hopes, thus improving their disposition and access to Stoic wisdom.[326] By giving spectators the opportunity to train their ability to evaluate situations correctly and to correctly identify and ascribe (positive) moral value, and by fortifying them against local trauma, Seneca prepares his audience to experience and evaluate Agamemnon's unsuccessful homecoming later in the play.

In the second part of this chapter, I propose that this pedagogical exercise is part of Seneca's conceptualisation of Stoicism as a tool to (re)claim agency in a world in which many members of the Roman elite had lost their social standing and many of their political powers and responsibilities.[327] I do so by demonstrating the Roman political aspects of storm imagery elsewhere in the *Agamemnon*, thus emphasising the embedding of the play's storms in socio-political and Stoic discourse, before evaluating Eurybates' description of Agamemnon's journey in act 3 and his homecoming in act 4. This analysis leads me to conclude that, by broadening our perspective from the local to the cosmic, Seneca encourages us to detach our wellbeing from our immediate, socio-political circumstances, and to pursue (Stoic) happiness despite them.[328]

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[326] By arguing that the storm's escalation into a cosmic catastrophe has pedagogical effects, I expand on Rosenmeyer (1989) 154–56, who argues that the *Agamemnon*'s apocalyptic storm sequence 'is the most emphatic illustration of our claim that the catastrophe of cosmic conflagration and inundation is deeply embedded in the structure and mood of Senecan drama' (p. 156). On the importance of cultivating one's disposition for making moral progress, see Wagoner (2014) 255–57.

[327] On elite status anxiety in the (late) Julio-Claudian period, caused e.g. by the loss of political power due to the increase of imperial power, and by the social mobility of freedmen and enslaved people, see Weaver (1967), Saller (1982) 65–7, Millar (1992) 69–78, Rudich (1997), Roller (2001) 264–72, Boyle (2019) xx–xxvi, Fertik (2019) 1–20.

[328] See Williams (2006) on the therapeutic powers of Seneca's emphasis on displacement.

Ultimately, my analysis facilitates further understanding of Seneca's pedagogical approach to the teaching of Stoicism, and of the relation between the *Agamemnon* and Seneca's philosophical thought. I shed light on the contribution of intertextuality to the construction of a (dramatic) cosmos that functions as a pedagogical setting for a Stoic-philosophical exploration of how (not) to endure instability, crisis, and displacement – in this case, through the idea of a homecoming gone wrong. Fundamentally, this exploration questions how it is possible to live virtuously in a world in which being a good person and being a good Roman is not necessarily the same as being a good citizen. While Seneca provides us with more questions than answers, he also suggests that Stoicism may function as a tool to endure such instability.

Cicero, Lucretius, and the Philosophical-Didactic Potential of Poetry

In this section, I discuss Lucretius' and Cicero's approaches to the relation between poetry and philosophy. I demonstrate the plural meaning of *vestigia* or 'traces' in their works, namely as signalling a type of philosophically informed intertextuality through their function as philosophical-didactic tools on the philosophy student's journey towards the highest good, and as a word that itself belongs to the category it describes: 'traces' work as a metapoetic image to articulate the relationship to one's poetic and philosophical predecessors. To this end, I examine Cicero's translation of Homer's Siren song (Cic. *Fin*. 5.49.10–9), a programmatic passage in book 1 of Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* (Lucr. 1.402–3) and the proem to book 3 of the same work (Lucr. 3.1–8). These passages are the focus of my analysis here firstly because, through interaction with each other, they comment on the pursuit of (philosophical) knowledge and the appropriateness of its conveyance through the medium of poetry, and secondly because, as I will demonstrate later, Seneca evokes these passages in order to articulate the relationship of the *Agamemnon* to his Stoic thought. This discussion will also be relevant to my examination of *Silvae* 2.2 in chapter 4, a poem in which Statius likewise explores the relation between poetry and philosophy through the theme of the Siren song.

In order to demonstrate the development of the relation between poetry and philosophy in Cicero and Lucretius, I discuss the texts mentioned in reverse chronological order. As such, I begin by investigating Cicero's interaction with Lucretius' poem in Cicero's late work, *De Finibus*, which is dated to 45 BCE. I then examine Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*, which was

likely written before Cicero's composition of *De Finibus*, and I explore its engagement with Cicero's earlier work, namely his translation of Aratus' *Phaenomena*.[329]

Let us therefore start with Cicero's translation of the Siren song in his late work, *De Finibus* (5.49.10–8):

> **O decus Argolicum**, quin puppim flectis, Ulixes,
>
> auribus ut nostros **possis agnoscere** cantus!
>
> Nam nemo haec umquam est transvectus caerula cursu,   635
>
> quin prius adstiterit vocum dulcedine captus,
>
> post variis **avido satiatus pectore** musis
>
> **doctior** ad patrias lapsus pervenerit oras.
>
> Nos grave certamen belli clademque tenemus,
>
> Graecia quam Troiae divino numine vexit,   640
>
> omniaque e latis rerum **vestigia** terris.

> Ulysses, glory of Argos, turn your ship around:
>
> you will be able to listen to our song!
>
> None has ever sailed this sea-blue course   635
>
> without stopping, entranced by our sweet voice,
>
> greedy soul filled with all manner of music,
>
> then to glide away and return home wiser.
>
> We know the dire struggle and clash of war
>
> that Greece waged on Troy by divine will;   640
>
> we know every last detail on the face of the earth.

This Siren song is a translation of Homer's *Odyssey* (12.184–91), where the Sirens attempt to persuade Odysseus to listen to their song. It is quoted here by Piso, in his exposition of the teachings of the Academy as conceived by Antiochus of Ascalon. In his explanation, Piso emphasises that the highest good for human beings is to live in accordance with nature (Cic.

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[329] The date (or: period) of composition of Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* is debated, but the poet likely died between 55 – 50 BCE: see Bailey (1947) 3–5 for discussion. This means that *De Finibus* postdates *De Rerum Natura*. Cicero probably composed his translation of Aratus' *Phaenomena* in the early 80s BCE, thus giving Lucretius plenty of time to engage with it, and himself the opportunity to respond to Lucretius' work later in his life. See Gee (2013) 60–9 for discussion of interactions between Cicero and Lucretius as evidenced by their works.

Fin. 26). He then describes what living in harmony with nature requires of both mind and body. In his discussion of the human mind, Piso points out that it has an innate love of learning and knowledge, to the extent that people will happily endure hardship and neglect their health and household in exchange for the pleasure derived from learning (Cic. *Fin*. 5.48). He then illustrates this prioritisation of the pleasurable pursuit of knowledge over health and household – even over homecoming (*Fin*. 5.49) – with the song of the Sirens. Piso argues that it was not the sweetness of their voices (*vocum suavitate*) or the originality and variety of their songs (*novitate quadam et varietate cantandi*) that attracted passers-by, but rather their declaration of great knowledge, which kindled a desire to learn (*discendi cupiditate*, Cic. *Fin*. 5.49).

This conception of the Sirens should be seen in the context of their reception in ancient philosophical thought, where ancient thinkers considered what the Sirens sang about and how much of their song the audience should be allowed to hear.[330] In Plato's *Symposium*, for example, the Siren song represents the call of (Socrates') philosophy and should not be resisted at all (Pl. *Symp*. 216a).[331] For Epicureans, on the other hand, the Siren song with its associations with distraction represented a danger to *ataraxia*, the sought-after state of imperturbability. This idea is perhaps most evident from a fragment of Epicurus' *Letter to Pythocles* (Diog. Laert. 10.6), in which the reader is recommended to hoist sail and steer away from all sorts of education, in words that recall Circe's warning to Odysseus in the *Odyssey* (Hom. *Od*. 12.36–54). This is typically understood as an indication of the traditional hostility of Epicureanism to poetry as a means of education.[332] But in the 1st century BCE, the relation between poetry and philosophy started to be renegotiated. The Epicurean Philodemus, for example, wrote about and composed poetry himself, albeit as a pastime, not as a means of education, and he depicts the Epicurean philosopher as even more captivating than the mythical Sirens in a way that recalls Plato's representation of Socrates' Siren song as the call of philosophy.[333] As a poetic exposition of Epicureanism, Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* notably represents the next step in this development. This is the context in which Cicero's Siren song should be seen. What knowledge do his Sirens promise, exactly, that a passer-by might prioritise it over their

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[330] Kaiser (1964). See also Montiglio (2011) 132–40, who discusses the reception of the Sirens and their attempted seduction of Odysseus by ancient thinkers.

[331] In the *Phaedrus*, on the other hand, Socrates and Phaedrus must be better than Odysseus and fully ignore the lulling 'Siren song' of the cicadas by discussing philosophical subject matter with each other (διαλεγομένους: see Pl. *Phdr*. 258e–259d).

[332] See Asmis (1991) 68–9 on Epicurean notions of poetry as a medium of education versus pleasure.

[333] Cf. Phld. *On Flattery*, *PHerc*. 222 Col. 2.2–7. See Asmis (1991), especially pp. 90–3. I examine Philodemus' passage in more detail in chapter 4, where I discuss Statius' engagement with Siren imagery in *Silvae* 2.2.

homecoming (Cic. *Fin.* 5.49), and how are Cicero's Sirens positioned in relation to poetry and philosophy?

It is clear that Cicero's Sirens explicitly offer knowledge (*multa se scire profitebantur*, 'they professed they knew many things', Cic. *Fin.* 5.49). This aspect of their attractiveness is not only specifically pointed out by Piso, as I have pointed out, but it is also reflected in their song. According to themselves, the Sirens' knowledge covers the stuff of mythology such as the Trojan war (*Fin.* 5.49.639–40) as well as the 'every last sign on the face of the earth' (*omniaque e latis rerum **vestigia** terris*, *Fin.* 5.49.641). Both claims go back to Homer's Siren song, which promises information about the Trojan war as well as universal knowledge, phrased in the language of the Muses.[334] This musical aspect is conveyed in Cicero's song too, through the phrase *variis avido satiatus pectore musis* (*Fin.* 5.49.637).[335] But, crucially, Cicero phrases his Sirens' promise of knowledge in different language as well: his phraseology brings us to the realm of (natural) philosophy, suggesting the meaning of *vestigia* or 'traces' as philosophical-didactic 'signs'.

In ancient epistemology, signs are evident facts by which some further, non-evident truth is revealed.[336] The criteria for such signs and the practice of sign-inference differ per philosophical school and per ancient thinker, and conceptually they play a fundamental role in shaping ancient understandings of the nature and construction of the cosmos. The study of celestial phenomena, for example – out of reach, yet perceivable to some extent – formed a fruitful setting to exercise the practice of sign-inference and analogous thinking.[337] In Epicureanism, this self-directed study of signs seems to have been understood in opposition to the Siren song – the μῦθοι, the 'fables' – of traditional education.[338] That the *vestigia* promised by Cicero's Sirens indeed refer to such philosophical signs is suggested by Lucretius' similar employment of the word *vestigia*.

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[334] Pucci (1979) 127.

[335] Goldberg (1995) 138.

[336] Long and Sedley (1987) 94–7, 211, 263–6.

[337] Epicurus' *Letter to Pythocles*, for example, discusses heavenly events at length, noting that their study is useful to the extent that contemplating multiple explanations for these phenomena removes fear of them and provides imperturbability. Cf. Epicurus, *Ep. Pyth.* 85–88, 116. On the logic of multiple explanations for such phenomena, see Hankinson (2013).

[338] The Siren song may have appeared in the context of the study of celestial phenomena in Epicureanism, if we consider that Epicurus' recommendation to hoist sail and evade the Siren song of education comes from a *Letter to Pythocles*, as stated by Diogenes Laërtius (10.6), and that the *Letter to Pythocles* about celestial phenomena advocates the study of these phenomena to escape μῦθοι, i.e., the fables conveyed to us through such education (Epicurus, *Ep. Pyth.* 116 = Diog. Laert. 10.116). For a discussion on the relation between these *Letters*, see Gordon (2013) 137–40.

In *De Rerum Natura*, *vestigia* typically function as signs or traces to be followed by students with keen minds, so that they may learn about the nature of things and thereby about Epicurean doctrine.[339] They are the traces of Epicurus, who travelled the steep and arduous path to the highest good that we also embark on when reading *De Rerum Natura*.[340] Through Lucretius' poetry, then, we may follow Epicurus' footsteps. *Vestigia* therefore have a markedly didactic function. At the same time, Lucretius also uses *vestigia* metapoetically, to describe his own work as following the footsteps of his philosophical and poetic predecessors.[341] Such predecessors include Epicurus as well as several authors who conveyed natural philosophy through poetry, such as Empedocles and Cicero, whose *Aratea* represents a Latin translation of Aratus' *Phaenomena* describing constellations and other celestial events. Thus, *vestigia* seem to have plural meaning, both signalling a type of philosophically informed intertextuality through their function as philosophical-didactic tools on the philosophy student's journey towards the highest good, and as a metapoetic image that expresses the relationship to one's poetic and philosophical predecessors. I suggest that Cicero's Siren song evokes Lucretius' plural, philosophical-didactic and metapoetic, use of *vestigia*, and that his Siren song may be read as an indication of Cicero's response to Lucretius' versification of natural philosophy, confirming that didactic poetry is indeed a valid medium to convey the *vestigia* that enable the reader to pursue philosophical truths. In fact, Cicero's Siren song recalls two Lucretian passages in particular, the second of which is also evoked during the conversation between Eurybates and Clytemnestra alongside its evocation of Cicero's Siren song, as we will see.

Firstly, Cicero's Siren Song shows parallels to the programmatic passage in *De Rerum Natura* 1, in which Lucretius encourages Memmius – and the wider audience – to read his work in a specific way (Lucr. 1.402–3):

> verum **animo satis** haec **vestigia** parva **sagaci**
> sunt per quae **possis cognoscere** cetera tute.

[339] See Schrijvers (1970) 18–26, Thury (1987), Schiesaro (1990) 101, Fowler (2000) 148, Gee (2013) 86–90.

[340] Schrijvers (1970) 18–26 discusses the predominance and didactic and philosophical importance of path imagery in Lucretius' work. Such path imagery had been common in ancient literature and philosophy from Hesiod onwards (Hes. *Op*. 289–97): see Becker (1937) and, more recently, Messimeri (2001).

[341] Schrijvers (1970) 19–21, Gee (2013) 86–90. Cf. e.g. Lucr. 1.926–30, 3.1–8. Later, Statius uses *vestigia* to articulate his *Thebaid* to the *Aeneid.* Cf. Stat. *Theb*. 12.810–9 with Hardie (1993) 110–1, Rosati (2008).

But for a keen-scented mind, these little tracks are enough to enable you to recognise the others for yourself.

Lucretius says that he could spend a lifetime providing further arguments in favour of the existence of the void, but that the *vestigia parva* his poem offers (Lucr. 1.402), its little tracks, ought to be enough for those with a keen enough mind to recognise similar such traces. This keen mind is then compared to a hunting dog sniffing out the traces of a wild mountain beast, the point being that looking for and finding *vestigia* will enable the reader-student to independently uncover (philosophical) truths (Lucr. 1.403–9).[342] Thus, this comparison serves as a programmatic statement, recommending a reading strategy. At the same time, the simile forms a brief pause from the steep learning curve of Epicureanism: Lucretius has just argued the existence of the void, and will now move on to discuss the existence of matter.[343]

We may recognise parallels between Lucretius' reading instruction here and Cicero's Siren song. Just as Lucretius' eager students are encouraged to perceive *vestigia* themselves (***possis cognoscere***, Lucr. 1.403), Cicero's Sirens invite the passers-by to turn around, so that they can perceive and examine their compositions (***possis agnoscere***, Cic. *Fin*. 5.49.634).[344] Doing so will result in the traveller's keen soul, satiated with these songs (*variis **avido satiatus pectore musis**, Fin*. 5.49.637), returning home wiser (***doctior***, Cic. *Fin*. 5.49.638). While the diction is slightly different, the attitude of the Ciceronian Sirens' ideal listener is remarkably similar to the keen-scented mind of Lucretius' ideal reader (Cicero's *avido* and *doctior* versus Lucretius' *sagaci*, and Cicero's *pectore* versus Lucretius' *animo*). Finally, just as Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* offers its readers *vestigia* that will enable them to pursue additional *vestigia* and, through them, philosophical truths, so Cicero's Sirens offer their passers-by *vestigia*. Taking into account these verbal parallels, alongside Cicero's specific rendering of Homer's ὄσσα as *vestigia* (compare *omniaque e latis rerum **vestigia** terris*, Cic. *Fin*. 5.49.641, with ἴδμεν δ᾽ ὅσσα γένηται ἐπὶ χθονὶ πουλυβοτείρῃ, 'we know all that happens upon all-nourishing earth', Hom. *Od.* 12.191), it seems probable that Cicero's *vestigia* should be understood as Lucretian *vestigia*: not as bite-sized portions of knowledge for their own sake, designed for the

[342] Thury (1987) 277.

[343] Bailey (1947a) 663. Schrijvers (1970) 24–5 comments on the plateau this comparison provides on the steep path to truth. Cf. e.g. Lucr. 1.658–9: *et fugitant in rebus inane relinquere purum, / ardua dum metuunt, amittunt vera viai,* 'and they shrink from leaving pure void in things, while they fear the steep they lose the true path.'

[344] While this combination of words may be expected in didactic poetry, Lucretius seems to be particularly keen on the phrase *possis cognoscere*: it features at Lucr. 1.403, 2.462, 2.840, 3.117, 4.642, 4.749, 5.285, 6.113, 6.1214.

consumptive pleasure of their audiences, but as tools on the student's journey towards the highest good. While the *summum bonum* may mean different things for the two differently philosophically inclined authors, then, they do seem to agree on the philosophical-didactic potential of poetry.

That Cicero's Siren Song engages with Lucretius' poem is further suggested by the Sirens' address of Odysseus as ***o decus Argolicum*** (Cic. *Fin*. 5.49.633). This address is a translation of the Homeric epithet μέγα κῦδος Ἀχαιῶν, 'great glory of Achaeans'.[345] In the proem to book 3 of the *Rerum Natura*, Lucretius addresses Epicurus in a similar way (Lucr. 3.1–8):

> E tenebris tantis tam clarum extollere lumen
> qui primus potuisti inlustrans commoda vitae,
> te sequor, **o Graiae gentis decus**, inque tuis nunc
> ficta **pedum pono pressis vestigia** signis,
> non ita certandi cupidus quam propter amorem   5
> quod te imitari aveo; quid enim contendat hirundo
> cycnis, aut quidnam tremulis facere artubus haedi
> consimile in cursu possint et fortis equi vis?

> You, who first amid so great a darkness were able to raise aloft a light so clear, illumining the blessings of life, you I follow, o glory of the Grecian race, and now on the marks you have left I plant my own footsteps firm, not so much desiring to be your rival, as for love, because I yearn to copy you: for why should a swallow vie with swans, or what could a kid with its shaking limbs do in running to match himself with the strong horse's vigour?

In this hymnic proem to book 3, Lucretius articulates his relationship to his poetical and philosophical predecessors. Lucretius' address of Epicurus as *o Graiae gentis decus* adds to the heroic depiction of Epicurus here, and recalls Lucretius' laudation of the Greek philosopher in the proem to book 1.[346] Cicero's address of Odysseus as *o decus Argolicum* in the Siren song is remarkably similar to Lucretius' address of Epicurus as *o Graiae gentis decus*: perhaps the latter is a rendering of the Homeric epithet too. Furthermore, just as in the aforementioned

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[345] Goldberg (1995) 137–9 discusses Cicero's rendering of Homer's Siren song (Hom. *Od*. 12.184–91) into Latin. This is the only instance in extant Latin up until Seneca where *decus* and *Argolicus* feature in this combination (Sen. *Ag*. 395; discussed in more detail on pp. 132ff. below).

[346] Bailey (1947a) 987, Kenney (2014) 74 with Lucr. 1.62–79.

programmatic passage, Lucretius' *vestigia* (Lucr. 3.4) express a metapoetic relationship, in this case between Lucretius and Epicurus.

But, as Emma Gee has demonstrated, the metapoetic force of these *vestigia* reaches beyond the philosophical relationship between Lucretius and Epicurus: combined with this passage's similes, they intertextually evoke one of Lucretius' poetic examples, namely Cicero's earlier work, the *Aratea*.[347] Lucretius' comparison between the kid and the horse recalls Cicero's description of the constellations Capricorn and Pegasus (Cic. *Arat*. 53–61), thereby casting Lucretius as a small constellation – Capricorn – trailing in the stardust of Epicurus, the bright constellation Pegasus. At the same time, Lucretius' ***pedum pono*** *…* ***vestigia*** (Lucr. 3.4) evokes two passages in Cicero's *Aratea*, in which *pedum* and *vestigia* play an important role in depicting constellations in spatial relation to each other (Cic. *Arat*. 451, fr. 15.4–5).[348] Thus, Lucretius here uses Cicero's astronomical language and imagery metapoetically to express a relationship between himself and his philosophical and poetical predecessors. Lucretius follows Epicurus philosophically, but distances himself from Epicurus' hostility to the Siren song of poetry by poetically emulating Cicero's early *Aratea*, thereby joining a series of philosophers conveying natural philosophy through didactic poetry, including Aratus and Empedocles.[349]

I have now demonstrated that Cicero's later Siren Song in *De Finibus* evokes two programmatic and metapoetic passages in Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*. Considering the Lucretian phraseology of Cicero's Siren song, it thus seems probable that we may read Cicero's Siren song in response to Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*. Cicero is playing at Lucretius' game, using Lucretius' language and imagery to further the debate about the conveyance of knowledge via poetry, and about the nature of poetry more generally. It seems likely that Cicero agrees with Lucretius that poetry may offer its audience *vestigia* which encourage the pursuit of wisdom.

But, as I mentioned earlier, Cicero's Sirens not only promise knowledge of every *vestigium* on the face of the earth, they also declare their knowledge of the Trojan War ('We know the dire struggle and clash of war / that Greece waged on Troy by divine will, / we know every last

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[347] Gee (2013) 86–90. Lucretius' indebtedness to Cicero's *Aratea* was already noted by Munro (1864) *ad* 5.618, Peck (1897) 71, Merrill (1921), Buescu (1966), most of which mainly includes the listing of potential parallels.

[348] Gee (2013) 89–90 discusses both passages in relation to the proem of *De Rerum Natura* 3. Merrill (1921) 149 noted the parallel in Cic. *Arat*. 451 (*vestigia parva*), and Buescu (1966) cited Cic. *Arat*. fr. 15.4 (*vestigia ponit*).

[349] On Aratus' evocation of Empedocles, see Ludwig (1963) 445–7, Traglia (1963), Steinmetz (1966) 463, Gee (2013) 29–34, and on Lucretius' engagement with Empedocles, see e.g. Sedley (1998), Garani (2007), Campbell (2014).

detail on the face of the earth', Cic. *Fin*. 5.49.639–41). Thus, there appears to be a place for myth in Cicero's conception of poetry as a medium of conveying knowledge. After all, Cicero's Siren song as a whole is described as attracting sailors and kindling their hope of learning through its declaration of great knowledge (Cic. *Fin*. 5.49). Mythological poetry, in this case as offered by the Sirens in the form of knowledge about the Trojan war, can convey philosophical truths too, or to be more precise, it can offer the tools to pursue them. While Lucretius distanced himself from Epicurus' warning to steer away from the Siren song of traditional education, then, and wrote didactic yet explicitly non-mythological poetry as a compromise, Cicero here further reconceptualises the Siren song of traditional education, suggesting that poetry may convey the tools to pursue wisdom even if said poetry does not explicitly set forth such tools in technical verse: mythological poetry can convey such *vestigia* too. This notion is in line with Cicero's citation of poetry elsewhere in his philosophical works, where poetic citations serve several purposes, including the exemplification of philosophical precepts.[350] As I will demonstrate now, it is in this way, too, that we may read Eurybates' messenger speech – and, by extension, the *Agamemnon* more broadly – as philosophically informed poetry: that is, as mythological verse that offers its audience *vestigia* or 'signs', encouraging the audience to pursue wisdom.

Following *vestigia* in Eurybates' Messenger Speech

Once the shade of Thyestes has disappeared, the chorus sing an ode on the fickleness of Fortune. In the second act of the play, we then witness Clytemnestra contemplating her response to Agamemnon's impending homecoming and her course of action in consultation with the nurse and with Aegisthus. Following an ode in which the chorus give thanks to the gods for Agamemnon's return, the chorus then draw our attention to the entrance of Agamemnon's messenger, Eurybates (*Ag*. 388–91). A conversation between Eurybates and Clytemnestra follows, in which Eurybates announces Agamemnon's return to Argos and is consequently questioned by Clytemnestra on the fates of Menelaus and Helen (*Ag*. 392–420). This conversation precedes Eurybates' messenger speech, which takes up the majority of the third act of the *Agamemnon* and which narrates the Greek fleet's journey home from Troy in great detail (*Ag*. 421–578).

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[350] On Cicero's practice of poetic citation, specifically in his philosophical works, see Čulík-Baird (forthc.).

As I mentioned earlier (p. 119), Eurybates' messenger speech draws on a range of genres and discourses. In the past, attention has been paid predominantly to Seneca's engagement with epic and tragic sources, and to Eurybates' function as an epic narrator in a dramatic setting.[351] Such discussions focused, for example, on Eurybates' (in)credibility as a narrator: Eurybates' account significantly transgresses that of an eyewitness in its detail and in its bird's-eye view.[352] This exploitation of epic features, alongside the *Agamemnon*'s characters' response to and concern with the impact of offstage events on themselves, causes the audience to question the reported events.[353] This questioning of Eurybates' credibility as a narrator, I suggest, is indicative of the play's overarching concern with the evaluation of tragic characters and their behaviour according to Stoic conceptions of value and standards of evidence.

This concern expresses itself in the way the play is built up: throughout the play, we are exclusively presented with characters who await Agamemnon's homecoming until he finally enters the play himself, around line 782 into a play of 1011 lines. Up until that point, our impressions of Agamemnon are shaped by characters' views of him. These divergent views cause us to contemplate what kind of Agamemnon we will encounter in this play, and according to which standards we should want to evaluate him. To what extent will Seneca's Agamemnon be the selfish king we know from Homer or from previous Greek and Roman tragedy? When we take into account Pompey's enthusiastic association with Agamemnon, and Agamemnon's ambiguity as a model for the *princeps*,[354] how does Seneca's Agamemnon sit in contemporary Roman political discourse? And how does this Agamemnon relate to Seneca's Stoic thought?

While Eurybates' messenger speech does not explicitly feature Agamemnon, I argue that this speech, which is central to the play both through its position and in its crystallisation of the play's themes,[355] prepares us to evaluate Agamemnon's homecoming later in the play. For during his conversation with Clytemnestra, Eurybates orients the audience towards evaluative reading – and critical spectatorship – by instructing them to look out for *vestigia*, or philosophically informed intertextual 'signs', in the speech that he is about to give.

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[351] See e.g. Marcucci (1996), Baertschi (2010), Aygon (2011). Boyle (2019) lxv–lxxiv provides an overview of the myth before Seneca, which includes different generic sources drawn on by Seneca in the *Agamemnon*.

[352] See especially Baertschi (2010), who argues that Seneca's attribution of an epic narrative voice to Eurybates lessens doubts about the credibility of his account and contributes to the dramatic force of the messenger speech.

[353] Trinacty (2014) 165–7.

[354] Champlin (2003) 297–305 discusses Pompey's association with Agamemnon, and points out that, while Agamemnon as a leader among leaders might have been a useful model for Pompey, Roman emperors could read tragic kings as commentaries on their (solitary) rulership – and the tragic Agamemnon features all too many flaws.

[355] See p. 119 above and Shelton (1983) 168–9, Trinacty (2014) 165–7 on the importance of Eurybates' speech for the thematic development of the *Agamemnon*.

When Eurybates enters the stage, he first briefly worships the gods of his hometown. Next, he announces his news to Clytemnestra, who responds inquisitively (*Ag.* 395–401):

> E.   telluris altum remeat **Argolicae decus**   395
>
>   tandem ad penates victor Agamemnon suos.

> C.   felix ad aures nuntius venit meas.
>
>   ubinam petitus per decem coniunx mihi
>
>   annos moratur? pelagus an terras **premit**?

> E.   incolumis, auctus gloria, laude inclitus   400
>
>   **reducem** expetito litori **impressit pedem**.

> E.   Now at last returns the towering glory of the land of Argos   395
>
>   to his heart-gods – Agamemnon, conqueror.

> C.   Blessed comes this message to my ears.
>
>   So where then is he dallying, my husband
>
>   ten years sought for? Is he traveling on land or sea?

> E.   Safe, enhanced by glory, and illustrious with renown,   400
>
>   he has set his homeward footstep on the longed-for shore.

Eurybates describes Agamemnon as the high glory of the Argive land in words that evoke Cicero's Siren song (compare *telluris altum ... **Argolicae decus***, *Ag.* 395 with ***o decus Argolicum*** (Cic. *Fin.* 5.49.633, see p. 123). At the same time, Eurybates' epithet for Agamemnon recalls the proem to Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* 3, which, as I have shown, is also evoked by Cicero's Sirens (*te sequor, **o Graiae gentis decus***, 'You I follow, o glory of the Grecian race,' Lucr. 3.3).[356] Furthermore, Lucretius' proem to book 3 is also evoked soon after,

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[356] *Decus* ('ornament' or 'glory') is frequently applied to persons as a laudatory epithet, and recurs throughout Senecan tragedy: cf. *OLD* s.v. *decus* 3, *TLL* 5.1.243.6–44.45 (Leissner), and Boyle (2019) 281. But prior to Seneca, this combination of words only occurs in Cicero's *De Finibus*. Tarrant (1976) 250 notes that the Ciceronian passage may have inspired Seneca here, but does not expand on this observation. For a comparable instance in Statius, cf. *Ach.* 1.775–6 (***decora inclita gentis / Argolicae***, about Odysseus and Diomedes).

when Clytemnestra enquires about Agamemnon's geographical location and Eurybates answers her question in language that recalls Lucretius' articulation of his relation to Epicurus (compare **reducem ... impressit pedem**, *Ag.* 401, with ***inque tuis nunc / ficta pedum pono pressis vestigia signis***, 'and now on the marks you have left I plant my own footsteps firm,' Lucr. 3.4). Earlier, I showed that Lucretius drew on Cicero's *Aratea* to articulate his adherence to Epicurus' philosophy on the one hand and his following of philosophers who convey natural philosophy through didactic verse on the other hand. Considering Eurybates' employment of similar language, I propose that we may read his depiction of Agamemnon's return in the context of this philosophical-didactic discourse too.

Eurybates' description of Agamemnon as *Argolicae decus* (*Ag.* 395), rather than as, for example, his more common descriptors *rex regum* and *ductor ducum*, suggests that we may view Eurybates as a Ciceronian Siren.[357] Just like the Ciceronian Sirens, Eurybates knows the aftermath of the Trojan War. His description of the returning Agamemnon, planting his returning footstep on the long-sought shore in highly metapoetic Lucretian language, confirms that Eurybates too will convey *vestigia* or philosophically informed 'signs' through verse: we just need to look out for the intertextual footsteps that Seneca's *Agamemnon* plants on the marks left by Lucretius and Cicero. As such, Eurybates' description of Agamemnon makes us wonder whether this will be a philosophically trained Agamemnon whose traces we could follow.

Thus, through engaging with late Republican philosophical-didactic discourse via the figure of Eurybates, Seneca prompts the audience to practice critical spectatorship rather than to passively perceive the speech and predominantly enjoy its craftsmanship and entertainment value.[358] He encourages the critical spectator to tune into the philosophical-didactic potential of Eurybates' impending messenger speech, and provides them with an evaluative strategy to read and interpret this speech, namely to look out for intertextual *vestigia* or 'traces' which may help them to evaluate Agamemnon's homecoming and which may encourage them to independently pursue *sapientia*.

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[357] Cf. *Ag.* 39 (*rex ille regum, ductor Agamemnon ducum*), *Ag.* 1007 (*mille ductorem ducum*). I discuss Agamemnon's characterisation at the beginning and end of the play on p. 168 below.

[358] I therefore expand on Nussbaum (1993), who notes that the spectator's vigilance is 'directed above all at the relationship formed between spectator and characters' (p. 138). I highlight the additional importance of vigilance directed at the verbal texture of the *Agamemnon*'s dramatic world as focalised by the play's characters, and I argue that this verbal texture may inform the spectator's evaluation of said characters. See also Wagoner (2014) 247–9, 252 on the idea that all reading can help achieve moral improvement, if one is advanced enough in their study of Stoicism and if it is done with the aim of improving one's mind.

In the next parts of this chapter, I look for such intertextual *vestigia* in Eurybates' messenger speech. I demonstrate how these philosophically informed intertextual 'signs' contribute to the depiction of the storm that overwhelms the Greek journey on their way home as an apocalyptic event. Seneca draws on several (near-)apocalyptic scenarios in Roman literature, especially Lucretius' conceptualisations of the end of the world in *De Rerum Natura*. Moreover, the *Agamemnon*'s sea storm also demonstrates parallels to Seneca's own reflections on the end of the world as evident from, predominantly, the *Letters* and the *Natural Questions*. In what follows, I show how the *Agamemnon*'s sea storm engages with each of these texts respectively, and I explore how Seneca's engagement with each text offers us different attitudes towards the end of the world. By staging varying approaches to cosmic disaster, I suggest, Seneca creates an opportunity – both for himself and for his audiences – to reflect on some of the fundamental principles of practising philosophy: when do we choose to turn to philosophy, and why? How can practising philosophy help us endure dire circumstances?

On The Nature of Apocalypse

Eurybates' speech begins with a detailed description of the Greek fleet's departure from Troy: from the division of spoils and the removal of amour to the men's communal rowing and relaxing on board, the beginning of the fleet's journey back to Greece passes smoothly. As Boyle has noted, the *Agamemnon*'s calm before the storm is depicted much more elaborately than it is in other narrations of this myth.[359] The fleet's leisurely exodus from Troy therefore creates suspense, since it stands in stark contrast to the storm that, by now, we know will happen. But what kind of sea storm will this be? It is not the predominantly tragic-epic sea storm we might normally expect. Eurybates' conversation with Clytemnestra has already oriented us towards the philosophical-didactic potential of Eurybates' speech, and it is a philosophical-didactic storm that we encounter. In this section, I show how Eurybates' speech draws on Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* to construct an apocalyptic sea storm. This build-up results in the evocation of Epicurean texts that show potential approaches to such adversity. This evocation invites us to evaluate the effectiveness of these attitudes.

When the first signs of the storm appear, they remind us of the catalogues of meteorological and celestial phenomena that portend bad weather, as listed in works such as Aratus'

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[359] Boyle (2019) 293.

Phaenomena, Cicero's *De Divinatione*, and Virgil's *Georgics*.[360] The signs are also phrased in diction that evokes Lucretius' explanations of meteorological phenomena. When the sun sets, for example, a small cloud appears (*Ag*. 462–3):

> **exigua nubes** sordido **crescens** globo
> nitidum cadentis inquinat Phoebi iubar;
> suspecta varius occidens fecit freta.

> A wisp of cloud, increasing with a murky mass,
> is staining setting Phoebus' shining beam:
> discoloured sunset made the waters suspect.

The idea that a blotched sun predicts bad weather can already be found in Aratus (819ff.) and found its way into several 1ˢᵗ-century BCE treatises, including Virgil's *Georgics* (1.450–6).[361] I suggest that the growth of the small cloud into the murky mass that blocks the sun also evokes the beginning of Lucretius' explanation of the formation of clouds (Lucr. 6.451–5, 8):

> **Nubila concrescunt**, ubi corpora multa volando
> hoc supero in caeli spatio coiere repente
> asperiora, modis quae possint indupedita
> **exiguis** tamen inter se compressa teneri.
> haec faciunt primum **parvas** consistere **nubis**;   455
> …
> usque adeo donec **tempestas saeva** coortast.   458

> Clouds mass together, when in the space of the sky above a large number of flying bodies have suddenly come together, which are rougher and, though they are entangled in a slight degree, are yet able to hold together in mutual attachment. These first cause small clouds to be formed;
> …
> until the time when a wild tempest arises.

Lucretius describes how atoms, suddenly intermingled in the sky at a slight angle (*modis …exiguis*, 6.454), form clouds and amass (***nubila concrescunt***, 6.451) until little clouds (*parvas … nubis*, 6.455) culminate into a *tempestas saeva* (6.458). Just so, Seneca's small cloud grows into a bigger mass (***exigua nubes … crescens***, *Ag.* 462), which, based on its evocation of Lucretius' explanation and on our literary knowledge of blotched sunsets more generally, we expect to grow into a savage tempest. The evocation of Lucretius' poem continues as the *Agamemnon*'s storm proceeds to manifest itself (*Ag.* 466–8):

> ... tum **murmur grave**,
>
> **maiora minitans**, collibus summis cadit
>
> tractuque longo litus ac petrae gemunt; …

> ... Then a muffled rumble,
>
> threatening worse, tumbles from the hilltops,
>
> and from shore and cliff-tops comes a long-drawn groan.

Once night has fallen and the heaven is sprinkled with stars (*Ag.* 465–6), the storm begins to break loose in earnest. First, a deep and threatening murmur is heard (***murmur grave / maiora minitans***, *Ag.* 466–7). So far, this rumble has been interpreted as the murmurs of the mountain and the sea.[362] But I suggest that there is more to this phrase, which intertextually evokes a series of passages that depict people experiencing natural disaster and which has a programmatic function in Lucretius. A good starting point is the following passage in *De Rerum Natura*, where Lucretius identifies the rumblings of thunder as one of the causes of (erroneous) belief in the gods (Lucr. 5.1183–93):

> in caeloque deum sedis et templa locarunt,
>
> per caelum volvi quia nox et luna videtur,
>
> luna dies et nox et noctis signa severa   1190
>
> noctivagaeque faces caeli flammaeque volantes,
>
> nubila sol imbres nix venti fulmina grando

[362] Tarrant (1976) 262 comments on the appearance of the 'storm-signals', including the 'murmuring on the mountain-tops', in *Ag.* 466–9, pointing to the passage's adherence to Theophrastus (*Sign.* 29), Aratus (*Phaen.* 909ff.), and Cicero (*Div.* 1.13). Boyle (2019) 302–3 refers to 'the sea's murmur' in *Teuc.* fr. 417 Klotz.

et rapidi fremitus et **murmura magna minarum**.

And they placed the gods' habitation and abode in the sky, because through the sky the night and the moon are seen to revolve, moon and day and night and the solemn stars of night, heaven's night-wandering torches and flying flames, clouds and sun, rain and snow, winds, lightnings and hail, rapid roarings and great threatening rumbles of thunder.

Lucretius ascribes people's misguided belief in the gods to their inability to identify the causes of the phenomenon that seasons – and all celestial and meteorological phenomena they bring – come around in a predictable order.[363] Because they cannot understand these phenomena, he argues, they assume that a providential power must allow for them to happen, and because these phenomena come from the sky, that is where this providential power must be located. And if such a providential power has influence over the sun, the moon, and the weather, it might also have control over people (Lucr. 5.1204–21, where, in verse 1221, fear of the gods is once again caused by 'rumblings run through the mighty sky', *magnum percurrunt murmura caelum*). As Emma Gee has demonstrated, Lucretius here engages with a passage from Cicero's *Aratea* that also features a threatening murmur.[364] In this passage, Cicero warns sailors not to set sail when Capricorn rises (Cic. *Arat*. 62–71):

Hoc cave te in pontum studeas committere mense:
nam non longinquum spatium labere diurnum,
non hiberna cito volvetur curriculo nox,
umida non sese vestris aurora querelis
ocius ostendet, clari praenuntia solis;   66
at validis aequor pulsabit viribus Auster,
tum fixum tremulo quatietur frigore corpus.
sed tamen anni iam labuntur tempore toto,
nec vi signorum cedunt neque flamina vitant,   70
nec metuunt canos **minitanti murmure** fluctus.

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[363] Lucretius first mentions another cause, one which is true, namely the visions (the *simulacra*) humans received of the gods: see Lucr. 5.1169–82 with Bailey (1947b) 1508.
[364] Gee (2013) 73–6.

Take care, this month, that you are not keen to commit yourself to the sea: for you will not sail a lengthy distance daily, and the wintery night will not roll along with a fast chariot; the wet dawn will not show itself more quickly because of your complaints, announcing the bright sun, but the Auster will beat the sea with mighty violence, your body will then be shaken, transfixed by a tremble-inducing cold. But still they sail along in every season of the year, and they do not yield to the force of the signs or avoid the winds, and they do not fear the white-topped waves with their threatening murmur.

Cicero's *Aratea* sets out a universe that has been ordered by a divine power for the benefit of mankind; a universe, moreover, in which there is a definitive explanation for everything.[365] But these sailors ignore the warning given to them by the constellations and decide to travel the seas anyway. As such, they form a negative example: do not do as these sailors did. In his episode on the causes of belief in the gods and their consequences, Lucretius draws on Cicero's passage with a very similar purpose, namely to give a (negative) example of a flawed attitude. As Gee has demonstrated, however, Lucretius draws on Cicero while promoting an understanding of the universe that is diametrically opposed to that of Cicero's *Aratea*: after all, the Epicurean universe exists due to the erratic behaviour of atoms, includes no gods to influence anything whatsoever, and does not offer a definitive explanation for anything.[366]

Recently, Manuel Galzerano has demonstrated Lucretius' employment of a literary device, which he terms 'cosmic shipwreck with spectator'.[367] This literary device combines the poetic impact of epic-didactic similes with the argumentative force of didactic examples in the philosophical tradition, in order to provide his audience with examples that are simultaneously poetically and didactically effective.[368] Typically, such examples stage one or more characters

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[365] Gee (2013) 77. The universe Cicero describes in the *Aratea* has a particularly Stoic dimension. Kidd (1997) 10–2 suggests that parts of Aratus' *Phaenomena* were written with Stoic intent. Čulík-Baird (2018) 650–3 argues that Aratus' poem therefore lent itself to Stoic citational analysis practices, and that this, in addition to Cicero's familiarity with the commentary on Aratus written by the Stoic Boëthus of Sidon, meant that, 'when Cicero rendered the *Aratea* into Latin, he was familiar with Stoic interpretations of the poem and incorporated aspects of these into his translation' (p. 653).

[366] Gee (2013), especially pp. 77–109.

[367] Galzerano (2019), after the essay *Schiffbruch mit Zuschauer* by Blumenberg (1979), in which Blumenberg analyses sea journeys, including shipwreck, as a metaphor for life.

[368] Galzerano (2019). Epic poetry offers us many examples of characters experiencing natural disasters, particularly heroes, for whom this typically formed an opportunity to demonstrate their character, abilities and determination. Cf. most obviously Hom. *Od.* 5.282–387, Verg. *Aen.* 1.50–156. Furthermore, the Hellenistic philosophical tradition provides us with representations of innocent people facing natural catastrophes, which function as an argument either for or against the existence of divine providence and the mortality of the world. Cf. e.g. Arist. *[Mund.]* 400a30–b6.

who are spectators and victims of natural and/or cosmic catastrophes. While these examples never explicitly depict Rome, Galzerano suggests that their Roman characterisation or phrasing often makes Rome 'the implicit epicenter of these scenes'.[369] The characters' resort to contemporary and traditional Roman values, such as *virtus*, *pietas*, and political ambition, leads to failure, thereby demonstrating the futility of said values. As such, Galzerano argues, Lucretius' examples encourage his audience to abandon their current worldviews and to live according to an Epicurean worldview instead. These examples therefore function as so-called 'shock therapy', inviting the reader to re-evaluate and consequently distance themselves from traditional Roman values and to pursue individual salvation through Epicureanism.[370]

Lucretius' explanation of people's misguided belief in the gods clearly functions as such a didactic example. The episode demonstrates the attitude of uninformed people and introduces its far-reaching consequences, including said people's fearful attitude in the face of natural catastrophes. Lucretius' engagement with Cicero's **minitanti murmure** (Cic. *Arat.* 71) plays an important role in this demonstration. The phrase's first instance (**murmura** *magna* **minorum**, Lucr. 5.1193) forms the culmination of celestial and meteorological phenomena that take place in the heavens where the gods supposedly live, and the second instance (**magnum** *percurrunt* **murmura** *caelum*, Lucr. 5.1221) then takes this culmination as a starting point to demonstrate the consequences of this mistaken belief by confronting its followers with an escalating catalogue of natural catastrophes, from thunderstorms (Lucr. 1218–25) to a sea storm (Lucr. 5.1226–32) and finally to earthquakes that threaten cities to fall (Lucr. 5.1233–40). As such, Lucretius' repeated intertextual interaction with Cicero's *Aratea* through the phrase *murmura magna minorum* draws on the phrase's initial didactic force in the *Aratea* and magnifies it through staging Cicero's threatening murmurs at a much greater scale. This 'shock therapy' encourages Lucretius' reader to re-evaluate traditionally Roman values, including their belief in the gods and their appreciation of political ambition. After all, there is a specifically Roman dimension to these catastrophes: the catalogue emphasises the futility of a traditional Roman career (Lucr. 5.1233–5), and its shaken cities that threaten to fall – *concussaeque cadunt urbes* (Lucr. 5.1237) remind us through contradiction of Ennius' notion

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[369] Galzerano (2019) 25. See Schiesaro (2007) 49 on Lucretius' condemnation of Roman political life and of 'a public good based on *virtus, pietas, nobilitas, honor*'.

[370] In addition to Galzerano (2019) 33, see Schroeder (2004) 140–53, who discusses Philodemus' and Lucretius' employment of examples that therapeutically create a distance between the reader and their passions. See also De Lacy (1964) on Lucretius' programme of distant viewing, especially in *De Rerum Natura* 2.

that 'on old-time ways the Roman state stands fast and on its men' (*Ann*. 156: *moribus antiquis res stat Romana virisque*).[371]

Moreover, there might be a programmatic value to Lucretius' 'menacing murmurs' more generally, for the appearance of this phrase is not limited to this episode in book 5, where it shows the reader how *not* to approach natural catastrophes. Elsewhere in *De Rerum Natura*, Lucretius presents us with the correct attitude to 'menacing murmurs' when he praises Epicurus for not letting fables about the gods or meteorological phenomena oppress his desire to learn and share the secrets of nature (*quem neque fama deum nec fulmina nec **minitanti / murmure** compressit caelum*, 'for neither fables of the gods could quell him, nor thunderbolts, nor heaven with menacing roar', Lucr. 1.68–9). In book 6, we find a few variations of the phrase as well, when Lucretius explains the potential causes of thunder (Lucr. 6.101: *tam magis hinc **magno** fremitus fit **murmure** saepe*) and when he compares the sounds that winds make when they are about to produce lightning bolts to the growling of wild beasts (Lucr. 6.197–8: ***magno** indignantur **murmure** clausi / nubibus in caveisque ferarum more **minantur***). Perhaps there is therefore a programmatic value to Lucretius' 'menacing murmurs', in that they represent one of the reasons to adopt an Epicurean understanding of the universe and to pursue an Epicurean, anxiety-free way of living life.[372] After all, Lucretius, following Epicurus' example, sought to take away fear of such natural phenomena through his exposition of the nature of things.

When, in the *Agamemnon*, Seneca introduces a deep murmur with a phrase almost identical to those in the *Aratea* and *De Rerum Natura* (***murmur** grave / **maiora minitans***, 'a deep murmur, threatening greater things', *Ag*. 466–7), he therefore uses a programmatic, Lucretian phrase to follow a series of didactic texts which stage people facing natural catastrophes, and which, by doing so, prompt the reader to re-evaluate their priorities and values and adopt a specified philosophical worldview instead. As such, Seneca's employment of this phrase creates the expectation that we too will be witnessing philosophical-didactic examples of people experiencing natural catastrophes – and that we, too, ought to evaluate these examples and re-assess our priorities and values through adopting a specified philosophical worldview. Notably, Seneca's storm does not just threaten great things, as the storms in the *Aratea* and *De Rerum Natura* do (***minitanti murmure***, Cic. *Arat.* 71, and ***murmura magna minorum***, Lucr.

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[371] I discuss this Ennian phrase in more detail on p. 166 below.

[372] Gee (2013) 73–6 discusses the presence of the phrase *minitanti murmure* in some of the mentioned places in Lucretius' work, and primarily understands their function as a discussion of and attack on *religio*.

5.1193), but it forewarns even greater things (**murmur** *grave / **maiora minitans***, *Ag*. 466–7).[373] Just as Lucretius magnified Cicero's menacing murmur to a catalogue of natural catastrophes, culminating in earthquakes that tear apart cities, then, Seneca creates the expectation that he in turn will escalate Lucretius' natural catastrophes. This escalation not only manifests itself poetically, in the form of a sea storm that expands on many literary models that precede it, but it also expresses itself through its philosophical-didactic potential. In what follows, I demonstrate that, at first, Seneca's intertextual evocation of people facing natural disasters in the *Agamemnon*'s sea storm seems similar enough to those featured by Lucretius. Soon enough, however, it becomes clear that Seneca's storm escalates Lucretius' catastrophes by turning into an apocalyptic event. When we evaluate Seneca's evocation of Lucretian didactic examples in this light, we begin to question what they can really teach us about facing such a disastrous scenario.

As the storm continues to manifest itself, its verbal construction recalls a passage of someone facing disaster (*Ag*. 469–70):

> agitata ventis unda venturis tumet:
> cum subito **luna conditur**, stellae latent; …   470

> Lashed by rising winds, the waters swell:
> when suddenly the moon is hidden, stars obscured, …   470

The moon and the stars disappear: as such, it has become impossible to use the stars to navigate the seas, as recommended in the fragment of Cicero's *Aratea* discussed earlier. More specifically, the passage's burial of the moon (*luna conditur*, *Ag*. 470) evokes Horace's depiction of someone experiencing shipwreck in his *Ode* on *otium* (*Carm.* 2.16.1–4):[374]

> **Otium divos rogat** in patenti
> prensus Aegaeo, simul atra nubes
> **condidit lunam** neque certa fulgent
> sidera nautis, …

[373] After Seneca, we only find this phrase in Silius Italicus (*Pun*. 3.465: *minitantia murmura*, where the Rhone river sends up threatening murmurs when Hannibal crosses it) and Ennodius (*Vit. Ep*. 192: *fragoso … murmure minitantes*, about Charybdis' gaping jaws).
[374] Tarrant (1976) 263, Boyle (2019) 303 refer to Horace's *Ode*, but do not expand on the allusion.

Otium is what a man prays the gods to grant him when caught in the open Aegean, and a dark cloud has buried the moon, and the sailors no longer have the bright stars to guide them.

This vignette depicts a man at sea who turns to the gods and asks for *otium* when the first signs of a storm appear: a dark cloud has buried the moon (compare **condidit lunam**, *Carm.* 2.16.3, with **luna conditur**, *Ag*. 470), and sailors can no longer rely on the certainty of the stars. This scenario is the first of several that portray people wishing for *otium* under dire circumstances, before Horace makes the overall point of this *Ode*, namely that the pursuit and acquisition of wealth and power do not facilitate a good, anxiety-free life: rather, we should refuse to worry about what lies ahead by living in moderation and by disregarding the demands of the *vulgus*. This *Ode* is strongly indebted to Lucretius.[375] In addition to its prominent engagement with the proem to *De Rerum Natura* 2, the *Ode*'s first vignette calls to mind Lucretius' depiction of a Roman general experiencing shipwreck (Lucr. 5.1226–1235):

> summa etiam cum vis violenti per mare venti
> induperatorem classis super aequora verrit
> cum validis pariter legionibus atque elephantis,
> non **divum pacem votis adit** ac prece quaesit
> ventorum pavidus paces animasque secundas,   1230
> nequiquam, quoniam violento turbine saepe
> correptus nilo fertur minus ad vada leti?

When also the supreme violence of a furious wind upon the sea sweeps over the waters the chief admiral of a fleet along with his mighty legions and elephants, does he not crave the gods' peace with vows, does he not in his panic seek with prayers the peace of the winds and favouring breezes? But all in vain, since none the less he is often caught up in the furious hurricane and driven upon the shoals of death.

Just as Horace's sailor turns to the gods in order to negotiate *otium* (**otium divos rogat**, Hor. *Carm.* 2.16.1), so too Lucretius' general approaches the gods to ask for peace (**divum pacem**

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[375] Nisbet and Hubbard (1978) 254–5. The *Ode* particularly evokes the proem to *De Rerum Natura* 2, in which Lucretius criticises the pursuit of wealth and display of power and points out their inability to dispel anxiety.

votis adit, Lucr. 5.1229).[376] In Lucretius' poem, the behaviour of this Roman general illustrates the miseries caused by erroneous beliefs concerning the nature of the gods (Lucr. 5.1161–1240). I have already demonstrated that Seneca evokes this Lucretian episode on people's misplaced belief in the gods through the phrase ***murmur grave / maiora minitans*** (*Ag.* 466–7). When Seneca describes the disappearance of the moon (***luna conditur***, *Ag.* 470), then, he recalls both Horatian and Lucretian examples of people's behaviour when faced with disaster. Both examples illustrate people with the wrong priorities from an overwhelmingly Epicurean point of view: their appreciation of wealth and power and their misguided belief in the gods have landed them in unfortunate situations, and now it is too late for them to salvage themselves: they die.

So far, Seneca's sea storm has recalled predominantly Epicurean portrayals of uninformed people experiencing disaster. Within their original contexts, these examples encourage the reader to reassess their own values and adopt an Epicurean point of view in favour of appreciating traditional Roman values. We begin to question their didactic value in the context of Seneca's play as the tempest continues to manifest itself (*Ag.* 472–4):

> nec una **nox** est: densa tenebras **obruit**
>
> **caligo** et omni luce subducta **fretum**
>
> **caelumque miscet**. …

> And night is doubled: dense fog overwhelms
>
> the darkness; once all light's removed, the sea and sky
>
> are indistinguishable.

The night is not of a uniform nature: in addition to darkness, it also brings fog that takes away all light – and thereby the distinction between sea and sky. This phenomenon is phrased in explicitly Lucretian language: the dense fog that smothers the darkness (*densa tenebras* **obruit** */* **caligo**, *Ag.* 472–3) evokes Lucretius' explanation of nightfall (*at* **nox obruit** *ingenti* **caligine** *terras*, 'But night buries the earth in vasty blackness', Lucr. 5.650). At the same time, Seneca's depiction of the fog also recalls Lucretius' discussion of the production of thunderbolts during storms (*sic igitur supera nostrum caput esse putandumst / tempestatem altam. neque enim* **caligine** *tanta /* **obruerent** *terras, nisi inaedificata superne / multa forent multis exempto nubila*

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[376] The parallel between these two passages is noted by Nisbet and Hubbard (1978) 256.

sole, 'In this way, therefore, we must believe the tempest to reach high above our heads. For the clouds would not submerge the earth with such blackness, unless there were many built above many, robbing us of the sun', Lucr. 6.262–5).[377] As such, the *Agamemnon*'s sea storm combines several Lucretian atmospheric phenomena to create a nighttime tempest. This is no straightforward storm, but one of a cosmic scale, for the fog mixes the elements of sea and sky (***fretum / caelumque miscet***, *Ag*. 473–4).

The mixing of natural elements in Latin literature is first found in book 3 of *De Rerum Natura*, where Lucretius explains that we should not fear death. After all, our existence is dependent on the union of body and soul, both of which are material and mortal. Since death dissolves this union, and since the soul is mortal, we do not have to fear the fate of our souls after death, not even if the world itself should end (Lucr. 3.838–42):

> sic, ubi non erimus, cum corporis atque animai
> discidium fuerit quibus e sumus uniter apti,
> scilicet haud nobis quicquam, qui non erimus tum,   840
> accidere omnino poterit sensumque movere,
> non **si terra mari miscebitur et mare caelo.**

> So, when we shall no longer be, when the parting shall have come about between body and spirit from which we are compacted into one whole, then sure enough nothing at all will be able to happen to us, who will then no longer be, or to make us feel, not if earth be commingled with sea and sea with sky.

In this passage, Lucretius depicts the mingling of elements as an apocalyptic event with cosmic consequences. Just as earth, sea, and sky are mingled in Lucretius' future apocalypse (*si terra mari **miscebitur et mare caelo***, Lucr. 3.842), so too the *Agamemnon*'s fog mixes sea and sky (***fretum / caelumque miscet***, *Ag*. 473–4).[378] If we consider the ways in which the *Agamemnon*'s

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[377] Otherwise, the combination of *caligo* and *obruere* in extant Latin only occurs in Sen. *Suas*. 1.2, where it describes otherworldly darkness on the edge of the world, and in Stat. *Silv*. 5.5.52–3, where it describes a metaphorical fog of sorrow.

[378] This apocalyptic imagery occurs across Senecan drama, where the mingling of elements, especially when described by the verb *miscere*, often indicates cosmic disarray and/or the end of the world. See e.g. Calder (1983); Segal (1983) 172–89; Rosenmeyer (1989) 136–59; Schmitz (1993) 193–200, 208–12; Mader (2000).

This imagery can also be recognised in Verg. *Aen*. 1.133–4: *iam **caelum terramque** meo sine numine, venti, **miscere** et tantas audetis tollere moles*, 'Do you winds now dare to move heaven and earth and raise these great

storm manifests itself, then, we must conclude that this is no ordinary tempest. Rather, this storm establishes itself on a cosmic scale. If we were to adopt the Epicurean approach to such an apocalyptic storm as recommended by Lucretius, the best possible scenario is that we do not fear death while the cosmos is falling apart. But how are we supposed to endure these disasters while they are happening? This is where Epicureanism falls short. After all, the Epicurean passages that Seneca alludes to here predominantly teach us how not to behave: we should not believe in the gods, and we should not pursue the wealth and power that lands us in precarious situations at sea. This Epicurean tactic of avoidance, which is meant to facilitate an anxiety-free life, does not explicitly teach us how to endure dire circumstances.[379] As such, Seneca's escalation of the sea storm into an unavoidable apocalyptic event highlights the limitations of Epicurean strategies. Thus, as noted earlier (p. 120), while Seneca demonstrates appreciation for Lucretius' poetic work through engaging with it, he also shows scepticism about the Epicureanism as a practicable philosophical system.

In the next sections, I suggest that Seneca's escalation of the sea storm not only highlights the shortcomings of Epicureanism, but that it also functions as a pedagogical exercise that addresses Stoic as well as non-Stoic spectators. I do so by comparing the *Agamemnon*'s tempest to Seneca's treatment of earthquakes in *Natural Questions* 6. This treatment presents us with an image of the Stoic *sapiens* facing apocalyptic circumstances that shows a range of verbal and thematic parallels to the *Agamemnon*'s sea storm (*QNat*. 6.32.4), and that likewise illustrates the futility of Epicurean strategies in the face of disaster through evocation of Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*. By considering this apocalyptic image in the light of Seneca's pedagogical approaches in *Natural Questions* 6 and comparing it to the *Agamemnon*'s giant sea storm, I suggest that Seneca employs similar pedagogical approaches in the *Agamemnon*: the use of terrifying and intertextually rich language, combined with the escalation of local disaster into cosmic catastrophe, is intended to strengthen readers against the experience and endurance of (local) trauma.

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masses without my divine authority?' On the *Aeneid*'s sea storm as a cosmic (Lucretian) disaster, see Hardie (1986) 90–7.

[379] To cite Cooper (2004) 312: 'He [Epicurus] could limit himself to getting his patients to memorize various basic precepts as guides to achieving and maintaining that [pleasurable] state of mind, and to train themselves to keep them in mind as they face adversities and make their choices. … But for a Stoic, whose ultimate goal is precisely to improve his own and others' minds – their grasp of philosophical truths on the basis of the reasons that in fact make them true – matters can never be so simple.'

It's The End of The World As We Know It (And The *Sapiens* Feels Fine)

In book 6 of the *Natural Questions*, Seneca discusses the causes of earthquakes. His discussion is aimed at comforting his audience and lessening or even taking away their fears, particularly regarding the (in)stability of the world and death (*QNat*. 6.1.4–3.4). His understanding of his audience in this book is explicitly plural: he assumes an audience of readers with different abilities and at different stages of moral and philosophical development. To address this plural audience, Seneca employs the following pedagogical approaches.

Seneca deliberately writes in a terrifying way (*QNat*. 6.2.1). This approach is meant to provide *stulti* or *imperiti*, who are not trained in philosophy, with consolation through the abandonment of false hopes, thus improving their disposition and access to Stoic truths. *Prudentes*, more experienced students of Stoicism, on the other hand, can learn to recognise the causes of things as Seneca describes them and thereby free themselves from fear.[380] This notion is in line with Seneca's different approaches to his different readers elsewhere. This includes, for example, the *sententiae* frequently uttered by Seneca's dramatic protagonists, powerful phrases from which non-philosophers and beginning students of Stoicism might benefit. Similarly to Seneca's terrifying writing style, *sententiae* may be helpful to such spectators because they have an immediate impact on their feelings, and because they focus their minds in ways that will help them begin their philosophical journeys.[381] Another example of Seneca's plural pedagogical approaches is his employment of precepts and *exempla*. In *Letter* 94, Seneca argues that beginning students of Stoicism may be guided by specific precepts before understanding why those precepts are correct (*Ep*. 94.31, 50–1), but at a certain point they should be able to judge examples and modelled behaviours correctly themselves.[382] Thus, Seneca's distinction between *stulti* or *imperiti* and *prudentes* at the beginning of *Natural Questions* 6 speaks to his pedagogical programme more broadly.

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[380] See Sen. *QNat*. 6.2–3 with Inwood (2002) 138–9. See Limburg (2007) 313 n. 37 for an overview of emendations to this passage, which might require an understanding of three audiences rather than two.

[381] Cf. e.g. *Ep*. 94.25, 28–9. On Seneca's employment of and approach to *sententiae*, see Asmis (2015) 234.

[382] Noting that the *populus* ascribes moral value to many historical *exempla* based on their political and military successes (that is, based on *externa*), Seneca urges the reader to 'unweave' the connection between moral value and political and military successes (*omnia ista exempla ... retexenda sunt*, *Ep*. 94.68) and to learn how to evaluate correctly, namely through the adoption of Stoic conceptions of value and standards of evidence. While Seneca regularly engages with exemplary discourse elsewhere, in this *Letter* he offers an explicitly Stoic critique on some of its basic principles and assumptions. On *Letter* 94, see especially Bellincioni (1979), Schafer (2009), Roller (2015) 131–40. Roller (2015) 150 also discusses *Letter* 120, which likewise reflects on exemplary discourse. In this *Letter*, Seneca relates how we may acquire the concepts of the good and the honourable: observing and learning about the actions of others and judging them forms the first stage of this process.

Seneca affects his readers not only by writing in a terrifying way, but also through employing a method of escalation in terms of scale. By broadening the reader's perspective from their local environment to the cosmos over the course of book 6, Seneca escalates the local source of the reader's grief – in this case: the Campanian earthquake of 62 CE – to global and cosmic levels. During this escalation in *Natural Questions* 6, Seneca explains the earthquakes' potential causes to demonstrate that these natural phenomena are simply aspects of cosmic functioning, even if they are unusual or catastrophic. Thus, through escalating a localised source of grief and fear and through technical explanation, Seneca fortifies the advanced reader's mind against trauma at the local level and encourages them to pursue freedom of fear.[383] Fortifying our minds, Seneca states at the end of this book, is important because it enables us to become courageous enough to endure anything, including death, in whatever manner and through whichever causes it comes to us (*QNat*. 6.32.1–3). In line with the pedagogical techniques practised throughout this book, Seneca then presents us with an image of how someone – a *sapiens* – would ideally endure the apocalypse and face death (*QNat*. 6.32.4):

> Pusilla res est hominis anima, sed ingens res contemptus animae. hanc qui contempsit **securus videbit maria turbari**, etiamsi illa omnes excitaverunt venti, etiamsi **aestus** aliqua perturbatione mundi totum in terras vertet oceanum. securus aspiciet **fulminantis caeli trucem atque horridam faciem**, **frangatur** licet **caelum** et **ignes** suos in exitium omnium, in primis suum, **misceat**. securus aspiciet **ruptis compagibus dehiscens solum**, illa licet **inferorum regna retegantur**. **stabit** super illam voraginem intrepidus, et **fortasse quo debebit cadere desiliet**.

> A person's soul is a trivial thing, but contempt for one's soul is a tremendous thing. Anyone who treats it with contempt will watch the seas in turmoil without anxiety, even if all the winds have whipped them up, even if through some disturbance to the world the tide is diverting the entire ocean onto the land. He will look without anxiety at the cruel, dreadful sight of the sky flashing with lightning, even if the sky is fractured and is concocting fires that will destroy everything, starting with itself. He will look without

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[383] I owe my understanding of Seneca's pedagogical techniques in *Natural Questions* 6 to Williams (2012) 213–57. These techniques are in line with the pedagogical approaches Wagoner (2014) recognises in the *Letters*, which aim to improve the reader's disposition and access to Stoic truths by eliminating vices and passions.

anxiety at the ground gaping open as its structure shatters, even if the kingdoms of the underworld were to be revealed. He will stand above that abyss unflinching and perhaps will leap in where he will have to fall.

Through showing contempt for your soul, Seneca explains, it is possible to face your death without anxiety, even if it is caused or accompanied by the dissolution of the cosmos. Throughout this passage, he employs the pedagogical strategy he has utilised over the course of book 6: he increasingly amplifies natural phenomena until the sage is confronted with extreme, apocalyptic circumstances. Crucially, this passage has much in common with Lucretius' approach to death in *De Rerum Natura*, including some of its phrasing.[384] Seneca begins his episode by depicting someone who watches the seas in turmoil without anxiety (*securus videbit maria turbari*), just as Lucretius' sage – safely ashore – watches others struggle on the turbulent ocean (Lucr. 2.1–2: *suave, **mari** magno **turbantibus** aequora ventis, / e terra magnum alterius **spectare** laborem*, 'Pleasant it is, when on the great sea the winds trouble the waters, to gaze from shore upon another's great tribulation').[385] For, so Lucretius then notes, it is sweet to perceive from what misfortunes you yourself are free (*sed quibus ipse malis careas quia cernere suave est*, Lucr. 2.4).

But in this passage, Seneca confronts the sage with natural phenomena that escalate until no one, not even the *sapiens*, is free or distanced from misfortune: the winds whip up the seas until it displaces itself and the sky fractures before finally the earth itself ruptures, directly confronting the sage with a yawning abyss. What would the Epicurean sage do under these circumstances? We do not know, for Lucretius' poem does not present us with such a scenario,

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[384] The idea that death is not a great thing (*ipsum perire non magnum est*, *QNat*. 6.32.5) and that we should not fear the fate of our trivial souls (*pusilla res est hominis anima, sed ingens res contemptus animae*, *QNat*. 6.32.4) is fundamental to Lucretius' exposition of Epicureanism. As Lucretius notes (Lucr. 3.830): *nil igitur mors est ad nos neque pertinet hilum*, 'Therefore death is nothing to us, it matters not one jot.' Seneca's evocation of Lucretius' poem has not gone unnoticed, but its significance has not been fully recognised. Williams (2012) 255–7 notes that the sage's sublime response here 'may be markedly Lucretian in colour', but points out that Seneca describes a similar mindset without obvious connection to Lucretius elsewhere (i.e. in *Ep*. 41.4–5), and generally argues that 'doctrinal difference between Lucretius and Seneca, Epicurean and Stoic, fails to diminish the commonality that we shall observe between them as artists' (p. 215).

Berno (2019) 78, on the other hand, does offer a more explicit, though still brief, discussion of Epicurean elements in this passage, and I here build on her suggestion that 'Seneca's sage refuses to be a distant observer, rather he wants to engage in the apocalypse' by commenting on the episode's confrontation of the Epicurean sage through the escalation of natural phenomena.

[385] Berno (2019) 78 notes Seneca's allusion to Lucretius' proem to book 2 of *De Rerum Natura* in this passage.

nor does the poem prepare us for it in a practical sense.[386] But Seneca's Stoicism does, and once the natural phenomena culminate into a full-blown apocalypse, Seneca's *sapiens* no longer watches disaster unfold from a distance in an Epicurean fashion.[387] Instead, I suggest that he demonstrates particularly Stoic behaviour in immediate confrontation with the apocalypse: the *sapiens* stands above the abyss, with *stabit* not merely describing the act of 'standing', but also evoking the notion of 'standing one's ground'.[388] This notion is in line with the Stoic concept of *constantia*, a desirable unity of *animus* and action that represents the opposite of *mentis fluctuatio* or instability, and that famously characterises Cato's attitude to the end of the world as he knew it (*Prov*. 1.2.9: *Catonem … **stantem** nihilo minus inter ruinas publicas rectum*, 'Cato … nevertheless standing upright amid public ruin').[389]

The *constantia* of the *sapiens* means that he is able to face the end of the world with consistency too. This could mean leaping in where he will have to fall (*et fortasse quo debebit cadere desiliet*, *QNat*. 6.32.4). The uncertainty of this possibility may come across as a cliff-hanger, and in some ways it is: it remains unclear to the reader whether this sage will jump into the abyss or not. The point here, I suggest, is found precisely in the uncertainty – in the *fortasse* – of the possibility.[390] Unlike someone who is not prepared for this scenario, the Stoic sage has the ability to exercise agency regarding his behaviour in the face of such cosmic disaster. He does not observe from a distance, but he makes a decision and embarks on his next course of action. This crucial difference is illustrated by the juxtaposition of the passage's concluding words *cadere desiliet*, which contrast the passive experience of falling, *cadere*, with the proactive deed of jumping: *desiliet*.

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[386] *De Rerum Natura* does present us with several apocalyptic scenarios, but none of them feature a sage or any specific advice on how to deal with said apocalypses. Cf. e.g. Lucr. 2.1105–74; 5.91–109, 380–415.

[387] Berno (2019) 78.

[388] Cf. *OLD* s.v. *sto* 1 vs *sto* 17.

[389] On Seneca's conceptualisation of *constantia*, see Inwood (1985) 105, who explains that, according to Seneca, consistency with oneself can be achieved by being correct in one's actions and desires, i.e. for them to be in line with nature. See also Star (2006) 211–20 on *Ep*. 120 and *De Providentia*. Seneca's characterisation of Cato as someone able to stand one's ground, both at *Prov*. 1.2.9 (quoted) and *Constant*. 2.2 (*adversus vitia civitatis degenerantis et pessum sua mole sidentis stetit solus et cadentem rem publicam, quantum modo una retrahi manu poterat, tenuit*, 'He stood alone against the vices of a decadent city sinking under its own weight, and he kept a hold on the falling republic as much as it could be dragged back by just one hand'), contrasts with his depiction of famous political leaders such as Alexander the Great, who are incapable of *stare* (cf. e.g. *Ep*. 94.63: *non ille ire vult, sed non potest stare, non aliter quam in praeceps deiecta pondera, quibus eundi finis est iacuisse*, 'He doesn't want to be on the move but he cannot stay still, just as weights thrown down a hill keep moving until they reach the bottom').

[390] Berno (2019) 78–9 comments that this image, 'which clearly purports to be an apology for suicide', shows the difference between the Epicurean motto λάθε βιώσας ('live unnoticed') and the Stoic struggle with participating in political life. I explore this idea and its relevance for the *Agamemnon* at the end of the next section (pp. 155ff.).

As such, this episode's literal *mise en abyme* explores the ideal behaviour of the Stoic *sapiens* through implicit comparison with the hypothetical behaviour of an Epicurean sage facing the end of the world. While this passage certainly shows commonalities between Seneca and Lucretius as artists, and even as philosophers, with both sages encouraging and facilitating the ability to watch or experience natural phenomena without anxiety, the Stoic sage's stance nonetheless exemplifies a doctrinal difference: his practice of Stoicism has prepared him to endure this apocalyptic scenario.[391] Seneca emphasises this difference immediately following his apocalyptic episode, when he notes that we must keep our soul ready to be received by disaster if we want to be happy and have a tranquil existence (*si volumus esse felices… anima in expedito est habenda*, QNat. 6.32.5).[392]

With this image of the *sapiens* in mind, and a more detailed understanding of the Stoic ideas that motivate his attitude and behaviour, let us return to the *Agamemnon*. Earlier, I demonstrated that Seneca escalates the *Agamemnon*'s sea storm by taking Lucretius' natural disasters as a starting point and by catastrophising them into a much greater apocalyptic scenario, and that his evocation of people adopting an Epicurean approach to these scenarios highlights the limitations of Epicurean strategies in the face of unavoidable disaster. We now see that this escalation and its accompanied staging of Epicurean people is comparable to Seneca's pedagogical strategies in *Natural Questions* 6, where Seneca likewise confronts a(n initially Epicurean) sage with a local cause of grief which escalates into a cosmic disaster, and where this staging likewise emphasises the ultimate futility of Epicurean strategies. In the *Natural Questions*, this method is meant to fortify the reader's mind against local trauma and to motivate them to pursue freedom of fear.[393] By comparing this passage from the *Natural Questions* to the *Agamemnon*'s tempest, I will now suggest that Seneca's staging of the *Agamemnon*'s apocalyptic sea storm should be interpreted similarly, namely as a fictive and poetic version of Seneca's pedagogical method of escalation in the *Natural Questions* which strengthens the spectator against local trauma. But while we are presented with a sage in the *Natural Questions*, we will find no such model in the *Agamemnon*.

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[391] *Contra* Williams (2012) 215 (see n. 384 on p. 148). Additionally, the philosophies' differing understandings of physics mean that their sages come to a similar attitude to death via different routes of argumentation. Lucretius argues that we should not fear the fate of our souls because they are material and will dissolve after death, and because there is therefore no way that we will somehow maintain or regain our conscience or identity (Lucr. 3.830–69). According to Seneca, however, we should not fear the fate of our souls after death because they are made from divine matter, and because, through death, our souls are being 'given back' to nature (*QNat.* 6.32.6).

[392] On this Senecan approach, often termed *praemeditatio futurorum malorum* by modern scholars, see especially Armisen-Marchetti (2008).

[393] Williams (2012) 213–57.

The *Agamemnon*'s manifestations of the sea storm show parallels to the escalating apocalyptic circumstances faced by the sage in the *Natural Questions* (*Ag.* 485–90, 94–5, 99–500):

mundum revelli sedibus totum suis	485
ipsosque **rupto** crederes **caelo** deos	
decidere et atrum rebus induci chaos.	
vento resistit **aestus** et ventus retro	
aestum revolvit; non capit sese mare:	
in astra pontus tollitur, caelum perit	471
undasque **miscent** imber et fluctus suas.	490
...	
... excidunt **ignes** tamen	
et nube **dirum fulmen** elisa micat;	495
...	
illam **dehiscens** pontus in praeceps rapit	
hauritque et alto redditam revomit mari; …	500

You'd think the world in its entirety was being	485
ripped up from its roots, the gods themselves were falling	
from the shattered sky, dark chaos being overlaid.	
Tide opposes wind and wind rolls back	
the tide. The sea cannot contain itself:	
the deep is lifted to the stars, the sky is gone,	471
and rain and waves combine their waters.	490
…	
Yet fires do flare	
as terrifying lightning flashes from compacted cloud.	495
…	
One ship is snatched abruptly by the yawning deep	
which swallows it and spews it out, restored to different sea.	500

While, at first glance, the *Agamemnon*'s sea storm seems to depict a predominantly water-induced apocalypse, it comprises world endings through other elements too.[394] Just as the sage watches the tide displace the ocean, so the *Agamemnon*'s surging sea cannot hold itself (compare *etiamsi **aestus** aliqua perturbatione mundi totum in terras vertet oceanum*, *QNat.* 6.32.4, with *vento resistit **aestus** et ventus retro / **aestum** revolvit. non capit sese mare*, *Ag.* 488–9). And just as the sage sees the sky being fractured, so too we are here invited to watch the sky rupturing (compare ***frangatur … caelum***, *QNat.* 6.32.4, with ***rupto … caelo***, *Ag.* 486). Both ruptures are accompanied by fire and dreadful lightning (compare ***fulminantis** caeli trucem* atque ***horridam** faciem … **ignes***, *QNat.* 6.32.4, with ***ignes** … nube **dirum fulmen** elisa micat*, *Ag.* 494–5). Finally, we watch the *Agamemnon*'s sea perform an action similar to the *Natural Questions*' ground by splitting open to swallow ships (compare ***dehiscens** solum*, *QNat.* 6.32.4, with ***dehiscens** pontus*, *Ag.* 499).[395] The *Agamemnon*'s sea storm then reveals an underworld to us too: it is so dark that the fleet cannot see what is happening (compare *illa licet inferorum regna retegantur*, *QNat.* 6.32.4, with *premunt tenebrae lumina et dirae Stygis / inferna nox est*, 'Darkness presses men's eyes; the hellish night of dire Styx prevails', *Ag.* 494–5).

In the *Natural Questions*, the sage stands above this abyss without fear, and he might even jump into it before he will inevitably fall down, thereby demonstrating his ability and eagerness to offer himself to fortune: one of the hallmarks of the Stoic sage.[396] But we detect no such behaviour among the Greek fleet: fearful and not resigned to their fates, the sailors question the gods' decisions in an attempt to divert their fate (*Ag.* 507–27).[397] And while Ajax Oileus

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[394] As Berno (2019) 78 notes, in the *Natural Questions* the sage faces all possible ends of the world: water, fire, and earth.

[395] The sage watching the earth split open (*dehiscens solum*) echoes Seneca's list of possible deaths at the beginning of book 6, which culminates in the earth splitting open and Seneca falling to his death (*QNat.* 6.1.9). For comparable instances where *dehiscere* depicts the earth or sea splitting open to disclose what lies beneath, especially the underworld, cf. Verg. *Aen.* 1.106: *unda dehiscens*, 'the yawning sea', displaying the ground beneath the waves; 6.52–3: *neque enim ante dehiscent / attonitae magna ora domus*, 'Until you have prayed the great mouths of my house are dumb and will not open'; 8.243: *terra dehiscens*, 'the earth splitting open', to disclose the underworld, an image describing Cacus' cave.

[396] For the student of Stoicism offering themselves to fortune, cf. e.g. *Prov.* 1.4.12; *Constant. passim*; *Tranq.* 4.1–2ff., 11.1; *Ep.* 13.1–3.

[397] These sailors do not simply beg the gods for *otium*, as the sailors in Horace and Lucretius do. Instead, they challenge the gods' decisions. From their questions, it is clear that they locate moral value in their political and military successes: they dared glorious things (*nobile ausos*, *Ag.* 517) and they are brave men (*fortes … viros*, *Ag.* 518). Since they consider a death at sea to be a fate for cowards (*ignava … fata*, *Ag.* 518), they see their fate as incompatible with their praiseworthy achievements – hence their outcry: *perdenda mors est*?, 'Must our deaths be wasted?' (*Ag.* 519). The disparity they perceive between their achievements and the manner of their deaths is also evident from the second part of their speech. On the one hand, the Greeks seem to be willing to accept that the

faces the elements head on and endures the disaster for a while (*solus invictus malis*, *Ag*. 532), just as a lonely heroic sage may endure the collapsing universe, Ajax' self-congratulatory speech on having conquered all elements as well as some of the gods demonstrates his attribution of moral value to military successes, that is, to external matters.[398] Consequently, Ajax' behaviour is immediately punished by Neptune, who uproots the rock Ajax is lying on so that Ajax falls to the bottom of the sea, where he lies conquered by earth, fire, and ocean (*terraque et igne victus et pelago iacet*, *Ag*. 556).[399] Ultimately, then, Ajax does not behave as a sage might: he values external matters, and he does not face his death with *constantia*, but he falls to his death, clinging to the rock he was lying on (*quem cadens secum tulit*, *Ag*. 555).

In fact, no character in the *Agamemnon* demonstrates truly sagacious behaviour according to Stoic standards. Only one character demonstrates endurance and a willingness to meet death: Cassandra. At the very end of the play, Cassandra expresses her readiness to die (*Ag*. 1006–11):[400]

Ne trahite, vestros ipsa praecedam gradus.
perferre prima nuntium Phrygibus meis   1005
propero: repletum ratibus eversis mare,
captas Mycenas, mille ductorem ducum,
ut paria fata Troicis lueret malis,
perisse dono, feminae stupro, dolo.

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gods may want to kill the Greeks (*Ag*. 522–3): this is atonement for Ilium (*Ag*. 577 – see Tarrant (1976) 284, Boyle (2019) 315). On the other hand, the Greek sailors question the gods' method of killing by pointing out that this sea storm would kill the (innocent) Trojans along with the (guilty) Greeks (*Ag*. 524–6). This reasoning evokes Lucretius' argument against lightning as the instrument of Jupiter's wrath (Lucr. 6.387–95). Thus, when we evaluate the sailors' behaviour according to Stoic standards, we must conclude that their attitude is flawed because they attribute value to external (political and military) matters, and we must recognise that their Epicurean reasoning does not benefit them in their confrontation with an apocalyptic disaster.

[398] See Berno (2019) 79–80, who notes that Ajax' portrayal in the *Agamemnon* is similar to the image of Cato fighting the apocalypse in *Constant*. 2.1–2. Cf. *Ag*. 544–52, especially 545–6: *superasse nunc me pelagus atque ignes iuvat, / vicisse caelum Palladem fulmen mare*, 'It's sweet now to have tamed ocean and fire, to have conquered sky, Pallas, lightning, sea.' On textual issues regarding these lines, see Boyle (2019) 319 with further bibliography.

[399] The gods play an exclusively destructive role in this sea storm, illustrating the moral aspect of this storm as a punishment for the Greeks' activities at Troy: Pallas Athena hurls a thunderbolt at Ajax, and, while we might expect Neptune to restore order to the seas when he raises his head above the water, as he does in the *Aeneid* (Verg. *Aen*. 1.127: *summa placidum caput extulit unda*) and in Stat. *Silv*. 2.2, as I will demonstrate in the next chapter, here he lifts his head from the depths to kill Ajax instead (*Ag*. 554: *Neptunus imis exerens undis caput*).

[400] Additionally, during one of her prophecies, Cassandra begs the underworld to open its roof (*Ag*. 754–8), seemingly superseding the *sapiens*' lack of anxiety regarding the reveal of the underworld following the collapse of the ground (*QNat*. 6.32.4).

nihil moramur, **rapite, quin grates ago**:   1010

iam, iam iuvat vixisse post Troiam, iuvat.

No need to drag me: I will walk ahead of you.

I'm keen to be first to bring the message   1005

to my Phrygians: how the sea was filled with capsized ships,

how Mycenae fell, how the chieftain of a thousand chiefs

perished by a gift, by woman's lust, by treachery,

to meet a fate that matched the Trojan sufferings.

I do not hesitate: hurry me away; in fact, I'm grateful: 1010

now I'm glad to have survived the fall of Troy, glad.

Just as the Stoic sage may proactively leap into the abyss, anticipating his fall, so too Cassandra strides to her death rather than having to be dragged towards it (*Ag.* 1004: *trahite* contrasts the passive experience of being pulled with Cassandra's proactive deed of *praecedam*).[401] But as she continues to speak, it becomes increasingly clear that Cassandra represents a perversion of the Stoic *sapiens*. Her proactivity and her willingness to die escalate into excitement and gratitude (*quin grates ago*, *Ag.* 1010).[402] This lust for death is not particularly Stoic: elsewhere, Seneca rejects the lust for death that Cassandra displays here.[403] And as several scholars have pointed out, despite showing a contempt of death similar to that of the Stoic *sapiens*, Cassandra is still committed to and motivated by the world of the living: her primary reason for welcoming death is her impending ability to bring news of the disasters that have befallen the Greeks to the dead Trojans in the underworld (*Ag.* 1005–9).[404] Moreover, her attitude towards death and her readiness to die have been acquired not by practising Stoic philosophy, but by obtaining foresight through *furor*.[405]

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[401] See my earlier analysis of *cadere desiliet* (*QNat.* 6.32.4, on p. 154).

[402] Earlier in the play (*Ag.* 589–658), the chorus of Trojan women lauds the freedom from pain offered by death, reflecting Seneca's thoughts on 'death's freedom (from pain, dishonour, grief, or other unbearable circumstances)': see Boyle (2019) 337–8.

[403] Cf. *Ep.* 24.25: *vir fortis ac sapiens non fugere debet e vita sed exire; et ante omnia ille quoque vitetur adfectus qui multos occupavit, libido moriendi*, 'A man of courage and wisdom should not flee life but merely depart from it. Also, and especially, one must avoid that state which has come over many people: a craving for death.'

[404] On Cassandra as a Stoic *sapiens*, see e.g. Pratt (1983) 114, Shelton (1983) 178–80. On Cassandra's (non-Stoic) commitment to the world of the living and feelings of pleasure, see Motto and Clark (1988) 197–9, Paschalis (2010) 212–3. See also Trinacty (2017) 184–7, who discusses the intertextual and thematic connections between Cassandra's speech at the end of the play and Thyestes' speech at its beginning.

[405] See Paschalis (2010) on Cassandra's *furor* and on *furor* in the *Agamemnon* more generally.

Cassandra therefore represents someone whose attitude and behaviour initially appear to correspond to Stoic values, but upon further reflection it becomes clear that her motivation and methods of achieving this attitude do not. Ultimately, she is not motivated by a Stoic desire to live (and die) according to nature, but by military and political successes – or rather: failures – just as much as the Greeks are. Thus, while we may recognise some sage-like aspects in Cassandra's attitude and behaviour, and while she precedes the steps of her capturers (*vestros ipsa praecedam gradus*, *Ag*. 1004), we should not follow her footsteps. Indeed, at the end of her speech, her Stoic and proactive attitude towards death falters: *rapite*, she exclaims (*Ag*. 1010), 'hurry me away', contradicting her earlier desire to stride ahead rather than to be dragged and thereby demonstrating her lack of Stoic *constantia* in the face of death.

Yet the behaviour of the *sapiens* as depicted in the *Natural Questions* is not entirely straightforward either. Perhaps the wise man will leap in where he will have to fall (**fortasse quo debebit cadere desiliet**, *QNat*. 6.32.4) – but perhaps he will not. Earlier, I discussed this cliff-hanger, and I argued that the uncertainty of this possibility emphasised the agency of the Stoic sage in this apocalyptic scenario. But there is an important political aspect to this imagery too. In her discussion of this passage, Berno asserts that this image 'clearly purports to be an apology for suicide,' which, she argues, demonstrates the difference between the Epicurean motto λάθε βιώσας ('live unnoticed') and the Stoic struggle with participating in political life.[406] While the passage on its own might not seem to give much cause to such a political reading, its position at the end of *Natural Questions* 6 suggests its all-encompassing function. As Williams summarises his analysis of this book:

> 'as we progress in Book 6 *ex oculis ad rationem*, we might also find ourselves transported from a literal to a more nuanced and figurative view of earthquakes, which themselves offer a powerfully suggestive metaphor here for any significant disaster or affliction, public or private, physical or psychological, that destabilizes life: the normalizing techniques that Seneca uses to ease the particular trauma here are transferable to so many other aspects of our existence.'[407]

It therefore seems reasonable that an image of a *sapiens* facing the ultimate earthquake, that is, the collapse of the very foundations of the earth during an apocalyptic scenario, may be

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[406] Berno (2019) 78–9. On λάθε βιώσας as an Epicurean motto, see Roskam (2007).
[407] Williams (2012) 257.

applicable to or even inflected with other disastrous and traumatic scenarios. In fact, similar passages elsewhere in Seneca's work explicitly conflate political and apocalyptic catastrophes.[408] Some of Seneca's depictions of Cato's final moments, for example, blend the collapse of the *res publica* with the destruction of the cosmos.[409] In some of these scenarios, Seneca depicts Cato as standing alone, holding up the falling *res publica* until he perishes as the cosmos collapses.[410] In other Senecan passages, Cato does not endeavour to carry the Roman state on his shoulders until it disintegrates, but instead he proclaims his own irrelevance in the grand scheme of the cosmic whole before dying gladly.[411] While these scenarios seem to contradict each other, this inconsistency can be explained by the different functions of these episodes within their contexts: in the first case, Seneca emphasises Cato's ability to endure as well as his constancy, and in the second case, he underlines Cato's exemplary adherence to nature and providence.

Nonetheless, this inconsistency also creates a space to ask questions. Seneca's conflation of political collapse and apocalypse makes us wonder: if the king happens to not be a wise person, and if the state threatens to collapse, should the Stoic *sapiens* intervene?[412] Is there any benefit in endeavouring to hold up the state, even if it is due to fall anyway? According to orthodox Stoicism, which urges its followers to live a life in public service, the answer to these questions is yes.[413] But it is well known that Seneca, motivated by his contemporary and ever-changing political circumstances, offered an alternative approach by offering a number of scenarios in which a contemplative life may be preferred over a practical life, for example after a career in public service, when one has insufficient power or is ill, or when the state is too diseased to be helped.[414] In the *Agamemnon*, as I argue in the rest of this chapter, Seneca explores these questions through the myth of Agamemnon's homecoming.

So far, I have demonstrated that Seneca encourages the audience to spectate critically and seek philosophical-didactic *vestigia* in Eurybates' messenger speech. I have identified such

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[408] See e.g. Berno (2019) 78 on *Ep.* 9.16–9.

[409] On Seneca's equation of Rome and the cosmos, especially in the *Natural Questions*, see Hine (2006). Lucan similarly assimilates Rome to the cosmos: cf. Luc. 1.70–80 and p. 166 below.

[410] Cf. e.g. *Prov.* 1.2.9; *Constant.* 2.1–2, 95.71.

[411] Cf. e.g. *Ep.* 71.11–7.

[412] Erskine (1990) 73–4 comments that, to the Stoics, the ideal king would be a wise man, noting that this connotes an idealisation of the wise man rather than an idealisation of a king.

[413] For an overview of the Stoics' advocation of participation in politics, see Erskine (1990) 64–74.

[414] Cf. e.g. Sen. *Ot.* 2.2 (retirement), 3.2.2–3 (insufficiency of power, illness of the philosopher or of the state). Note that, should a contemplative life be pursued, Seneca recommends an active type of *otium*, so that, even if the philosopher is in contemplation, he is still committed to serving the *res publica* that matters most: the cosmos. See Williams (2014b) 219–21.

vestigia, and demonstrated that they present us with a range of models that describe ways in which (not) to face adversity. The evocation of these models is part of Seneca's pedagogical strategy here, which confronts people with a local calamity that escalates into a cosmic disaster. This escalation not only highlights the shortcomings of the evoked models, but it also strengthens the spectator against local trauma. By giving the spectator the opportunity to train their ability to evaluate situations correctly and to correctly identify and ascribe (positive) moral value, then, and by fortifying the spectator against local trauma, Seneca prepares his audience for Agamemnon's homecoming to Argos. In the second part of this chapter, I propose that this pedagogical exercise is part of Seneca's conceptualisation of Stoicism as a tool to (re)claim autonomy in a world in which many people were facing complicated social and political circumstances. I do so by demonstrating the Roman political dimension of the *Agamemnon*'s storm imagery and by (finally) exploring descriptions and the homecoming of the play's eponymous hero himself: Agamemnon.

Agamemnon's Homecoming

Although the *Agamemnon* tells the story of Agamemnon's homecoming, the king himself is remarkably absent. He only enters the stage around line 782 into a play of 1011 lines, and pays attention almost exclusively to Cassandra and to his ancestral gods (*Ag*. 778–807). Otherwise, we mostly learn about his activities and his eventual demise through reports by Eurybates and the chorus, and through prophecies by Cassandra. This remarkable absence puts the focus of Agamemnon's homecoming on the experiences of his home community, Argos: we witness Clytemnestra and Aegisthus contemplate and decide on their plans (*Ag*. 108–309), we see the chorus praising the gods and performing sacrifices (*Ag*. 310–87, 808–66), and, following Cassandra's narration of Agamemnon's death, we observe Agamemnon's children negotiating the fall of their house and Clytemnestra attempting to subdue Electra and the willing Cassandra (*Ag*. 910–1011). These scenes are overwhelmingly negative: in many ways, they emphasise the outright corruption in Argos, predominantly exemplified by Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, and they also set up the continuation of violence by facilitating Orestes' escape. Thus, the *Agamemnon* presents us with an image of a very diseased community, setting in motion its own drawn-out collapse.

In this second part of the chapter, I examine Agamemnon's return to his home community after a long period of absence. This return, I suggest, facilitates an exploration of Stoic participation in public and political life through the story of Agamemnon's homecoming. How

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can a Stoic reintegrate into his home community after a long period of absence? Is he able to and should he try to hold up or save this community if it is on the verge of collapsing, just like Cato did? And, more generally, what is the role and responsibility of the individual in relation to the Roman state, especially if that state is diseased? To answer these questions, I first examine the Roman political dimension of storm imagery elsewhere in the *Agamemnon*, highlighting the first choral ode's engagement with late republican and early imperial discourse on the relation between the Roman state and its citizens. I then examine Agamemnon's behaviour as described by Eurybates immediately prior to the messenger speech, before analysing the play's depiction of Agamemnon's actual homecoming to Argos in act 4. These analyses enable exploration of how the *Agamemnon* reconceptualises what it means and how it is possible to live a virtuous life in a world in which being a good man and being a good Roman is no longer necessarily the same as being a citizen who participates in politics and public life.

Empire State of Mind: The King and the Storms of Fortune

Following the play's opening speech of Thyestes, the chorus of Argive women sing about the fickleness of Fortune in the play's first choral ode (*Ag.* 57–107). Through a dense series of *sententiae* and tropes, they comment on Fortune's power, which should be feared especially by those who have reached particularly great hights, such as kings: *quidquid in altum Fortuna tulit, / ruitura levat*, they say (*Ag.* 101–2), 'Whatever Fortune raises up high, / she lifts it so she can hurl it down.' The chorus' meditation on the fragility of kingship and political power strongly relates to the preceding act as well as to the rest of the play, both through its general message – 'All is prepared for the toppling of Agamemnon,' as Boyle notes – as well as more specifically through its use of storm imagery, which illustrates the anxieties affecting the minds of kings and leaders (*Ag.* 63, 90–3) and the everchanging ways of Fortune (*Ag.* 64–72).[415] In

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[415] In addition to its prevalence in Seneca's corpus, the mutability of Fortune was a recurrent motif of Roman tragedy and a *topos* of Roman declamation: see Boyle (2019) 143–5. Moreover, much work has been done recently to demonstrate the importance of choral odes for the interpretation of Senecan drama, often offering another perspective, causing 'the audience to (re)adjust their own perception of the events and the interpretations offered by characters thus far': Trinacty and Sampson (2017b) 9. Mazzoli (2014) 567–9 provides a helpful chronological overview of scholarly approaches to Senecan choral song, but see especially Davis (1993), Hill (2000), Trinacty (2014) 144–64, Trinacty and Sampson (2017b) 9–13.

The *Agamemnon*'s storm imagery, which knits together and reflects on the soul, family, city, and the cosmos, is not unique to this play: storm imagery functions similarly in Seneca's *Thyestes*, as Lowrie (2016) has demonstrated.

this section, I show that this ode's meditation on kingship and political power is inflected with philosophical language and imagery which shows us that political power and the practice of philosophy cannot be separated. This message is embedded in Roman discourse on the relation between the individual and the Roman state in crisis. I suggest that this ode prepares us for Agamemnon's homecoming to Argos by inviting us to view it as the return of a displaced king to a diseased (Roman) state on the brink of collapse. As such, this ode prepares us for the play's pedagogical exercise, meant to train the spectator in evaluating situations correctly and to fortify them against trauma, while suggesting the relevance of this exercise for audience members who are facing similar social and political circumstances.

The chorus begin their song with a summary of their message. While Fortune gives great gifts to kings, they should always be on their guard for setbacks and disappointments (*Ag*. 57–63):

> O regnorum magnis fallax
> > Fortuna bonis,
> in praecipiti dubioque locas
> > excelsa nimis.
> Numquam **placidam** sceptra **quietem**   60
> certumve sui tenuere diem:
> alia ex aliis cura fatigat
> **vexatque animos nova tempestas.**

> Fortune – deceptive in power's great blessings –
> you set in precarious, unstable positions
> the too-much exalted.
> Never do sceptres possess tranquil peace   60
> or a day that is sure of itself.
> Anxiety after anxiety harries them,
> new storms always taxing their minds.

We are presented with a familiar image: those who are happy by ordinary standards – in this case: those who are kings – find themselves on lofty heights which are actually precarious. Elsewhere, Seneca emphasises such people's sudden rush to philosophy in hopes of

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salvation,[416] but here he emphasises their never-ending state of worry. The strophe's depiction of these anxious kings is phrased in markedly Lucretian language and embedded in the notion that a good king never sleeps, as a Dream sent by Zeus warns the sleeping Agamemnon in Homer's *Iliad*.[417] The peaceful rest which kings never have (***placidam … quietem***) is phrased in diction that evokes Lucretius' description of the *placidam … vitam* that is sought – but never attained – by men who wish to be famous and powerful.[418] After all, such a peaceful life is a private life, a life withdrawn from politics, the sort of life lived by an Epicurean sage – not by people who pursue wealth and power, such as kings. The opposition between these two lives is emphasised by the phrasing of the strophe's final verse: 'new storms always taxing their minds' (*Ag*. 63: ***vexatque animos nova tempestas***). *Vexari* is the verb Lucretius uses to describe people who are struggling while living a public life, pursuing wealth and power, unlike the Epicurean wise man, who prefers a life of obscurity and is free of such troubles.[419] It is therefore a particularly apt verb to characterise the worries of a king.

So far, then, this strophe presents us with kings who will never live the quiet life of the Epicurean sage, because they attribute value to wealth and power rather than to *voluptas* and *ataraxia*. But this opposition is complicated by the strophe's final two words: the kings' minds are not buffeted by any storm, but by a new type of storm: a ***nova tempestas*** (*Ag*. 63). This comparatively unique phrase calls to mind Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* 5, where the Epicurean poet explains the birth of the universe.[420] After describing how the atoms have clashed together, thereby forming the foundations of earth, sea, and sky, Lucretius notes that, at that point, there was only 'a sort of strange storm, all kinds of beginnings gathered together into a mass, while their discord, exciting war amongst them, made a confusion …' (*sed **nova tempestas** quaedam molesque coorta / omnigenis e principiis, **discordia** quorum … turbabat **proelia miscens***, Lucr. 5.436–[42]). This is not just any tempest, but the storm that plays a foundational role in the construction of Lucretius' Epicurean, atomic universe. Crucially, this storm is phrased in

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[416] See e.g. *Ep*. 94.72–4: this *Letter*'s description of people turning to philosophy because they are scared to lose what they have has much in common with the Lucretian and Horatian passages evoked in the *Agamemnon*'s sea storm.

[417] Cf. Hom. *Il*. 2.23–5: 'Do you sleep now, son of warlike Atreus, the horse-tamer? A man of counsel, charged with an army, on whom responsibility so rests, should not sleep!' See also Stat. *Ach*. 1.472 (Odysseus).

[418] Boyle (2019) 146 suggests that '*placida quies* may well be a variation of Lucretius' *placida vita*'. For *quies* as characteristic of the *sapiens*' peaceful life, cf. especially Lucr. 3.18.

[419] Lucr. 2.3–4: *non quia vexari quemquamst iucunda voluptas, / sed quibus ipse malis careas quia cernere suave est*, 'not because any man's troubles are a delectable joy, but because to perceive what ills you are free from yourself is pleasant.' I also discuss this passage in my examination of *Silvae* 2.2 in chapter 4.

[420] In extant Latin, this phrase only occurs in this grammatical form in Lucretius and Seneca.

language that recalls civil war: the adjective *nova* is often used to refer to civil unrest in the state, and Discord is personified as the leader of the armies of atoms (*discordia ... proelia miscens*).[421] Lucretius' Epicurean cosmology is therefore civil war-like in nature.[422] When Seneca's kings are buffeted by a *nova tempestas*, then, they are confronted with a storm which is distinctly philosophical but which also has a Roman political dimension.

As such, this confrontation blurs the Epicurean distinction between the king and the sage: this ode's king is not simply a king who pursues wealth and power, but one who is confronted with a philosophical tempest. Moreover, the contemplation of this storm distresses this king rather than offering him *placida quies*: even when practising philosophy, there is no rest for him. Perhaps he does not even recognise the philosophical potential of this storm. Either way, this breakdown of the Epicurean distinction between king and sage demonstrates the entanglement of politics and philosophy: in practice, they are not so easily separated. They are certainly intertwined from Seneca's point of view, as mentioned earlier (p. 156): although Seneca advocates for a gradual retreat from politics or public life if such withdrawal is necessitated by, for example, illness, Seneca generally advocates living a life in public service, which may mean participating in politics among other things.[423]

The first strophe of this ode, then, makes us wonder if and how it is possible to achieve tranquillity of mind when combining political responsibility with the practice of philosophy. Paradoxically, answers to this question about *tranquillitas* – literally: calmness of sea or weather – may be found in the *Agamemnon*'s actual *nova tempestas*: the sea storm described in Eurybates' messenger speech.[424] After all, according to Seneca, tranquillity of mind is not freedom from exterior disturbances, but rather a stable balance of the mind,[425] and, as I have argued, through its catastrophisation of the sea storm, Eurybates' messenger speech aims to fortify the spectator's mind against (localised) trauma. Through its engagement with (Epicurean) discourse on the relation between tranquillity, Roman public life, and wisdom,

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[421] Cf. *OLD* s.v. *novus* 10. Gee (2013) 53–5 discusses the civil war imagery that pervades this passage.

[422] Cf. also Lucr. 5.380–1 with Gee (2013) 54–5.

[423] Cf. e.g. Sen. *Ot.* 2.2, *Tranq.* 3–4, where Seneca notes that there are many ways to be useful to the state, deftly conflating Stoic cosmopolitanism with Roman imperialism (*Tranq.* 4.4: 'In this way and with exalted mind we have not confined ourselves within the walls of a single city, but released ourselves to do business with the whole world and declared the universe our native land, so as to give a wider battleground to our virtue').

[424] Cf. *OLD* s.v. *tranquillitas* 1. This imagery is in line with ancient analogies of life to a (sea) voyage, which Seneca also employed – e.g. in *Tranq.* 1.17, where Seneca's student Serenus says: 'I am distressed not by the storm but by seasickness.' On sea voyages as ancient metaphors, see Curtius (1948) 137, Lieberg (1969), Harrison (2007b).

[425] Sen. *Tranq.* 1.11 (Serenus' incorrect understanding of tranquillity) versus *Tranq.* 2.3 (Seneca's definition of tranquillity, which follows Democritus' εὐθυμία).

then, the first strophe of this ode prepares the audience for the philosophical-didactic aspects of the *Agamemnon*'s storm imagery, encouraging them to view the play as an opportunity to practise skills which may help them to endure complicated socio-political circumstances with a fortified mind.

The conflation of storm imagery with Roman politics continues throughout the rest of the choral ode. In the next strophe, the chorus expand on the first strophe's *nova tempestas* (*Ag.* 64–71):

> non sic Libycis Syrtibus aequor
> furit alternos volvere fluctus,   65
> non Euxini turget ab **imis**
>   **commota vadis**
> unda nivali vicina polo,
> ubi caeruleis immunis aquis
> lucida versat plaustra Bootes,   70
> ut praecipites regum casus
>   Fortuna rotat.

> Not so violently does the tide at the Syrtes
> of Libya whip wave upon wave in its fury;   65
> not so violently does churned-up water
> swell from the depths of the Euxine,
> close to the land of the ice and the snow,
> where Boötes turns his shimmering plough
> clear of the waters of blue,   70
> as the fates of rulers
> are whirled by Fortune.

In this strophe, the chorus compare Fortune's transformative powers to the recurring and turbulent cycle of waves at some of the edges of the Roman world: the infamous Syrtes, off the coast of north Africa, and the Black Sea area. These locations bring new dimensions to the ode's contemplation of philosophy and politics, namely disorder, dissolution, and displacement. I suggest that the strophe's application of disorder, dissolution, and displacement

to the ode's narrative on philosophical-political kingship works to question the relation between the individual and the Roman state.

The Syrtes were infamous for the dangers that they posed to voyagers, including their sandbanks and shallowness, winds, and strong currents that change direction as tide falls.[426] Ancient authors described the dangers of the Syrtes at length, highlighting the risk of shipwreck and the area's permanent state of flux.[427] The unpredictability and unnavigability of the Syrtes found its way not only into geological discourse, but also into other types of literature, including lyric and elegiac poetry as well as epic.[428] In fact, Lucan describes the Syrtes as a place that does not adhere to Stoic order.[429] Moreover, for many Stoics, including Seneca, the Syrtes were known for Cato the Younger's shipwreck and his troops' famous march through the Libyan desert. In such contexts, the Syrtes function as a landscape to test or realise Stoic virtue.[430] Particularly famous in this regard is Lucan's narration of Cato's journey across the Syrtes and the Libyan desert (Luc. 9.303–47), an account that Seneca himself must have been familiar with too, considering that Seneca and Lucan were related and moved in the same contemporary, intellectual environments. Seneca too discusses Cato's march: in *Letter* 104, Seneca illustrates the ability of humans to endure adversity by describing Cato's march through the desert, emphasising his leadership over the remains of his troops and his refusal to drink

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[426] Arnaud (2005) 174, Quinn (2011) 11–2.

[427] See e.g. Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 4.1237–49, 1264–71; Polyb. 1.39.1–5; Sall. *Iug.* 78; Diod. Sic. 20.42 (the dangers of the desert), Strabo 17.3.20; Mela 1.35; Plin. *HN* 5.26–41.

[428] In lyric and elegiac poetry, for example, the Syrtes became part of a motif, typically expressing the protagonist's willingness to travel anywhere and endure anything, from the elements to monsters: see Thomson (1951). Cf. e.g. Hor. *Carm.* 1.22.5 with Nisbet and Hubbard (1970) 265–6, a verse that also includes the Black Sea as our choral ode here does, and Ov. *Am.* 2.16.21, where the Syrtes form part of a catalogue of dangers that the poet-narrator would happily endure as long as his beloved were with him.

For the Syrtes in epic, cf. e.g. Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 4.1237–49, 1264–71; Verg. *Aen.* 1.110–2; Luc. 9.303–47.

[429] Lucan's literary detour to the Syrtes features two geographical theories of the region's dangerous nature, which makes its confusion of land and water particularly clear: 'The Syrtes, perhaps, when Nature gave the universe / initial shape, were left in doubt between the sea and land' (*Syrtes vel, primam mundo natura figuram / cum daret, in dubio pelagi terraeque reliquit*, Luc. 9.303–4). For an informative discussion of Lucan's Syrtes and the way they can be read as a place lacking the normal governing rules of Stoic order, see Zientek (2014) 216–20, and for an analysis of the landscape's language of cosmic dissolution and its role in the epic's closural dynamics, see Taylor (2020), who describes the Syrtes as 'a fragment of primordial chaos' (p. 94).

Another indication that the Syrtes were seen as a transgressive and unstable combination of land and water can be found in the *Dirae*, where a dispossessed farmer curses the veteran who now owns his land, and wishes for his fields to be flooded with water, so that his farmland can be called 'a foreign sister of the Libyan sand, a second Syrtis' (*barbara dicatur **Libycae** soror, altera **Syrtis***, 52–3).

[430] This tale is probably best known as told by Lucan in book 9 of the *Civil War*, but we also find accounts in e.g. Strabo (17.3.20) and Plutarch (*Vit. Cat. Min.* 56.1–4). See Leigh (2000), who discusses Lucan's narration of Cato's march and notes its engagement with a variety of discourses, including Hellenistic epic and fantastic tales, Stoic philosophy, and expositions on (good) kingship.

the scarce water until everyone else had drunk some.[431] As such, it seems probable that Seneca's allusion to the Syrtes here recalls contemporary Stoic discourse on Cato the Younger as a *sapiens* and as a political leader, especially considering the ode's focus on kingship.

The second location in this strophe brings another dimension to the ode's portrayal of faraway places, namely that of geographical and political displacement. By Seneca's time, the Black Sea had gained a specific literary association with Ovid's exile and exilic literature – indeed, as Tarrant points out, the chorus' description of this area is evocative of Ovid's *Tristia* and the *Epistulae ex Ponto*.[432] Furthermore, the chorus' depiction of the Black Sea recalls two texts. Firstly, in their description of the turbulent waves originating in the Euxine Sea's depths (*non Euxini turget ab **imis** / **commota vadis** unda*, *Ag*. 66–7), the chorus recall the appearance and intervention of Neptune in *Aeneid* 1, when, noticing that the seas are in turmoil, he raises his head above the waters before he restores calm (Verg. *Aen*. 1.124–6: *interea magno misceri murmure pontum / emissamque hiemem sensit Neptunus et **imis** / stagna refusa **vadis**, graviter **commotus***, 'Neptune, meanwhile, observed the loud disturbance of the ocean, the rampaging of storms, the draining of his deepest pools, and was moved to anger'). But we have seen that there are no gods who restore order in the *Agamemnon* – not in this choral ode, and not during the play's sea storm, where Neptune actively contributes to the sea storm's destruction (cf. *Ag*. 554, see p. 153). Instead, we are presented with storms that escalate into cosmic disorder. This escalation is anticipated through the choral ode's evocation of another text that features sea depths (***imis** … **vadis***, *Ag*. 66–7): Horace's *Epode* 16.[433]

In this particularly bleak poem, Horace declares that Rome's recurring civil wars will destroy the Roman state, and suggests that the best option is to leave Italy and set sail for the Blessed Isles on the edges of the known world, where days may be spent in a Golden Age-like paradise.[434] In their description of the Euxine Sea's depths (*Euxini… ab **imis** … **vadis***, *Ag*. 66–

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[431] Cf. *Ep*. 104.33. I discuss *Letter* 104 in more detail below (p. 175).

[432] Tarrant (1976) 186, who refers to Ov. *Tr*. 5.2.64, 5.10.1ff.; *Pont*. 4.9.2, 4.13.39ff., most of which feature snowy or icy poles and references to the Black Sea as the Euxine Sea. Boyle (2019) 147 points out that *Euxinus* is a Senecan *hapax*, and suggests that it may indicate the 'Greekness' of the chorus to a Roman audience. While this may be part of its effect here, I argue that it works predominantly to evoke Ovid's exilic literature, where it features twenty times out of the word's forty instances in early imperial Latin, with the other appearances occurring mostly in Pomponius Mela, Manilius, and Pliny's *Natural History*.

[433] While *imis… vadis* may seem a common enough phrase, the words only occur in this particular combination in Horace's *Epode* 16, the *Aeneid*, and the *Agamemnon*, as well as in Silius Italicus' *Punica*, 6.283–4, where the phrase describes the Libyan river's cry of sorrow, spreading through its depths, at the death of the Naiads' snake by the hands of Regulus.

[434] Watson (2003) 479–88 provides a useful introduction to this *Epode*, the *topoi* and discourses it draws on, as well as an overview of scholarly disagreement regarding its meanings.

7), Seneca's chorus evoke Horace's series of (purposefully impossible) conditions that would allow the escapees to return to Rome in this scenario: only when rocks float up to the surface from the sea's bed, only then would it not be a sin to return (*simul **imis** saxa renarint / **vadis** levata, ne redire sit nefas*, Hor. *Epod*. 16.25–6). [435] As such, the strophe's evocation of philosophical-political leadership and behaviour in the context of political and/or apocalyptic catastrophe invites us to view Agamemnon's homecoming to Argos as a return to a catastrophic political or even apocalyptic scenario.

The ode continues to bring to mind the relation between the individual and the Roman state by comparing Fortune's weight to that of the Roman state, visualising its collapse. As the chorus continue their ode, describing the fall of prideful dynasties at the hands of Bellona and Erinys, their emphasis on disorder increases, until, in the fourth and penultimate strophe, the chorus apply the language of disorder and dissolution to the concept of Fortune (*Ag*. 87–9):

> Licet arma vacent cessentque doli,
> sidunt **ipso pondere magna**
> ceditque **oneri** fortuna **suo**: …

> Though weapons be idle and treacheries cease,
> still greatness sinks down through its very own weight
> and fortune collapses beneath her own burden.

Seneca here depicts Fortune collapsing under its own weight. This image is not unique to Seneca, but it is typically used to describe the proverbial weight of the Roman state, which ideally rests on the shoulders of its men and *mores* – but which is at risk of collapsing into itself when those men and *mores* are absent.[436] We are perhaps most familiar with this image through Lucan, whose proem famously compares Rome collapsing under its own weight to the dissolution of the cosmos (Luc. 1.70–80).[437] But we also know it from other, earlier Roman

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[435] The phrase also anticipates the apocalyptic sea storm churning the sea from its deepest beds in Eurybates' messenger speech (*pelagus infimo eversum solo*, *Ag*. 475).

[436] Boyle (2019) 155 briefly discusses and interprets Seneca's image of Fortune in this context: I expand on its relevance to the choral ode itself and the *Agamemnon* more generally.

[437] See Roche (2009) 151–9, who mentions that the notion of Rome collapsing under its great weight is amplified in the *Agamemnon*'s choral ode, and who also refers to Hor. *Epod*. 16.

authors. Particularly relevant here again is Horace's *Epode* 16, which begins as follows (*Epod.* 16.1–2):

Altera iam teritur bellis civilibus aetas
suis et ipsa Roma viribus ruit.

Another generation now has been ground down by civil war,
and Rome herself is being ruined by her own power.

Horace introduces his escapist dream by declaring that Rome's recurring civil wars will destroy their state. He illustrates this catastrophe through the image of Rome collapsing under its own power. As Stocks has pointed out, this image responds to a particularly famous phrase from Ennius' *Annales*: *moribus antiquis res **stat Romana virisque***, 'On old-time ways the Roman state stands fast and on its men' (*Ann.* 156).[438] In this conceptualisation of the Roman state, the state rests on the shoulders of exemplary individuals. But during the late Republic and the early Empire, people had lived through times of civil war and institutional change. Authors such as Cicero and Horace explored and commented on the deterioration of Rome's men and morals in times of crisis and questioned the relation between the individual and the state – and, thereby, explored what it meant to be Roman. In *On The Republic*, for example, Cicero draws on Ennius' verse to illustrate the social and political crisis that threatens the Roman republic: no longer can the Roman Republic count on such Ennian exemplary customs and individuals.[439] In book 6 of this work, in the so-called *Dream of Scipio*, Scipio Africanus encourages the younger Scipio Aemilianus to use his soul in the best activities, which are those that involve the safety of the fatherland, namely public service motivated by the pursuit of virtue (rather than of earthly fame and glory).[440] While Cicero was pessimistic about the morals of contemporary Romans, then, he still considered individual Roman citizens to have the power and responsibility to shape and preserve the *res publica*.

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[438] Stocks (2016) 156–7. I discuss Lucretius' potential engagement with this notion above (p. 139).

[439] Cf. especially Cic. *Rep.* 5.2: *quid enim manet ex antiquis moribus, quibus ille dixit rem stare Romanam? quos ita oblivione obsoletos videmus, ut non modo non colantur, sed iam ignorentur*, 'What remains of the morals of antiquity, upon which Ennius said that the Roman state stood? We see that they are so outworn in oblivion that they are not only not cherished but are now unknown.'

[440] Zetzel (1995) 223–53. See also Williams (2012) 28–9 on Cic. *Rep.* 6.9–29 in comparison with Seneca's cosmic viewpoint. Cicero also advocates for civilian rather than military *virtus* elsewhere: see Goldberg (1995) 151–2 with references.

Horace's engagement with Ennius' verse, however, shows a different approach: as Stocks summarises, 'the Rome that once stood (*stat*) by virtue of its *viri* now falls (*ruit*) as a result of its *viribus* (16.2).'[441] As such, Horace inverts Ennius' image to create a contrast between Horace's civil-war-ridden Rome and that of Ennius' glorious past with its external victories in the Punic wars. And Horace's solution to this internal collapse is not to try to interfere and preserve the state, but to escape it, including its *vulgus*.[442] Clearly, being a good man, being a good citizen, and being a good Roman are not necessarily the same thing anymore.

Seneca's depiction of Fortune yielding to her own burden in an ode that describes the onus of kingship is obviously indebted to and embedded in this discourse that explores the relation between the individual and the state in crisis. He not only employs the same language and imagery in his description of Fortune at the beginning of the strophe, but also at its end: *quidquid in altum Fortuna tulit, / **ruitura** levat* ('Whatever Fortune raises up high, / she lifts it so she can hurl it down', *Ag.* 101–2). By embedding his ode on kingship in Roman political discourse about the state in crisis, then, through the application of the language and imagery of imperial collapse and dissolution to the concept of Fortune, Seneca brings a particularly pessimistic and contemporary dimension to the ode's exploration of kingship and the pursuit of power.

Moreover, since Horace's *Epode* depicts a Rome that implodes to such an extent that its collapse needs to be escaped from by travelling towards a nearly mythical location on the edges of the known world, we may wonder what the effect of Seneca's evocation of this poem is here. It seems that, in this choral ode, Seneca is creating a scenario in which the cosmos collapses, but in which an escape from this disaster is impossible. By staging one of Horace's *adynata*, Seneca enforces a return to the centre of the cosmos: a collapsed and corrupted Argos (Rome). Taking into account the programmatic value of this choral ode and its intertextual and thematic anticipation of the *Agamemnon*'s later events, I therefore suggest that we may read Agamemnon's homecoming to Argos as an exploration of a hypothetical return to a collapsed Rome.

In fact, Argos' corruption is emphasised throughout the *Agamemnon*. To speak in Ennian terms, the city-state of Argos does not rest on its men and its *mores*, but it is collapsing due to its lack of men and its *mores*: Clytemnestra has replaced Agamemnon as ruler, and once she

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[441] Stocks (2016) 157.

[442] Hor. *Epod*. 16.36–8: 'Let all citizens leave, having taken the vow, / or that part superior to the ignorant herd: the soft / and the hopeless can keep to their ill-fated beds!'

has resolved on her plan of action, she expresses her political rulership frequently.[443] When Agamemnon comes home, then, he returns to a corrupted city-state, and, despite his characterisation as *rex regum* and *ductor ducum* at the beginning and end of the play,[444] he has been displaced from his throne and his political identity as king. What, then, is his relationship to the city-state of Argos now? Has he learnt anything from the storm that buffeted him – has he even recognised it as a philosophical storm with didactic potential? How does he act upon his return to a state in crisis; is he able to endure the complicated socio-political circumstances he ends up in? And what can his portrayal and behaviour tell us about the return of a displaced person, a philosopher(-king), to a state that has changed for the worse in his absence, both in the world of the play itself as well as the world outside of the play?

In the next section, I show that evaluating Seneca's descriptions of Agamemnon himself, including his homecoming, provides us with answers to these questions. Key to Seneca's explorations of these issues, and to our evaluations of them, is the concept of displacement on several levels: geographical displacement, for example through exile or colonialist enterprises, cosmic displacement, namely through apocalyptic scenarios, and, fundamental to the correct Stoic approach to both of these scenarios, the displacement of our (divine) souls from heaven during our lifetimes. I show that Seneca's depictions of Agamemnon within this play are anchored in consolatory discourse that aims to broaden our perspectives from the local to the cosmic and that thereby endeavours to prepare us for any disastrous scenarios. As such,

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[443] The second act of the play is dedicated to conversations between Clytemnestra, the nurse, and Aegisthus, which are greatly rhetorical in nature and result in a Clytemnestra determined to take revenge on Agamemnon. See e.g. Shelton (1983), Mader (1988), Michalopoulos (2019). My view of Clytemnestra as a political figure goes against Hall (2005) 66, who argues that Seneca's 'Clytemnestra remains, in comparison with Aeschylus' heroine, an apolitical character.' Cf. e.g. *Ag.* 414: *effare casus quis **rates** hausit **meas***, 'Tell me what mishap engulfed my own ships,' and, after she has murdered Agamemnon (*Ag.* 964–5): *indomita posthac virginis verba impiae / regina frangam*, 'I'm queen and I will break your untamed words, / the words of an unfilial virgin.' Cf. also *Ag.* 978, where Clytemnestra addresses Aegisthus as 'equal partner in my danger and my power' (*consors pericli pariter ac regni **mei***). See Boyle (2019) 286–7 for an overview of textual issues with *Ag.* 141: I here follow Boyle in his adoption of the *E* reading.

[444] Cf. *Ag.* 39 (*rex ille regum, ductor Agamemnon ducum*), *Ag.* 1007 (*mille ductorem ducum*). Notably, Clytemnestra predominantly refers to Agamemnon not as a king, but as a man or as her husband, often in a condescending way that testifies to her negative emotions. Thus, she displaces him from his throne through language too. Cf. e.g. *Ag.* 156: *decem per annos vidua respiciam virum?*, 'Give him a second glance after ten years' widowhood?', *Ag.* 165: *quos ille dignos Pelopia fecit domo*, '[my daughter's wedding], which he made suitable for Pelops' house', *Ag.* 398–9: *ubinam petitus per decem coniunx mihi / annos moratur?*, 'So where then is he dallying, my husband / ten years sought for?', *Ag.* 404: *tu pande vivat coniugis frater mei*, 'Please reveal where my husband's brother lives', *Ag.* 579: *utrumne doleam laeter an reducem virum?*, 'Should I lament or celebrate my husband's coming home?'

Seneca's Agamemnon himself functions within the play's larger programme of fortification against (local) trauma through catastrophisation.

Agamemnon at Sea

At the beginning and end of the play, Agamemnon is characterised as *rex regum* and *ductor ducum* by respectively Thyestes and Cassandra. These characterisations tie into our expectations based on the Agamemnon we know from ancient literature, emphasising the magnitude and vanity of Agamemnon's power.[445] Their strategic placement serves to point out the play's conventional plot of Agamemnon's homecoming: at the beginning of the play, Thyestes announces that the mythical king Agamemnon is here, doomed to die (*Ag.* 43), and at the end of the play, Cassandra leaves Argos for the underworld to share the completion of this story, including the capture of Mycenae and the death of the *mille ductorem ducum*, with the deceased Trojans (*Ag.* 1004–11). But we have seen that Thyestes' return to Argos, facilitated by travel across worlds to come home to a place where he does not belong anymore, makes us question what home means in this play (p. 118). I have also demonstrated that the first choral ode and Eurybates' messenger speech motivate and prepare the spectator to evaluate Agamemnon's homecoming in a Stoic philosophical-didactic manner, and alerted them to its embedding in Roman political discourse. Equipped with this question and this strategy of interpretation, I now examine Eurybates' brief description of Agamemnon in the middle of the play (*Ag.* 410–3), which describes Agamemnon's own experiences during the apocalyptic sea storm. This image offers us *vestigia* which suggest that understanding displacement as a fundamental characteristic of existence, and a state of belonging, is the best and Stoically informed way to fortify ourselves against disaster and to endure it.

Following Eurybates' initial announcements of Agamemnon's return, Clytemnestra enquires about the fates of Menelaus and Helen. Eurybates then expresses his regrets about his lack of knowledge, explaining that the Greek fleet was scattered by storms, before redirecting Clytemnestra's attention to her husband's experiences (*Ag.* 410–3):

> quin ipse Atrides **aequore immenso vagus**   410
> graviora pelago damna quam bello tulit
> remeatque **victo similis**, **exiguas trahens**

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[445] Tarrant (1976) 177, Boyle (2019) 126–7 discuss the intertextual heritage of these phrases.

lacerasque **victor** classe de tanta **rates**.

Even Atrides himself, while roaming the immeasurable flood,   410

took heavier losses from the sea than from the war.

He returns, the conqueror but like one conquered,

dragging homeward from his mighty fleet a few tattered ships.

Agamemnon's journey home is phrased in military language that puts his victory at Troy into perspective: the sea storm was much worse than the war itself. I have demonstrated that this apocalyptic sea storm has philosophical-didactic potential, and I now suggest that Eurybates' description of Agamemnon's experience of this sea storm can be read as a metaphor for his philosophical journey during this storm. On a surface level, Agamemnon's characterisation as *vagus*, 'roaming', emphasises his physical displacement from his home community and his lack of direction during the sea storm more specifically. But Eurybates' description of Agamemnon not only describes physical travel: we can also understand it as a metaphor for his approach to philosophy and his philosophical journey. In this context, the adjective *vagus* can mean different things, dependent on one's stage of philosophical progress.

Firstly, Seneca elsewhere uses the word to describe an unfocused traveller, and, relatedly, an unstructured reader.[446] Such descriptions generally indicate people who do not practice philosophy intentionally, and who consequently wander rather than travel purposely, changing spectacle for spectacle.[447] This unfocused travelling is at odds with Seneca's conceptualisation of the Stoic student's development in his prose, where it is typically presented as an intentional

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[446] Cf. e.g. Sen. *Ep*. 2.1–2: 'From your letter and from what I hear, I am becoming quite hopeful about you: you are not disquieting yourself by running about from place to place. Thrashing around in that way indicates a mind in poor health (*aegri animi ista iactatio est*). In my view, the first sign of a settled mind is that it can stay in one place and spend time with itself. [2] Be careful, though, about your reading in many authors and every type of book. It may be that there is something wayward and unstable in it (*habeat aliquid vagum et instabile*).'

Cf. also *Ep*. 45.1: 'Varied reading gives pleasure; selective reading does real good. If a person wants to reach his destination, he should follow just one road, not wander around (*vagetur*) over many. What you are doing is traipsing around (*errare*), not journeying (*ire*).'

[447] Cf. *OLD* s.v. *vagus* 1, 6. See O'Sullivan (2011) 42–4, Edwards (2018) 177–8. Sometimes, such people even retrace their own footsteps: see *Tranq.* 2.2, and specifically 12.4: 'After that they return with superfluous exhaustion and swear they don't know why they went out or where they had been, although the next day they will wander along in the same tracks (*erraturi per eadem illa vestigia*).' Cf. also e.g. Sen. *Ep.* 104.16: 'But as long as you are ignorant of what to avoid and what to pursue, and remain ignorant of the just, the unjust, the honourable, and the dishonourable, you will not really be travelling but only wandering.'

pursuit and a journey of progress.[448] Secondly, much further in his *Letters*, Seneca applies the word *vagari* to the act of gathering information through reading, his bees roaming around (*vagantur*) to find appropriate flowers and turn them into honey (*Ep*. 84.3). This proactive way of reading is beneficial for more advanced students of Stoicism, who are able to independently pursue truths. Incidentally, it is also the type of reading I have argued we should practice when reading the *Agamemnon*. Finally, the adjective *vagus* may make us think of the travelling sage or the wandering philosopher, a figure who embarks on lengthy journeys in the pursuit of knowledge.[449] Seneca's stance on the pursuit of knowledge, and on the desire of knowledge as a reason for travel, does not uniformly line up with this view. Generally, he does not recommend travelling to the aspiring wise man, whose mental restlessness prevents him from travelling well.[450] But perhaps there is room in Seneca's conceptualisation of the advanced *proficiens* and the *sapiens* for them to have a stable enough mind to be able to dwell safely.

Eurybates' description of Agamemnon as *vagus* could therefore be interpreted in several ways, depending on the stage of Agamemnon's philosophical progress. Contributing to our interpretation of Agamemnon as having potentially been on a philosophical journey is the location of his wandering. While *aequore immense*, 'the vast deep', might appear to be a common enough phrase to describe the ocean, the phrase is limited to Virgil in extant Latin prior to Neronian times. Most importantly, the phrase is found at the end of book 2 of the *Georgics*, where the poet-narrator articulates his position in a tradition of didactic poetry, a position, moreover, which is inextricably linked with the poet-narrator's views on the relation between poetry and (Epicurean) philosophy.[451] Accordingly, this section is permeated with the language and imagery of natural-philosophical poetry.[452] This metapoetic natural-

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[448] Lavery (1980) 153–5; Armisen-Marchetti (1981), (1989) 88–9; Montiglio (2006) 562–3. This conceptualisation seems to serve a primarily pedagogical purpose: as mentioned earlier, a Stoic student rarely reaches and maintains *sapientia*. But Seneca employs metaphors of progress as a way to encourage consistent moral improvement.

[449] Cf. *OLD* s.v. *vagus* 1. On the travelling sage, and Seneca's stance on him, see Montiglio (2006), Edwards (2018) 176–7.

[450] Montiglio (2006) 557–8. Just as logical and theoretical study is not appropriate for every student at every time (Wagoner (2014)), so too the appropriateness of travel seems to depend on the student's individual disposition, their motivation to travel, and their progress in the study of Stoicism.

[451] See especially Thomas (1988) 244–64, Kronenberg (2000), Volk (2002) 138–51. The phrase is also found in the *Aeneid* (6.355): *tris Notus hibernas immensa per aequora noctes / vexit me violentus aqua*, 'Three long winter nights the wind blew hard from the south and carried me over seas I could not measure.' But Virgil's employment of the phrase in the *Georgics* seems more directly relevant to an interpretation of Agamemnon's philosophical progress.

[452] Gee (2013) 39–42. This includes, most explicitly, the Aratean image of Justice, making her final footprints as she leaves earth (*extrema ... / Iustitia excedens terris vestigia fecit*, *G*. 2.473–4), as well as the poet-narrator's

philosophical imagery is also present in the book's final two verses (Verg. *G*. 2.541–2): *sed nos **immensum** spatiis confecimus **aequor**, / et iam tempus equum fumantia solvere colla*, 'But we have covered a deal of ground in our course, and now / it's time to slip off the harness from the necks of our reeking horses.' This statement serves metapoetically to express that a lot of ground has been covered so far – but that there is some philosophical-didactic poetry to go yet. As such, this intertext informs our understanding of Seneca's description of Agamemnon as ***immenso aequore*** *vagus* (*Ag*. 410). On his way back from Troy, Agamemnon has not just wandered the deep seas, he has roamed the plains of philosophical-didactic poetry. Just like Virgil's employment of the phrase, this phrase is located near the half-way point of the play: some philosophical-didactic ground is yet to be covered – in Eurybates' messenger speech. I have demonstrated that this speech is indeed set up as a piece of philosophical-didactic poetry, and that it offers us *vestigia* in order to pursue *sapientia* too. The question is now whether Agamemnon has learnt anything.

The rest of Eurybates' description of Agamemnon's journey back to Argos further make us wonder about his potential philosophical development, and how he will handle his homecoming. For Agamemnon's victorious yet defeated return in *Ag*. 412–3 (*remeatque **victo** similis, **exiguas trahens** / **laceras**que **victor** classe de tanta **rates***, 'He returns, the conqueror but like one conquered, / dragging homeward from his mighty fleet a few tattered ships') shows parallels to Seneca's descriptions of famous historical-mythological figures elsewhere in his works: Aeneas and Cato the Younger.

Firstly, Eurybates' description evokes Seneca's description of Aeneas in Seneca's *Consolation to Helvia*. In this text, written during his own exile on Corsica, Seneca reflects on the condition of exile, exploring its different modes, versions, and associations. Important in this exposition is the way in which Seneca engages with the Stoic notion that displacement from one's community is not such a great burden, since the exiled person is only alienated from their local, socio-political home, but not from their true home: the cosmos.[453] In the *Consolation to Helvia*, Seneca builds on this notion by suggesting that the real *exul* is not the exile who has been geographically and/or politically displaced from their local community, but

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mock-modest *recusatio* in which he outlines precisely the type of astronomical, natural-philosophical poetry he will not write (*G*. 4.475–82).

[453] This notion is familiar to us from other ancient consolations on exile too, and seems to be very old: Opsomer (2002) 281–2 with n. 3. See e.g. Ar. *Plut*. 1151, Cic. *Tusc*. 5.108 (quoting Pacuvius' *Teucer*), Muson. p. 42.1–6 (Hense), Plut. *Mor. De exil*. 600e–601b. On exilic literature, especially in Roman times, see Claassen (1999), and on displacement in Seneca's prose, see Williams (2006), Edwards (2018).

rather the person who is blind to or alienated from this cosmic citizenship.[454] Seneca begins to convey this idea through loosening the reader's identification with a particular place, noting that peoples have always changed their abodes (*Helv*. 7.1). In his excursus on migration and displacement as experiences that many peoples have in common, Seneca refers to the dispersal of the Greeks across the Mediterranean after the Trojan War and points out that even the founder of the Roman Empire was an exile (Sen. *Helv*. 7.5–7):

> Omnes autem istae populorum transportationes quid aliud quam publica exilia sunt? [6] … Quid Diomeden aliosque quos Troianum bellum **victos simul victoresque** per alienas terras dissipavit? [7] Romanum imperium nempe auctorem exulem respicit, quem profugum capta patria, **exiguas reliquias trahentem**, necessitas et victoris metus longinqua quaerentem in Italiam detulit. Hic deinde populus quot colonias in omnem provinciam misit! Ubicumque vicit Romanus, habitat.

> But all these migrations of peoples – what are they but states of communal exile? [6] … Why mention Diomedes and others, conquered as well as conquerors, who were scattered over foreign lands by the Trojan War? [7] To be sure, the Roman Empire itself looks back to an exile as its founder – a refugee from his captured city who, taking with him its few survivors, was forced by fear of the conqueror to make for distant parts and was brought to Italy. In turn, this people – how many colonies has it sent to every province! Wherever the Romans have conquered, there they settle.

While they were each other's enemies during the Trojan war, Greeks and Trojans now have something in common that was caused by it, namely displacement. As such, the juxtaposition of these examples not only emphasises the prevalence and normality of migration in antiquity, but it also highlights one of its most common causes: war and conquest. Moreover, the indistinguishable dispersion of Trojan war survivors, both Greek and Trojan, to homes old and new across the Mediterranean emphasises that you can be at home anywhere, and indeed, that displacement is a fundamental characteristic not only of being human, but also of being Roman: Aeneas, the founder of the Roman Empire, was an exile, and conquest and displacement have

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[454] Williams (2006), (2014a) 45–6, with e.g. Sen. *Helv*. 9.2, 18.1, 20.2. For the Stoic idea that those who do not practice philosophy are exiles, see e.g. Cic. *Mur*. 61 with Williams (2006) 159–60.

been key to the development of the Empire.[455] Eurybates' depiction of the returning Agamemnon shows verbal parallels to Seneca's description of Aeneas in this *Consolation*: Agamemnon, ***victo similis*** and ***victor*** (*Ag*. 412–3), dragging the remains of his fleet behind him (***exiguas trahens***, *Ag*. 413), simultaneously evokes the *Consolation to Helvia*'s descriptions of the returning Greeks, settling across the Mediterranean (***victos simul victoresque***, *Helv*. 7.6.3), as well as the journeying Aeneas, taking his remaining fleet with him on his search for a new homeland (***exiguas reliquias trahentem***, *Helv*. 7.7.1).[456] As an intertextual fusion of Greek Trojan War-survivors and the prototypical Roman *exul* Aeneas, then, Seneca's Agamemnon suggests that displacement is a very human and Roman state of being, and moreover, that it can be a state of belonging: if we are at home anywhere, we are out of place nowhere. Paradoxically, then, displacement is a way of homecoming.[457]

Seneca's emphasis on displacement may seem quite shocking: his focus on the transience of peoples and empires uproots the conventional and teleological notion of Rome's *imperium sine fine*, and displaces Rome from its central position in the Roman world and imagination. As Williams has argued, through recognising the Roman Empire as part of a much larger pattern of the displacement of peoples and the rising and falling of empires, Seneca suggests that '"being Roman" is no fixed commodity but an ongoing process, or a state of negotiation, in a fluid world.'[458] Furthermore, through understanding that one is a citizen of the cosmos first, and a citizen of a locality such as Rome second, it is possible to detach one's wellbeing from imperial power. As such, Seneca's recommended way of practising Stoicism, with a focus on understanding one's place in the world through the concept of displacement, functions as a tool to (re)claim autonomy in a world in which many members of the Roman elite had lost many of their powers and responsibilities.[459] A world, moreover, in which they were subject to the whims and wishes of the emperor, and in which they were all too familiar with displacement and the ownership and/or occupation of multiple homes, whether through exile or by taking up

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[455] Montiglio (2006) 576: 'The initial displacement, exile, is turned into the motor (if not the precondition) for imperial expansion.'

[456] See Doblhofer (1987) 251–8 on Seneca's engagement with the *Aeneid* here. Seneca's description of Aeneas also shows parallels to his depiction of Cato the Younger in *Letter* 104 too: compare ***victos simul victoresque*** (*Helv*. 7.6.3) and ***exiguas reliquias trahentem*** (*Helv*. 7.7.1) with *sine ullis impedimentis **victi** exercitus **reliquias trahens*** (*Ep*. 104.33).

[457] Williams (2006) 157.

[458] Williams (2006), (2014a) 46–7. This paragraph summarises his argument on the *Consolation to Helvia*.

[459] See also Whitmarsh (2001) 282 on Musonius Rufus' view of exile as stimulating the '(internal, personal) power of the philosopher' rather than as 'a submission to the power and authority of the emperor', thereby inverting power relations between emperor and philosopher.

political functions elsewhere.[460] Just as the *Consolation to Helvia* prepares us to endure local hardship, such as exile, then, by broadening our perspective from the local to the global and even to the cosmic, so too Eurybates' succinct description of Agamemnon, which conflates the experiences of victors and victims, loosens our attachment to the notion of one's socio-political home community by suggesting that displacement is a human state of being and that it can also be a state of belonging.

Furthermore, Eurybates' description of Agamemnon also recalls Seneca's depiction of Cato the Younger in *Letter* 104. There, Seneca depicts Cato 'dragging the remains of his ill-equipped and defeated force' across the Libyan desert (*sine ullis impedimentis **victi** exercitus **reliquias** trahens*, *Ep*. 104.33). This description is similar to Eurybates' depiction of Agamemnon 'like one conquered, / dragging homeward from his mighty fleet a few tattered ships' (***victo similis, exiguas trahens** / lacerasque ... **rates***, *Ag*. 412–3). The parallel contributes to our interpretation of Seneca's Agamemnon as a displaced political leader. In *Letter* 104, Cato serves as an example to illustrate that it is possible to overcome both death and exile.[461] The key to this type of *libertas* lies in *constantia* and in the ability to suffer: Cato's *constantia* not only helped him face and endure changing political circumstances,[462] but it also enabled him to evaluate the potential outcomes of the civil war between Caesar and Pompey, and to decide on his subsequent actions in advance, so that he could die by his own decree (*Ep*. 104.32). In other words, his *constantia* enabled him to detach his wellbeing from political circumstances. Seneca also praises Cato's ability to endure adversity, comparing Cato's journey through the Libyan desert to exile (*Ep*. 104.33). As such, the verbal parallels between Seneca's Agamemnon and Cato the Younger make us wonder to what extent this Agamemnon may be like the sagacious Cato, who was able to overcome both exile and death. Considering the suitability of exile to philosophical contemplation,[463] we again wonder: has Seneca's Agamemnon learnt anything from his own displacement? Moreover, has he shown a Catonic ability to endure his displacement, and how will he face his death?

All in all, then, Eurybates' brief description of Agamemnon's experience during the sea storm is multifaceted. Eurybates presents us with an Agamemnon who has roamed the plains

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[460] On the experiences of members of the Roman elite in early imperial Rome, see p. 121 above.

[461] *Ep*. 104.33: 'You see that one can rise above death as well as exile: Cato condemned himself both to exile and to death, and in between to war.'

[462] *Ep*. 104.31: 'No matter how often the political world changed, no one ever observed any change in Cato. He maintained the same character in every circumstance, …'

[463] Edwards (2018) 176.

of philosophical-didactic poetry, and who might have made some progress in his philosophical journey – but who might also not have recognised the potential of the *nova tempestas* that buffeted him. Eurybates presents us with an Agamemnon who focuses our attention on his displacement, and who thereby encourages us to reconceptualise our place in the world and to understand that displacement can be a state of belonging and being at home. He presents us with an Agamemnon, moreover, who reminds us that it is possible to overcome both displacement and death through our pursuit of Stoic *sapientia*, and to (re)claim autonomy regarding our wellbeing through detaching it from imperial power. On one level, then, Eurybates' description of Agamemnon prepares us for his narration of the sea storm: we want to be intentional in our reading, so that we can pursue *vestigia* that might benefit our own journeys to *sapientia*, so that we can fortify ourselves against (local) disaster, and so that we can pursue a happy life even in dire circumstances. On another level, we still do not know whether Agamemnon himself will live up to the potential Eurybates has created for him here. After all, this presentation of Agamemnon is markedly different from those offered to us by Thyestes and Cassandra, who describe him as *rex regum* and *ducor ducum* (see p. 168). There is only one way to find out: by finally evaluating Agamemnon's return to Argos.

Agamemnon Enters The Stage

Following a choral ode in which a Trojan chorus – victims of the Greeks – narrate the fall of Troy (*Ag.* 589–658), and following an act in which Cassandra describes her own suffering, goes into a trance, and collapses (*Ag.* 659–778), Agamemnon finally enters the stage. The chorus announce his triumphant arrival, describing how he greets the house-gods and wears victory laurels (*Ag.* 778–9). Clytemnestra walks out to meet him, wearing a festive dress and matching his steps (*Ag.* 780–1: *et **festa** coniunx obvios illi tulit / gressus reditque iuncta **concordi gradu***, 'and his wife in celebration went to meet him / and returns beside him, perfectly in step'). Neither action bodes well. Clytemnestra's festal dress is not simply meant for the feast Agamemnon expects upon his homecoming, but also for 'a different kind [of feast] planned by her and her lover.'[464] The fact that Clytemnestra matches Agamemnon's strides (*concordi gradu*) indicates that she perceives equality between her husband and herself, and

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[464] Boyle (2019) 398.

suggests that she is not planning to yield her current status as the primary leader of Argos.[465] Agamemnon sees no danger (*Ag.* 782–91):

> Tandem **revertor sospes** ad patrios lares;
> o cara salve terra! **tibi** tot barbarae
> dedere gentes spolia, **tibi** felix diu
> potentis Asiae domina summisit manus.   785
> Quid ista vates corpus effusa ac tremens
> dubia labat cervice? famuli, attollite,
> refovete gelido latice. iam recipit diem
> marcente visu. Suscita sensus tuos:
> optatus ille **portus aerumnis** adest.   790
> festus dies est.

> At long last I return, safe and sound, to my father's house-gods.
> Greetings, my beloved land! To you, numerous barbaric tribes
> have yielded booty, to you, Troy, queen
> of mighty Asia, prosperous so long, has now surrendered.   785
> Why's that prophetess collapsed and trembling,
> Swaying her failing neck? House-slaves, raise her up,
> revive her with chill water. Now she sees the light again,
> with wavering eyes. [*to Cassandra*] Rouse your senses:
> that longed-for harbour from your sufferings is here.   790
> It's a day of celebration.

Agamemnon's first words recall Thyestes' exclamation at the beginning of the play ('What joy – to return!', *libet reverti*, *Ag.* 12).[466] As we have seen, Thyestes' return to Argos from the underworld and his misplacedness in his former home community made us question what homecoming will mean in this play. But unlike Thyestes, Agamemnon fails to realise the reality of the 'home' to which he has returned: he triumphantly exclaims that he has returned safely

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[465] Boyle (2019) 398: 'The concordant steps point to the public image of regal harmony about to implode.' See O'Sullivan (2011) 22–8 on Roman expectations for women's bodily comportment, including walking, ideally displaying modesty and moderation, and see pp. 70, 87 on the equalising power of walking.
[466] Boyle (2019) 400.

(*revertor sospes*, *Ag*. 782). He does not pick up on Clytemnestra's behaviour – in fact, he does not pay any attention to his wife at all, directing his attention towards Cassandra instead. To some extent, Agamemnon's behaviour 'seems designed to qualify, perhaps even to invert, the unfavourable view of his character evident in the pronouncements of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus in Act II.'[467] This Agamemnon is not quite the 'one-dimensional figure characterised by his stupid arrogance' we might have expected.[468]

But he also does not seem to be an Agamemnon who has made much moral progress according to Stoic conceptions of value. Most obviously, he dedicates his spoils to Argos (*tibi ... tibi ...*, *Ag*. 783–5), thus attributing value to wealth and power. His lack of philosophical progress becomes especially clear at the end of his speech, where he describes his return to Argos as a longed-for 'harbour from pain' (*portus aerumnis*, *Ag*. 790). This phrase recalls the Trojan chorus' description of death in their ode on the fall on Troy (*Ag*. 590–2): *heu quam dulce malum mortalibus additum / vitae dirus amor, cum pateat malis / effugium et miseros libera mors vocet, / portus aeterna placidus quiete*, 'The terrible love of life – it's sad how sweet that misery is, / implanted in mortals, when escape from miseries / lies within reach and when death freely summons the miserable, / tranquil harbour of rest eternal.'[469]

Seneca often expresses time with spatial imagery, and his conceptualisation of death as a harbour of eternal peace here is no exception.[470] It is not unique to the *Agamemnon*, but features in Seneca's *Letters* and drama as well.[471] Moreover, the freedom offered by death is an important concept in Stoicism, and underlies Seneca's thinking too.[472] Key to this understanding of death is the issue of agency: 'the option of death guarantees that action is always possible, however constrained one's circumstances may be.'[473] When Agamemnon expresses delight at having reached a harbour from pain, then, he employs language with a very specific (Stoic) philosophical meaning. But is he aware of this? If we think back to Eurybates'

[467] Boyle (2019) 398–9, who argues that Seneca seems to present Agamemnon as 'more complex and morally impressive than some critics suggest.'

[468] Braund (2017) 239.

[469] Boyle (2019) 403–4.

[470] Armisen-Marchetti (1989) 153–4, Edwards (2014) 325ff. The harbour as a place of refuge was a common metaphor in ancient literature, and could be applied to several things, from *otium*, *studium*, philosophy, old age, retirement and sleep to death. See Auricchio (2004) and my analysis of Pollius Felix' harbour in chapter 4, where the **placidam ... quietem** of Pollius' metaphorical harbour indicates his (Epicurean) *ataraxia*.

[471] Cf. *Ep*. 70.2–3 (on the journey of life): 'Finally there comes into view that ending shared by the entire human race. [3] We think it is a rock – but that's insane: it is the harbour. Sometimes we need to steer for it, but never away from it.' See Boyle (2019) 338–9 for relevant passages in Senecan drama.

[472] Edwards (2014) 334–9.

[473] Edwards (2014) 335.

description of Agamemnon, and its evocation of Cato the Younger and his ability to overcome both exile and death (see p. 175), we might be forgiven to think that Agamemnon is aware of the terminology he has just used. But we have already seen that Agamemnon wrongfully considers himself to be safe (*sospes*, *Ag.* 782), and it soon becomes clear that Agamemnon is not aware of the philosophical meaning of his words as he enters a stichomythic discussion with Cassandra.

The conversation between Agamemnon and Cassandra demonstrates that they understand the events in Troy and the (impending) events in Argos on different levels (*Ag.* 791–9).[474] At first, Agamemnon fails to see the parallels between the fall of Troy and his impending fall, which Cassandra so clearly outlines for him.[475] Once he does see the parallels (*credis videre te Ilium?*, 'Do you think it's Ilium you see?', *Ag.* 794), he fails to recognise their significance (*hic Troia non est*, 'This is not Troy', *Ag.* 795). He misinterprets Cassandra's equation of Helen and Clytemnestra and reassures her that she need not fear Clytemnestra (*Ag.* 795–6). This leads Cassandra to contemplate freedom, a concept also misunderstood by Agamemnon (*Ag.* 796–9):

Ca.		libertas adest.
Ag.	secura vive.	
Ca.		mihi mori est securitas.
Ag.	nullum est periclum tibimet.	
Ca.		at magnum tibi.
Ag.	victor timere quid potest?	
Ca.		quod non timet.

Ca.		Freedom is at hand.
Ag.	Live fear-free.	
Ca.		It's death makes me fear-free.
Ag.	No danger is awaiting you.	
Ca.		Great danger is awaiting *you*.
Ag.	What need a conqueror fear?	

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[474] Boyle (2019) 403: 'Apparent to the audience are Cassandra's intellectual control of the dialogue and Agamemnon's inability to comprehend her pointed responses.'
[475] The parallels include festivity (*Ag.* 791), altars (*Ag.* 792), and Jupiter (*Ag.* 793).

Cassandra's announcement that freedom is here (*Ag*. 796) refers to her impending death, but this is only clear to those who have witnessed her prophecy earlier in the play (*Ag*. 741–58) – and Agamemnon is not one of them. Instead, he assures her that she can live safely (*Ag*. 797). Cassandra immediately picks up on Agamemnon's *secura*, applying it not to life, but to death (*mihi mori est securitas*, *Ag*. 797). Cassandra's claim that death is her security works on multiple levels: most obviously, she is certain that she will die (after all, she has foreseen it), but her assertion is also a Stoic principle.[476] Thus, although Cassandra is not a Stoic *sapiens*, as I discussed earlier (pp. 154ff.), she seems to be ahead of Agamemnon in her understanding of Stoicism. While the certainty of death and the freedom it brings is a comforting concept for Cassandra or for a Stoic, though, Agamemnon incorrectly interprets Cassandra's statement as fear: again, he assures her that she faces no danger (*Ag*. 798). In turn, she warns him that he does, which causes Agamemnon to wonder what a conqueror could fear (*Ag*. 799). His self-description as *victor* (*Ag*. 799) confirms that he has in fact not made any moral progress, and that he still attributes value to power and wealth. Cassandra's response to Agamemnon's question points out this fatal flaw: *quod non timet*, she says, 'that he does not fear', or 'what he does not fear', the point being that 'only those with nothing to lose have nothing to fear.'[477] This Agamemnon, then, behaves just as those people whose pursuit of wealth and power lands them in unfortunate situations, and who only turn to philosophy for salvation once it is too late (see my discussion of such Lucretian and Horatian *exempla* on pp. 141ff. above). This is not a Cato-like Agamemnon, who has prepared himself for potential future scenarios, and who is able to overcome exile and death. Instead, exile kills the king (*Ag*. 884).

Thus, Seneca's Agamemnon has not been able to break the cycle of his story, making the same mistakes as preceding Agamemnons. This cyclicity is illustrated at the end of the play by Strophius' visit to Argos. Following Cassandra's description of Agamemnon's murder by the hands of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, the Greek Strophius visits Argos in order to congratulate Agamemnon on his victory at Troy (*Ag*. 918–20):

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[476] On the certainty of death in Seneca's conceptualisation of Stoicism, see Edwards (2014) and p. 150 n. 391 above.

[477] Boyle (2019) 406–7.

> **Phocide relicta** Strophius Elea inclutus
> palma **revertor**. causa veniendi fuit
> gratari amico, …

> I, Strophius, have left Phocis to come back, decorated
> with the palm of Elis. The reason that I've come is
> to congratulate my friend …

Strophius has come from Phocis to congratulate Agamemnon with his victory over Troy. Instead, he ends up helping Orestes and Pylades escape the collapsing state of Argos and its tyrannous rulership. His place of origin, Phocis, evokes Seneca's consolatory discourse. In the *Consolation to Helvia*, Seneca expands on his own place of exile: Corsica, where the Phocaeans first settled after having left Phocis in order to escape tyrannous Persian rule (**Phocide relicta**, *Helv*. 7.8). But the Phocaeans did not stay on Corsica permanently, either: they moved on to Marseilles (*Helv*. 7.8). Seneca's own exilic location therefore emphasises the point he is making in his *Consolation*, namely that any land is inhabited by peoples of different origins, and that migration is a common human habit.

Strophius' geographical origin also calls to mind Horace's *Epode* 16, which Seneca evoked in the *Agamemnon*'s first choral ode (see pp. 164ff. above). In this poem, Horace introduces his proposal to leave the collapsing city of Rome by suggesting to follow the precedent of the Phocaean community, that is, through swearing an oath and abandoning their country ('Let no other plan be adopted but this, that just as / the Phoceans fled into exile (*Phocaeorum / velut … civitas*), having cursed / their fields and ancestral gods,' Hor. *Epod.* 16.17–22). But Seneca has taught us that such migration does not offer a long-term solution to crises, and this is also the function of his allusion to Phocis at the end of the play. Through enabling Orestes' and Pylades' escape from Argos, Strophius facilitates the continuation of the cycle of violence that plagues the house of Atreus.[478] As such, the *Agamemnon* exemplifies the never-ending cycle of rising and falling *regna* that Seneca characterises as the human condition in the *Consolations*. But if we have paid attention, perhaps we can break our own cycle – or at least learn to better endure it. Sometimes, the only way out is through.

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[478] Boyle (2019) 454: Strophius' impending homecoming to Phocis (*revertor*) recalls Agamemnon's catastrophic homecoming (*revertor*, *Ag*. 782) as well as Thyestes' 'homecoming' at the beginning of the play (*libet reverti*, *Ag*. 12).

In this chapter, I have suggested that the Siren song of the *Agamemnon* offers us different paths to follow, depending on our philosophical development and our definition of the highest good. The literary construction of the *Agamemnon*'s dramatic world plays a crucial role in this: through the use of terrifying and intertextually rich language and the escalation of local disaster into cosmic catastrophe, Seneca addresses a plurality of readers. Depending on their degree of philosophical development, a reader might improve their disposition and access to Stoic truths or be presented with the opportunity to evaluate modelled behaviours according to Stoic standards. Both options fortify the reader against the experience of local trauma, in this play exemplified by Agamemnon's disastrous homecoming. As such, in the *Agamemnon* Seneca reconceptualises Roman tragedy to encourage Stoic moral development in ways that address all spectators, and in ways that are informed by and designed to encourage the endurance of extreme and uncertain contemporary circumstances.

This reconceptualisation of tragedy is illustrative of Seneca's understanding of Stoic philosophy and its role in contemporary Roman society. In *Letter* 95, Seneca describes how Stoic philosophy has had to become more energetic and acquire more strength in order to equip its students with the tools to confront the complex and manifold problems faced by the Roman state and its citizens.[479] The *Agamemnon*'s complex escalation of storm imagery both exemplifies this increase of Stoic philosophy and provides the reader with an opportunity to pick up these tools.

Thus, Seneca's approach to tragedy, as demonstrated by my discussion of this play, not only speaks to his identity as a Stoic philosopher, but also to his understanding of his social and political role in society as a Roman citizen. Seneca's role as an imperial advisor to Nero and his role as a teacher in the *Letters* to Lucilius have been widely discussed: by demonstrating parallels in pedagogical strategies between Seneca's prose and the *Agamemnon*, I hope to have furthered our understanding firstly of the didactic aspects of this play and secondly of the relation between Senecan drama and philosophical thought. Just as in his prose, in the

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[479] *Ep*. 95.29–32: '… diseases have arisen that are not single but complex, manifold, and multiform. To oppose them, medicine too has begun to arm itself with multiple diagnoses and multiple treatments. The same thing, I tell you, applies to philosophy. In days gone by, it was simpler; it dealt with lesser faults that were curable even with a mild treatment. To combat the huge wreckage of our moral condition, we need to try everything. … [30] We are insane as a country, and not just as individuals. … [32] To combat such powerful and widespread madness, philosophy has become more energetic, and has acquired strength that is a match for the strength of its adversaries.'

Agamemnon too we recognise Seneca's objective to benefit others by calling attention to the importance of pursuing Stoic philosophy and moral self-improvement.

Moreover, we have seen that Seneca's understanding of Stoic cosmic citizenship and his idea of Romanness follow similar logic: just as we can be at home anywhere through understanding that we are displaced from the cosmos until our death, so too we can be Roman anywhere by understanding that displacement from one's geographic and political home community is a characteristically Roman state of being. And just as journeys towards *sapientia* are always an ongoing process, never reaching their final destination, so too being Roman is a constant state of negotiation.[480] For Seneca, there are many valid ways of being Roman, some of which involve participation in public life and others of which feature withdrawal from public life. This plural understanding of Romanness is illustrated – and presumably informed – by Seneca's own multifaceted journey through life and the varying degrees in which he participated in public life and politics: born in Spain to an Italian immigrant family, Seneca moved to Rome for his education as a young boy, spent time in Egypt as a young adult and then returned to Rome where he got married before being exiled to Corsica, from where he was recalled to become tutor to Nero – a role he performed for a long time, despite several attempts to retire.

When Seneca prompts us to question what homecoming means, then, as he does in the *Agamemnon*, he causes us to ask ourselves questions about our geographical and metaphorical place in the world and about our social and political role in society. Just as Cicero's Sirens, he does not provide us with straightforward answers, but rather with *vestigia* or 'traces' that may help us map our own journeys.

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[480] Williams (2014a) 47.

Map 2: Statius' intended route back to Rome (displayed in purple) versus his journey across the Bay of Naples to Pollius Felix' villa (depicted in red).

Chapter 4

Epic(urean) Homecomings in the Bay of Naples

Introduction

In *Silvae* 2.2, Statius describes how he, having attended the *Augustalia* in Naples in 90 CE, postpones his return to Rome and travels to Pollius Felix' villa on the Surrentine peninsula to enjoy a brief stay there with his friend and patron. The poem's opening introduces two interrelated elements that play an important role in Statius' description of Pollius' villascape, namely the Sirens and the theme of homecoming (*Silv.* 2.2.1–5):

> Est inter **notos Sirenum nomine** muros
>
> **saxa**que Tyrrhenae templis onerata Minervae
>
> celsa Dicarchei speculatrix villa profundi,
>
> qua Bromio dilectus ager collesque per altos
>
> uritur et prelis non invidet uva Falernis.   5

> Between the walls well known by the Sirens' name and the cliffs burdened with Tyrrhene Minerva's temple there is a lofty villa looking out upon the Dicarchean deep, where the land is dear to Bromius and the grapes ripen on the high hills nor envy Falernian presses.

The reader is introduced to the topographical and geographical location of Pollius' villa with a reference to Surrentum as 'the walls well-known by the Sirens' name'. This false but popular etymological description is indicative of the strong associations between the Bay of Naples and the Sirens at the time, due to the establishment of their cult in Naples and near Surrentum and the presence of three rocks in the sea near Surrentum that Strabo refers to as the Σειρῆναι (see Map 2 on p. 184).[481] Statius' allusion to the Sirens here also works as an Alexandrian footnote: this location is *notos*, 'well known', for Odysseus' and Aeneas' successful passages past the Sirens.[482]

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[481] van Dam (1984) 195 discusses the association between the Sirens and the bay of Naples more fully, referring to Naples' alternative name, Parthenope, and the worship of the Sirens near Surrentum, possibly in a temple whose remains are discussed by Mingazzini and Pfister (1946) 45–54. For the Σειρῆναι rocks, see Strabo 1.2.12, 5.4.8.

[482] Strabo (5.4.8) associates the region with Odysseus, reminding the reader of Odysseus' successful passage past the Sirens.

In fact, Statius' diction recalls two passages in Virgil and Ovid that depict Aeneas and his crew finally reaching Italy without any further harm (cf. *notos **Sirenum** nomine muros / **saxa***, Stat. *Silv*. 2.2.1–2, with *iamque adeo **scopulos Sirenum** advecta subibat*, 'they were soon coming near the Sirens' rocks', Verg. *Aen*. 5.864, and *Acheloiadumque relinquit / **Sirenum** **scopulos***, 'and passed the rocky isle of the Sirens, the daughters of Acheloüs', Ov. *Met*. 14.87–90). Both passages describe the moment when Aeneas, upon finding that Palinurus has fallen overboard and that his ship no longer has a pilot, takes the wheel and directs his crew to their new home in Italy past the rocks of the Sirens at the tip of the Surrentine peninsula.[483] In the works of these ancient authors, the Sirens had long stopped singing their song: Virgil and Ovid both represent the Sirens' rocky haunts, and thereby shipwreck, as the main danger instead.[484]

Nevertheless, Statius here clearly plays up the area's associations with the Sirens, highlighting their importance for our interpretation of this poem. Thus, through the focus of the poem's opening on the location of Pollius' villa near the Sirens, recalling the dangers they might pose to passers-by and their travels homewards, Statius introduces a contradiction between diversions from homecoming and homecoming itself. This contradiction sets up divergent expectations about Statius' laudation of Pollius' villa: will this be a homecoming or a distracting adventure, and for whom?

In this chapter, I show how polyvalent engagement with homecoming and diversion imagery enables Statius firstly to praise Pollius' life of withdrawal from public life, politics, and Rome, and secondly to reflect on his own career as a poet, the generic composition of his corpus, and his personal and professional relations to Rome and the bay of Naples. I do so by examining homecoming and diversion imagery as we follow Statius around the watery edges of Pollius' villascape, where such narratives are particularly present.

Crucially, this imagery is embedded in several generic discourses, including, primarily, epic poetry and Epicurean philosophy. The Epicurean framing of Pollius' villa, highlighting his Epicurean way of life and values, has been widely recognised, and indeed, the motifs of homecoming and the Siren song not only occurred in epic narratives, but they also had meaning in Epicurean contexts: metaphorical homecomings were represented in the blessed harbour of

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[483] There is a small difference between the versions of Virgil and Ovid: Virgil only mentions the Sirens after Palinurus has fallen overboard, but Ovid does so before this has happened (Ov. *Met*. 14.87–90). The order is of little importance here, since both narratives closely associate Palinurus' death with the rocks of the Sirens and Aeneas' impending arrival in Italy.

[484] Fratantuono and Smith (2015) 722–3.

philosophy, while the Sirens symbolised the dangerous appeal of poetry and/or education.[485] Because epic and Epicureanism inversely conceptualise homecoming, namely as a return to one's political community and a private withdrawal from one's political community respectively, the conflation of these generic discourses facilitates contemplation of how this imagery applies differently to Pollius and to Statius, and what it can tell us about their respective roles in society and empire as Roman citizens and their social, political, and topographical relationships to Rome and the imperial court.

Before pursuing this generically ambivalent imagery and investigating its relation to Pollius and Statius, I first consider the position of Pollius' villa in the poem's narrative and in its wider world, including its relation to existing archaeological remains and their immediate geographical environment, thus setting the scene for Statius' arrival. I then demonstrate how Statius' arrival in Pollius' villascape in the first half of the poem sets up divergent expectations about the theme of homecoming. I do so by showing the anchoring of Statius' arrival in Pollius' harbour (*Silv.* 2.2.13–29) in several epic harbour arrival narratives, including Odysseus' homecoming to Ithaca, Aeneas' arrival in Italy, and Aeneas' visit to Carthage. The concurrent evocation of these epic narratives, two of which represent homecomings while the third represents a diversion, causes the reader to question whether Statius' arrival in Pollius' harbour should be interpreted as a homecoming or as a diversion, and whether this imagery relates to Pollius or to Statius. The poem's ambiguity about homecoming is further complicated through Statius' description of Pollius' port and villa proper, which, in praise of its Epicurean owner, is cast in Epicurean language that conveys the impression of a homecoming in philosophy's blessed harbour.

To unpick the generically ambiguous riddle of homecoming that is set up in the first half of the poem, I then move on to trace and examine epic and Epicurean aspects of homecoming and diversion imagery through several scenes in the second half of this poem which frame the end of Statius' tour around Pollius' villascape: a sea-nymph's visit (*Silv.* 2.2.98–106), Pollius' enchanting composition of literature (*Silv.* 2.2.112–20), and a nautical description of Pollius' journey through life (*Silv.* 2.2.138–42). In addition to providing us with insights into Pollius' and Statius' relationship and their individual careers, lives, and identities, my analysis aims to

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[485] For analyses of the Epicurean aspects of Pollius' villascape, see Cancik (1968) 71ff.; Nisbet (1978) 1–2; van Dam (1984) 191; Newlands (2002) 156, 169–74, (2011) 150–7. On the habit of elite Romans to construct and decorate their homes and villas in order to assert and convey their (family's) identity, see Wallace-Hadrill (1994), (1998), Hales (2003), Zarmakoupi (2014). Discussions of the motif of the Siren song and the theme of homecoming in Epicureanism include Auricchio (2004), Clay (2004).

increase our understanding of Statius' generic formulation of occasional poetry through examining his employment of philosophical discourse in his reflections on the (im)possibility of withdrawal from Rome, the imperial court, and the composition of epic.

Situating Pollius' Villascape

Following the poem opening's brief ecphrasis, which, through its references to cities and sanctuaries, situates Pollius' villa in its immediate topographical and mythological surroundings, Statius introduces himself into the poem. The subsequent change of perspective is illustrated and accompanied by the poem's focalisation, which changes from a narratorial panoramic viewpoint in *Silv.* 2.2.1–5 to that of an internal primary narrator in *Silv.* 2.2.6–12:[486]

> huc me post patrii laetum quinquennia lustri,
> cum stadio iam **pigra quies** canusque sederet
> pulvis, ad Ambracias conversa gymnade frondes,
> **trans gentile fretum placidi facundia Polli**
> **detulit** et nitidae iuvenilis **gratia** Pollae,   10
> flectere iam cupidum gressus qua **limite noto**
> Appia **longarum teritur** regina **viarum**.

Hither I came gladly across my native bay after the quinquennial festival of my home, when a lazy lull had settled on the stadium and the dust lay white as the athletes turned to Ambracian laurels. I was drawn by the eloquence of gentle Pollius and elegant Polla's youthful grace, though already eager to bend my steps where Appia, queen of long highways, takes the traveller along her familiar track.

Following the competitions, lazy idleness (*pigra quies*, *Silv.* 2.2.7) descends on the Neapolitan stadium. This inertia leads Statius to leave Naples, presumably in search of a more fertile environment.[487] Statius is planning to return to Rome when his journey is diverted as Pollius' *facundia* and his spouse Polla's *gratia* draw the poet across the bay towards Surrentum (*Silv.* 2.2.9–10). Statius' description casts Pollius and Polla in the role of Sirens, luring travellers-by

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[486] Cf. similar shifts in focalisation in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, where they are often used in 'arrival' type-scenes – just as here. See e.g. de Jong and Nünlist (2004) 69–71 on Hom. *Il.* 9.186–91, 4.223–421; *Od.* 3.4–33.
[487] For the Roman country villa as a location of 'productive leisure', see Myers (2005).

to their Surrentine rocks with their enchanting songs: Pollius' *facundia* or 'eloquence' is suggestive of his generically varied compositions, which are praised later in this poem (*Silv.* 2.2.112–20), and, combined with Polla's *gratia* or 'attraction', his song is irresistible to Statius.[488] In fact, Pollius' Siren song is so powerful that it literally turns Statius' intended return to Rome into an afterthought: he only declares his initial intentions to travel back to Rome (*Silv.* 2.2.11–2) once Pollius' eloquence has diverted his journey (*detulit*, *Silv.* 2.2.10).[489] As such, Statius' framing of his visit to Pollius' villa picks up on the association between Pollius' villascape and the Sirens as suggested in the poem's opening.

In the first place, Statius' description tells us something about Pollius' identity as an author and as an Epicurean philosopher. The epithet *placidus*, 'gentle' or 'peaceful', indicates his affinities with Epicureanism (*Silv.* 2.2.9).[490] This conflation of poetry and Epicureanism suggests that this is no straightforwardly epic Siren song, but rather that we are in for a generically ambiguous treat. This ambiguity is further complicated by the combination of Pollius' *facundia* and Polla's *gratia*, which recall Odysseus' flattering manner of speaking in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* when he successfully convinces the council of Greek leaders to gift him Achilles' arms (*neque abest **facundis gratia** dictis*, 'his eloquent words did not lack grace in their delivery,' Ov. *Met.* 13.127). Odysseus was of course known for his talents as a storyteller, but also for his habit of flattery for the purpose of his own benefit and/or survival. These aspects led to varied reception of Odysseus in philosophical schools, including Epicureanism: on the one hand, his inquisitiveness and inventiveness characterised him as a model for the wise man, but on the other hand, his flattering eloquence and his love of feasting and banquets led to his depiction as a parasite.[491] Thus, when Statius describes himself as being drawn to Pollius' villa by the couple's eloquence and charm, he implicitly depicts Pollius not only as a Siren, but also as an Odysseus. The question is what kind of Odysseus he will find.

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[488] *OLD* s.v. *gratia* 6, *TLL* 6.2.2212.65–14.36 (H.).

[489] For *detulit* as 'causing to travel', see *OLD* s.v. *defero* 5, *TLL* 5.1.315.58 (Lambertz).

[490] Throughout this poem, Pollius and his villa are repeatedly characterised as *placidus*: in addition to the current passage, see *Silv.* 2.2.13, 140. The adjective *placidus*, especially in combination with words such as *quies*, *otium*, and *serenus*, frequently appears in Lucretius and often suggests an association with Epicureanism: see e.g. Lucr. 1.40 (*placidam ... pacem*), 1.463 (*placidaque quiete*), 2.1094 (*placidum ... aevum vitamque serenam*), 5.1154 (*placidam ... vitam*), 6.73–5 (*placida ... pace quietos ... placido cum pectore*). Statius regularly uses this word to describe his friends' and patrons' pursuits of Epicurean *ataraxia*: van Dam (1984) 210, Newlands (2011) 124, Bennardo (2018) 282–6. On this nexus of associations in Seneca's work, cf. my discussion of Lucretian *placida quies* in the *Agamemnon* (pp. 160).

[491] Montiglio (2011) 95–123.

In the second place, the generic plurality of Pollius' Siren song also anticipates Statius' reflections on his personal and professional relation to the bay of Naples and Rome. After all, Statius' familial origins were in Naples, which he here emphasises through his description of the bay as *gentile* (*Silv*. 2.2.9). But he had long since moved to Rome to pursue a career as a professional poet. Thus, Statius' attraction to Pollius' villa and his postponement of his return to Rome enable him to explore his identity as a poet belonging to both Rome and Naples.[492] In other words: what is his true home? Is Naples a homecoming or a diversion from his new home in Rome? This exploration finds place not only through the geographic location of these spaces, but also via the metapoetic aspects with which Statius imbues them. Through being seduced by Pollius' epic(urean) Siren song and visiting and narrating Pollius' generically ambiguous villascape, Statius strays from the familiar path that leads to Rome (*limite noto*, *Silv*. 2.2.11) and to the worn-out genre of epic poetry (*Appia **longarum teritur** regina **viarum***, *Silv*. 2.2.12).[493] In fact, his visit to Pollius' villa might allow him to gain perspective on his relation to Naples and Rome: after all, Pollius' villa offers a view over the bay of Naples (*celsa Dicarchei **speculatrix** villa profundi*, *Silv*. 2.2.3).[494]

Thus, the poem's first twelve verses introduce several themes that are important for the poetical construction of Pollius' villascape and its wider environment. The Sirens play a crucial role both in the poem's panoramic introduction to Pollius' villa and in Statius' personal focalisation of his visit to the Bay of Naples. Statius contextualises his stay at Pollius' villa both spatially and within the wider circumstances of his life: Pollius' villa lies just across the Bay of Naples, where Statius happens to be for professional reasons. Although Rome is easy to reach by means of the Via Appia, the centre of the Roman Empire disappears from sight as Statius is seduced by Pollius' *facundia*. Pollius' villa certainly appears to be the centre of Statius' world for now.

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[492] See Rosati (2011), Newlands (2012) 136–59 on Statius' Greek, Roman, and Neapolitan 'hearts'.

[493] Thus, I suggest a metapoetic interpretation of 'long highways' as epic poetry. For my discussion of the current passage in relation to Statius' *Silvae* 4.3, a poem in the form of another road that lends itself to a metapoetic interpretation, see p. 81 above.

[494] *speculatrix* is usually interpreted as 'looking out for danger', which is part of the prevailing reading of Pollius' villascape as a military fortress, in which the owner's domination of the landscape – including his construction of artificial structures – allows him to display his moral excellence and enjoy life in this subdued, non-invasive environment: see Cancik (1968) 69, Pavlovskis (1973) 14, van Dam (1984) 227–8, Newlands (2002) 178–82, (2011) 122–3. But Newlands (2012) 152 suggests that Pollius did not build his villa on a high elevation for reasons of military defence, but rather for the view – an indication of luxury that also suggests Pollius' Epicurean citadel of the mind later in the poem (*Silv*. 2.2.131–2, see p. 214). I follow this latter interpretation: the act of observation connotated by *speculari* (*OLD* s.v. *speculor* 1) lends itself to (philosophical) contemplation.

As we have seen in the first few verses of this poem, Statius does not only position Pollius' villa broadly in relation to Rome, but he also anchors it more specifically in the bay of Naples by referring to specific cities and sanctuaries. Because these places inform our understanding of Pollius' villascape as described in Statius' poem, it is helpful to discuss the villa's precise location and its embedment in its geographic surroundings.

Many ancient and modern readers have attempted to locate Pollius' villa by searching for its archaeological remains. The identification of archaeological remains with Statius' descriptions of Pollius' villa is complicated by the nature of Statius' depictions, which are relatively impressionistic in comparison to, for example, Pliny's more systematic villa descriptions.[495] Statius' description of Pollius' villascape resembles a tour around the villa and its surroundings, but also features mythological elements and scenes that make it difficult to reconstruct Pollius' villa. This has caused scholars to interpret (parts of) the villa as a *topothesia*, a description of an imaginable place.[496]

Yet Pollius' villascape must have been imaginable to Statius' audience not only on the level of literary memory, that is, through having knowledge of similar descriptions and tropes, but also on the level of experienced memory, namely, by having visited Pollius' villa or similar (maritime) villas. Moreover, Statius' description of Pollius' villa must have been recognisable to a very important member of his audience, namely Pollius himself. Thus, to quote van Dam, 'Pollius' harbour is a real one described in literature',[497] and a reader with enough knowledge of the Bay of Naples and the Surrentine peninsula can infer the villa's approximate topographical location. In fact, scholars have argued that it is possible to recognise a particular section of the Surrentine coastline in Statius' harbour description (*Silv.* 2.2.13–9):

… placido lunata recessu

hinc atque hinc curvas perrumpunt aequora rupes.

dat natura locum montique intervenit unum[498]   15

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[495] Vollmer (1898) 338, Sherwin-White (1966) 186–9, Pavlovskis (1973) 5ff. n. 20, van Dam (1984) 187–9.

[496] Newlands (2002) 165 suggests that the description of Pollius' harbour is informed by literary rather than topographical observation. Servius already referred to Virgil's Carthaginian harbour as a *topothesia*, cf. Serv. *ad Aen*. 1.159. On *topothesia* in Virgil and with relation to Virgil's Carthaginian harbour, see Della Corte (1972) 4, 85.

[497] van Dam (1984) 201. In their article on Virgil's Libyan harbour description possibly alluding to the harbour of Carthago Nova, Shi and Morgan (2015) emphasise the importance of written descriptions for the ways in which the Romans understood geographical information and would have had geographical knowledge.

[498] The text here may be corrupt: Courtney maintains *unum* as 'continuous', while others have emended *unum* to *imum*, 'very deep' (Gronovius), or *udum*, 'wet' (Heinsius and Shackleton Bailey). To refer to Newlands (2011)

litus et in terras scopulis pendentibus exit.

gratia prima loci, gemina testudine fumant

balnea et e terris occurrit dulcis amaro

nympha mari.

Curving cliffs on either side pierce crescent waters, making a calm recess. Nature
provides space. A continuous beach interrupts the heights, running inland between
overhanging crags. The spot's first grace is a steaming bathhouse with twin cupolas, and
from land a stream of fresh water meets the briny sea.

The rugged coastline on the side of the Surrentine peninsula looking out on the Bay of Naples
only features one stretch of beach, which is really the only suitable place for drawing in a small
ship. This beach, located in modern Marina di Puolo, is one of the main reasons for identifying
this part of the Surrentine coast as belonging to Pollius' villa. It is situated in a calm inlet and
surrounded by a double set of curving cliffs on either side (presumably the *curvae... rupes*, *Silv.*
2.2.14): Punta di Sorrento and Capo di Massa, protruding into the open sea and embracing a set
of two smaller cliffs, Punta della Calcarella and Punta Croce (see Map 3 on p. 194). As such,
this area's geographic layout generally corresponds to Statius' description. Nowadays, a small
stream of fresh water, descending from the higher peninsula, enters the beach. Perhaps we can
imagine such a stream for Statius' *e terris occurrit dulcis amaro / nympha mari* (*Silv.* 2.2.18–
9). Moreover, the modern name of the bay's harbour is Marina di Puolo, carrying a potential
remnant of Pollius' name, which is an additional reason for many scholars to identify this as
the area of Pollius Felix' villa.[499]

In 2004, Mario Russo sought to identify the precise location of Pollius' villa in this area.[500]
Taking into account the remains of what he interprets as three Roman villas in and around the
Baia di Puolo and their artificial and natural boundaries, Russo focused on the remains on and
around the Punta della Calcarella and argued that they can be identified as the villa of Pollius
Felix (see Map 4 on p. 195). In addition to the conformity of the geographic location with
Statius' description, Russo discusses, among other things, the remains of the temple of Neptune

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125: 'The topography is basically clear: St. adopts the perspective of a sailor looking for a safe landing place – a
break in the line of steep cliffs running along the peninsula with a substantial beach.'

[499] Mingazzini and Pfister (1946) 64–5, Cancik (1968) 68, D'Arms (1970) 220–1, van Dam (1984) 192. Russo
(2004) 119 n. 64 briefly explains the linguistic process of diphthongisation and refers to similar instances from the
same area.

[500] Russo (2004).

(*Silv.* 2.2.21–3), the baths on the shore (*Silv.* 2.2.17–8), the temples of Hercules (*Silv.* 2.2.23–4 and *Silv.* 3.1), the portico leading from the foot of the coastal rocks to the villa area (*Silv.* 2.2.30–5), and the actual *domus* (*Silv.* 2.2.44–51, 63–97). Although the extant remains are fairly scarce due to quarrying, agriculture, and building activities, Russo's argument is convincing at the very least in terms of the geographical location of Pollius' villa on Punta della Calcarella and the accompanying portico, baths, and beach. I therefore follow Russo and others in rejecting the identification of the villa remains on the very tip of Capo di Sorrento, today known as Villa di Pollio Felice or the Bagni della Regina Giovanna, as the villa of Pollius Felix.[501]

All in all, then, it is possible to infer the location of Pollius' villa from Statius' description. The villa must have been located on the Punta della Calcarella, featuring views over the Bay of Naples corresponding to those described in *Silvae* 2.2.86–94 (see Map 3 on p. 194),[502] a portico leading from the villa down to the inlet's small bay, baths on the coastal rocks, and a stretch of beach. Water still plays a dominant role in this landscape today, from the fresh water running onto the beach and the relatively calm waves in the small bay, lapping at the coastal rocks possibly featuring remains of baths, to the wilder sea in the distance. The distinctly watery aspects of this environment and the liminal nature of Roman maritime villas more generally help to explain Statius' description of Pollius' villa with its focus on the theme of homecoming and deviations therefrom, both of which are typically concerned with liminal arrival spaces such as harbours and with obstacles related to sea travel, ranging from storms to unequivocally dangerous monsters and seductive hosts causing the hero to postpone his journey.

In the next section, I focus on Statius' description of Pollius' harbour, discussing its position in a tradition of epic harbour arrivals, going back to Homer's *Odyssey*, that engage with precisely this type of imagery. This discussion will then form the point of departure for an analysis of similar homecoming and diversion imagery on the other watery edges of Pollius' villascape.
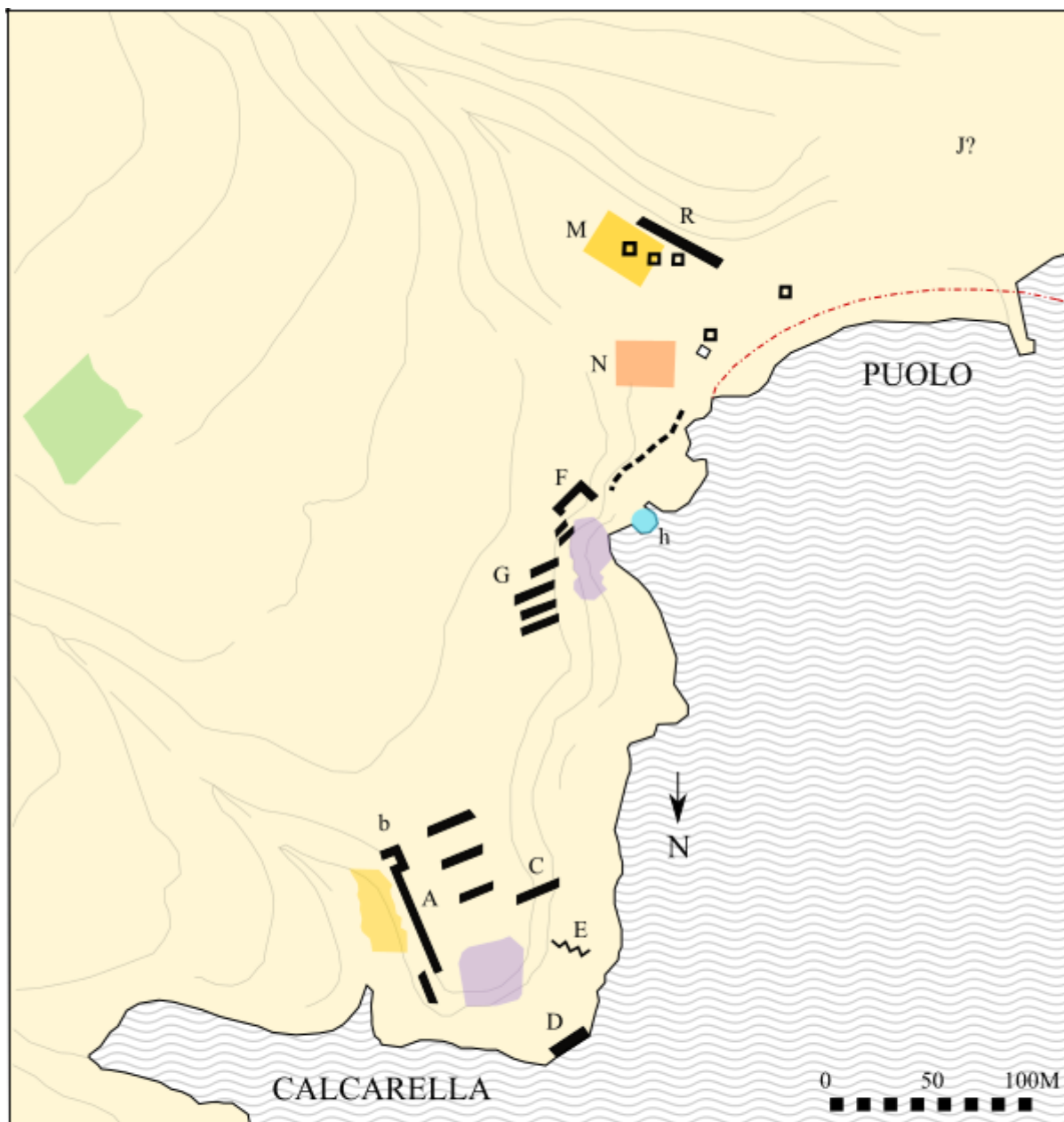
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[501] Beloch (1890) 269–74, for example, argued that Pollius' villa stretched from Marina di Puolo all the way to the villa remains on Capo di Sorrento, but this is unlikely: see Russo (2004). Newlands (2011) 121 refuses to identify which archaeologic remains might belong to the villa of Pollius.

[502] Russo (2004) 156–9.
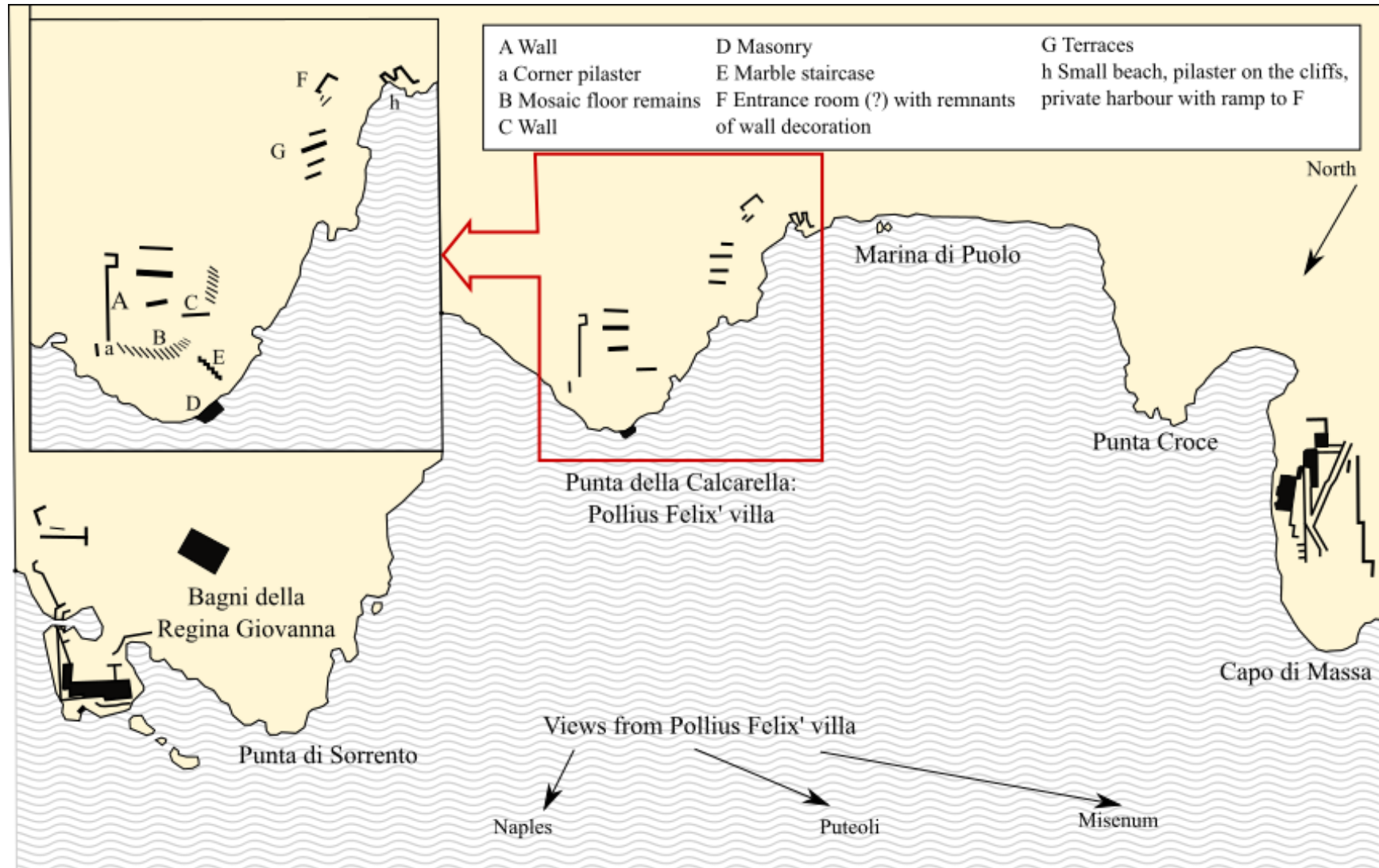
Map 3: The area of Marina di Puolo with its sets of curving cliffs and Roman villa remains on the Punta di Sorrento, the Punta della Calcarella, and Capo di Massa.

Author's digitisation of Cancik (1968) 63, a map drawn after Mingazzini and Pfister (1946) carta V and figure 28.

Map 4: Archaeological remains found on Punta della Calcarella and in the area of Marina di Puolo as recorded and interpreted by Russo (2004) 140. Author's digitisation of Russo (2004) table 11.

Arrivals by Sea

After Statius has described his captivation by Pollius' *facundia*, leading him to pay his friend and patron a visit, he depicts his approach to Pollius' villa. After crossing the bay of Naples, presumably by boat, Statius first describes Pollius' harbour area. In the ancient world, harbours functioned as liminal places, forming a transitional area between the perils of open sea travel and unpredictable reception in often unknown territory. The ways in which harbours are described therefore play an important role in creating the audience's expectations for what is to come. Whom does this harbour belong to? Is the protagonist arriving in a safe and friendly environment, or should they be on the look-out for danger?

It has been widely recognised that Statius' arrival by sea and his description of Pollius' harbour (*Silv.* 2.2.13–29) are conceptually and verbally reminiscent of epic harbour descriptions.[503] In particular, Pollius' harbour features multiple allusions to Aeneas' arrival at the Libyan harbour in *Aeneid* 1.159–68. Both harbours are described from the same point of view, that is, approaching from the sea, they continually focus on increasingly central aspects, from cliffs and sheltered water to luscious spaces frequented by nymphs, and they set the tone for the rest of the poem.[504]

Both Myers and Newlands have discussed the Carthaginian dimensions of Pollius' villascape. Although their interpretations differ on some points, they both propose that Pollius' private villa is antithetical to the ambitious aims of imperial politics. Myers sees this Carthaginian dimension as one of the potentially distressing echoes of epic arrivals in Pollius' private villa and suggests that they are likely intended to 'impart epic elevation' to the poem, befitting the literary aspects of this harbour.[505] Not attaching any particular value to the epic echoes in this villascape, Myers asserts that the sense of retreat apparent from Statius' private landscapes suggests the withdrawal of both patron and poet from political spheres. Newlands generally follows this suggestion, arguing for a contrast between Statius' bay of Naples as a self-contained, safe, and mostly Greek world with a strong sense of 'regional identity' versus Rome's position as the centre of the Roman Empire with imperial, possibly dangerous ambitions and a sense of 'national identity'.[506] This contrast leads Newlands to interpret Pollius' villascape as a 'superior Carthage' and a 'viable counterworld to Rome', the villa's

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[503] Pavlovskis (1973), van Dam (1984) 201–2, Myers (2000) 118–9, Newlands (2002) 165–6.
[504] van Dam (1992) 201–2.
[505] Myers (2000) 118. Myers also sees a connection between Pollius' harbour and Lucan's description of the harbour at Brundisium (Luc. 5.440–2).
[506] Newlands (2002) 154.

peace, security, and moral superiority contrasting with the uncontrolled risks of the open sea and its epic and imperial associations.[507]

In what follows, I expand on the primary issue that Myers and Newlands have brought to light, namely the relation between Pollius' secluded villa with its sense of poetic and political withdrawal and Rome as the centre of the Empire. I do so by highlighting Statius' engagement with homecoming and diversion imagery beyond Aeneas' arrival in the Libyan harbour in the *Aeneid*. In my discussion of the poem's opening and its introduction of the motifs of the Siren song and homecoming, I have already demonstrated that this imagery functions on different generic levels, thus creating divergent expectations about the nature of Statius' visit to Pollius' villa and about the identity and career journey of Pollius himself. I will argue that Statius continues this ambiguity in his description of Pollius' harbour, and that he unfolds it throughout his tour around the villascape, thereby reflecting on his own personal and professional relations to the bay of Naples and Rome.

To this end, I now consider Statius' arrival in Pollius' harbour in more detail, examining its anchoring in a tradition of epic harbour descriptions, including but not limited to Aeneas' arrival in Carthage. The Libyan harbour in the *Aeneid* draws on a tradition of epic harbour descriptions that goes back to Odysseus' adventures and his eventual homecoming in Ithaca, and I suggest that these Odyssean harbour arrivals also inform Statius' arrival in Pollius' harbour. In what follows, I therefore discuss Odysseus' arrival in Ithaca's harbour of Phorcys and Aeneas' arrival in the Libyan harbour in Virgil's *Aeneid*, examining the ways in which these narratives create and inform the reader's expectations and interpretations of the nature of the protagonist's arrivals and stays in these places. I then discuss Statius' description of his arrival in Pollius' harbour, showing how, through engagement with these earlier epic harbour arrivals, Statius causes the reader to question whether this is a homecoming or a diversion, and whether this imagery relates to Pollius or to Statius. As I will demonstrate, this ambiguous plurality works on several levels: the conflation of Greek and Roman homecoming and diversion narratives not only works to praise Pollius' identity and life journey, but it allows Statius to reflect on the bay of Naples as his home but also his not-home, and thereby on the Greek, Neapolitan, and Roman aspects of his identity.[508]

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[507] Newlands (2002) 154–98 (citations from pp. 186 and 190).

[508] As such, I follow Rosati (2011), who discusses Statius as a poet with three 'hearts'.

Odysseus' arrival on Ithaca is the last in a series of his many arrivals in unknown places. Upon landing in a new location, Odysseus typically wonders whether he has just arrived in a land whose inhabitants are cruel and wild, or if the land's inhabitants are friendly and respectful of the gods.[509] His well-known adventures range between both ends of that spectrum, from a hungry Cyclops and the cannibalistic Laestrygonian giants to a helpful Aeolus and a hospitable welcome in Scheria, land of the Phaeacians.

When Odysseus finally arrives on Ithaca, he does not know where he is: the Phaeacians had given him wine that induced a deep and peaceful sleep, so that Odysseus was fast asleep when the Phaeacians put him to shore (Hom. *Od*. 13.1–95). Odysseus' ignorance regarding his whereabouts is emphasised and amplified when he wakes up (Hom. *Od*. 13.187–96):

<div align="center">

ὁ δ᾽ ἔγρετο δῖος Ὀδυσσεὺς

</div>

εὕδων ἐν γαίῃ πατρωΐῃ, οὐδέ μιν ἔγνω,

ἤδη δὴν ἀπεών· περὶ γὰρ θεὸς ἠέρα χεῦε

Παλλὰς Ἀθηναίη, κούρη Διός,   190

…

τοὔνεκ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἀλλοειδέα φαινέσκετο πάντα ἄνακτι,

ἀτραπιτοί τε διηνεκέες λιμένες τε πάνορμοι   195

πέτραι τ᾽ ἠλίβατοι καὶ δένδρεα τηλεθάοντα.

Meanwhile in his own country Odysseus woke, and after his long absence failed to recognise where he was. For the goddess Pallas Athene, Zeus' daughter, had veiled him in mist, … So everything looked strange to their king, those long ridge-tracks, the safe anchorages, the sheer cliffs and verdant trees.

Athena has cloaked Odysseus in fog, thereby causing him to not recognise Ithaca as his homeland: from Odysseus' point of view, this might just as well be another of his epic adventures.[510] As such, the fog simultaneously brings about and illustrates Odysseus'

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[509] Cf. e.g. Hom. *Od*. 6.119–21 (upon Odysseus' arrival in Phaeacia): 'Oh, what mortal place have I reached this time? Are they cruel and merciless savages, or god-fearing people, generous to strangers?', 9.172–6 (when Odysseus and his crew are about to explore the land of the Cyclopes).

[510] Haller (2007) 212.

confusion and points to a gap of knowledge between Odysseus and the reader, who is privy to the knowledge that Odysseus' location is actually Ithaca. This gap of knowledge and the resulting tension between confusion and recognition, between a foreign land and homecoming, is also expressed in the poem's description of the Ithacan harbour in which Odysseus (asleep) arrives, a port that is named after the sea god Phorcys (*Od.* 13.96–104):

Φόρκυνος δέ τίς ἐστι λιμήν, ἁλίοιο γέροντος,
ἐν δήμῳ Ἰθάκης· **δύο** δὲ **προβλῆτες** ἐν αὐτῷ
ἀκταὶ ἀπορρῶγες, λιμένος ποτιπεπτηυῖαι,
**αἵ τ᾽ ἀνέμων σκεπόωσι δυσαήων μέγα κῦμα
ἔκτοθεν**· ἔντοσθεν δέ τ᾽ ἄνευ δεσμοῖο μένουσι   100
νῆες ἐΰσσελμοι, ὅτ᾽ ἂν ὅρμου μέτρον ἵκωνται.
αὐτὰρ ἐπὶ κρατὸς λιμένος τανύφυλλος ἐλαίη,
ἀγχόθι δ᾽ αὐτῆς **ἄντρον** ἐπήρατον ἠεροειδές,
ἱρὸν **νυμφάων** αἳ νηϊάδες καλέονται.

One of the island's coves is that of Phorcys, the Old Man of the Sea, with its mouth between two projecting headlands: both are sheer cliffs to seaward, but slope down towards the harbour on the landward side. They restrain the huge breakers raised by strong winds outside, while oared ships can ride unmoored once they have reached their anchorage. A long-leafed olive tree grows at the head of the cove, and nearby is a pleasant, shadowy cave sacred to the Nymphs called Naiads.

The harbour of Phorcys recalls several earlier harbours and arrival scenes in the *Odyssey*.[511] Most obviously, its natural inlet evokes the harbour of the Laestrygonians (*Od.* 10.87–94) both conceptually and verbally: both harbours feature double cliffs that mark the entrance of an inner bay (ἀκταὶ and προβλῆτες, 'headlands jutting out', in both *Od.* 10.89 and 13.97–8).[512] In the sinister harbour of the Laestrygonians, these cliffs are described as a mouth (ἀκταὶ δὲ προβλῆτες ἐναντίαι ἀλλήλῃσιν / ἐν στόματι προὔχουσιν, 'and two projecting promontories facing each other run out toward the mouth', *Od.* 10.90). This depiction is part of the Laestrygonian harbour's gastrointestinal imagery that forewarns the Laestrygonian giants'

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[511] Segal (1962) 48–9; Leach (1988) 32–4; Haller (2007) 198–9, 212ff.; Giusti (2018) 146–7.
[512] For more parallels, see Haller (2007) 199.

habit of cannibalism and anticipates their consumption of many of Odysseus' men.[513] The attentive reader might therefore be alerted by the similarities between the Ithacan harbour of Phorcys and that of the Laestrygonians, and wonder how the latter informs the former. Might Odysseus' homecoming not go well?

The reader is quickly reassured: the Ithacan harbour features several associations between its physical features and Odysseus himself. This includes the harbour's maternal embrace (*Od*. 13.98–9), which evokes Odysseus' earlier description of Ithaca as ἀγαθὴ κουροτρόφος ('a good nursing-mother', *Od*. 9.27), and the olive tree at the head of the harbour, which simultaneously suggests Athena's continuing protection of Odysseus and Odysseus' determination, and anticipates Odysseus' confirmation of his identity through his correct description of the marriage bed (τανύφυλλος ἐλαίη, in both *Od*. 13.102 and 23.195).[514]

Thus, although the harbour description initially gives the impression of a rather '*unheimlich* home',[515] its topography and physical and intertextual features are clearly associated with Odysseus' identity. The Ithacan harbour's tension between the seemingly welcoming landscape and its evocation of earlier, often disastrous, harbour arrivals mainly serves a narratological purpose: it prompts the reader to wonder how the hero's homecoming will go. After all, this will prove to be merely a temporary homecoming for Odysseus: he still has to drive out the suitors, and he is fated to wander for a while longer yet. At the same time, Odysseus' ignorance regarding his location, brought about and illustrated by Athena's fog, causes the hero to consider this as another adventure and another potential distraction from homecoming – at least until Athena lifts the fog and his confusion.

Both the initial confusion regarding homecoming, as underlined by the gap in knowledge between character and reader, and the harbour's marked connection between the characteristics of the land and its owner, play an important role in similar epic narratives that simultaneously frame harbour arrivals as homecomings and as diversions from homecoming. Aeneas' arrival in Carthage falls into this category.

At the very beginning of the *Aeneid*, Juno asks Aeolus to unleash a storm that gravely endangers Aeneas' fleet. When Neptune finally calms down the seas, Aeneas heads for the nearest land in sight, the harbour of Libya (Verg. *Aen*. 1.159–68):

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[513] Haller (2007) 198–9. For evocations of other dangerous adventures in the harbour of Phorcys, including Scylla and Charybdis, see Segal (1962) 48.
[514] Leach (1988) 33–4, Haller (2007) 219–20.
[515] Giusti (2018) 145.

Est in **secessu** longo locus: insula portum

efficit obiectu laterum, quibus omnis ab alto   160

frangitur inque sinus scindit sese unda reductos.

hinc atque hinc vastae **rupes** geminique minantur

in caelum scopuli, quorum sub vertice late

aequora tuta silent; tum silvis scaena coruscis

desuper, horrentique atrum nemus imminent umbra.   165

fronte sub adversa **scopulis pendentibus** antrum;

intus aquae **dulces** vivoque sedilia saxo,

Nympharum domus.

There is a place where a harbour is formed by an island blocking the mouth of a long sound. As the waves come in from the open sea and break on the sides of this island, they are divided into the deep inlets of the bay. Rock cliffs are everywhere. A great pinnacle threatens the sky on either side, and beneath all this the broad water lies still and safe. At the end of the bay there rises a backcloth of shimmering trees, a dark wood with quivering shadows, looming over the water and there at the foot of this scene, is a cave of hanging rocks, a home for the nymphs, with fresh water inside it and seats in the virgin rock.

The Libyan harbour is situated in an intertextually evocative landscape. Although the Libyan inlet evokes several harbours, its similarities to Homer's harbour of Phorcys are especially notable.[516] Both bays feature two projecting headlands that create a natural inlet where high waves cannot reach and ships can lie unmoored, and both bays feature trees, a cave sacred to the nymphs, and fresh springs. In their literary construction, they also employ similar language and imagery: just as the Ithacan harbour, the Libyan harbour features maternal language of enclosure (*sinus*, *Aen*. 1.161) that is at odds with more brooding language, including *frangitur* (*Aen*. 1.161), *minantur* (*Aen*. 1.162), and *horrenti* and *imminent* (*Aen*. 1.165). [517] Virgil's

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[516] Austin (1971) 71–5, Williams (1972) 173. Also notable are its similarities to the harbour of the Cyclopes (Hom. *Od*. 9.116–41), which features a wooded island outside a harbour, a cave, a natural spring, and a calm sea that makes mooring unnecessary. Just as Odysseus and his men, Aeneas hunts for game and they all enjoy a feast before exploring the mainland – but where Odysseus investigates a pastoral land dominated by the dangerous Polyphemus, Aeneas finds an urban environment ruled by Dido. Other evoked harbours include the harbour of the Laestrygonians (Hom. *Od*. 10.87–96) and the arrival of the Argonauts in Colchis through their entrance of the river Phasis (Ap. Rhod. *Argon*. 2.1266–70, 1281–3).

[517] *OLD* s.v. *sinus* 2, 3. Leach (1988) 32–4 also interprets *secessu* (Verg. *Aen*. 1.159) as having maternal connotations, but the word's associations with withdrawal from Rome and public life seem to me to primarily

Libyan harbour is therefore similar to Homer's harbour of Phorcys both in terms of layout and through the presence of a tension between the seemingly welcoming landscape on the one hand and its ominous language on the other.

Scholars have interpreted this tension in different ways: as a projection of Aeneas' insecurities onto the landscape, for example, and as a proleptic anticipation of the danger that Carthage posed to the Romans.[518] These are valid interpretations that acknowledge the Libyan harbour's programmatic values in different ways. I focus here not on the tension itself, but on its effects, suggesting that the ambiguous construction of the Libyan harbour works to create divergent expectations similar to those raised by Ithaca's harbour of Phorcys.

Just like Odysseus, Aeneas does not know his whereabouts upon arriving in Libya. The reader does know Aeneas' geographical location, but is uncertain about the nature and duration of his stay there. On the one hand, the Aeolian storm immediately prior to Aeneas' arrival on the Libyan coast recalls the storm stirred up by Poseidon in the *Odyssey* (Hom. *Od.* 5.282–387), causing the reader to question if Aeneas' stay in Carthage could be similar to that of Odysseus in Phaeacia: that is, a pleasant and final stop before the protagonist's homecoming. On the other hand, the similarities between Aeneas' arrival in the Libyan harbour and Odysseus' arrival in Ithaca's harbour of Phorcys make the reader think of Odysseus' *nostos*.[519] Thus, just as the *Odyssey*'s formulation of the Ithacan harbour prompted the reader to wonder how Odysseus' homecoming would go, the Libyan harbour, through its concurrent evocation of different Homeric harbour arrivals, leads the reader to have divergent expectations about the exact nature and duration of Aeneas' visit to Carthage. And just as in the *Odyssey*, this uncertainty is underlined and complicated by a gap in knowledge between protagonist and reader.

The reader soon realises that Carthage poses a distraction from Aeneas' homecoming in Italy, but it takes a while for this realisation to dawn on Aeneas – and for Aeneas to accept it. In fact, Aeneas' recognition and begrudging acceptance of Carthage as a diversion from his objective requires divine intervention. Just as Odysseus only recognised the true nature of his whereabouts when Athena dissolved the fog that caused his confusion, so too Aeneas' delusion is lifted by a god as Mercury reminds Aeneas that he must leave for Italy (Verg. *Aen.* 4.238–95). The characterisation of Carthage as a leisurely distraction is further emphasised by the

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suggest that the Libyan harbour and Carthage more generally form a place of retreat from Aeneas' quest to found Rome (*OLD* s.v. *secessus* 1b, 2b).

[518] See e.g. Reeker (1971) 12–22, Pöschl (1977), Segal (1981) 71–2.

[519] Giusti (2018) 146.

hero's departure from the city. When Aeneas is preparing to leave Carthage, Dido asks her sister Anna to go and talk to him in a final attempt to change his mind. Specifically, Dido wants to know why Aeneas refuses to 'admit her words to his harsh ears' (*cur mea dicta negat **duras demittere in auris?***, Verg. *Aen.* 4.428). The reason for Aeneas' unyieldingness is soon revealed (Verg. *Aen.* 4.437–40):

> Talibus orabat, talisque miserrima fletus
> fertque refertque soror. sed nullis ille movetur
> fletibus aut voces ullas tractabilis audit;
> fata obstant **placidasque viri deus obstruit auris**.   440

> These were Dido's pleas. These were the griefs her unhappy sister brought and brought again. But no griefs moved Aeneas. He heard but did not heed her words. The Fates forbade it and God blocked his ears to all appeals.

The intervention of the gods is not limited to Mercury's prompting of Aeneas, but also includes the blockage of Aeneas' ears. In ancient literature, the motif of ear-blocking was often associated with the Sirens to the point where it reached almost proverbial status.[520] Thus, Dido's pleas, conveyed by Anna, are implicitly compared to a Siren song.[521] Just as Odysseus, Aeneas seems to be able to hear this Siren song and to be moved by it – but not to such an extent that he is persuaded to stay.[522]

   Through his description of the Libyan harbour and his evocation of the Sirens, then, Virgil sets up Carthage as a potential destination of homecoming that eventually turns out to be a diversion from the main goal of the protagonist's journey: coming home in Italy. I now show how, by engaging with these Homeric and Virgilian homecoming and diversion narratives, Statius causes the reader to question whether this is a homecoming or a diversion, and whether this imagery relates to Pollius or to Statius. I will demonstrate that this ambiguous plurality

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[520] Burbidge (2009).

[521] Pease (1935) 363: 'The reader would naturally recall *Od.* 12.47–9; 12.173–7.'

[522] Verg. *Aen.* 4.447–9: *haud secus adsiduis hinc atque hinc vocibus heros / tunditur, et magno persentit pectore curas; / mens immota manet, lacrimae volvuntur inanes*, 'just so the hero Aeneas was buffeted by all this pleading on this side and on that, and felt the pain deep in his mighty heart but his mind remained unmoved and the tears rolled in vain.' Thus, although the Sirens are no longer alive in Virgil's *Aeneid*, Aeneas still gets to have this Odyssean adventure. See *Aen.* 5.865–6: 'the Sirens' rocks, once a difficult coast and white with the bones of drowned men, and at that moment sounding far with the endless grinding of breaker upon rock.'

works in different ways: on the one hand, it praises Pollius' journey through life and his identity as a follower of Epicureanism, and on the other hand, it enables Statius to contemplate the generic composition of his poetry and to connect the Greek, Neapolitan, and Roman aspects of his identity through reflecting on the bay of Naples as simultaneously home and not-home.

Arriving in Pollius Felix' Villascape

When Statius describes his arrival in Pollius' villa, the similarities between Pollius' harbour, Virgil's Libyan harbour, and Homer's Ithacan port quickly become clear (*Silv.* 2.2.13–9):

> sed iuvere morae. **placido** lunata **recessu**
>
> **hinc atque hinc** curvae perrumpunt aequora **rupes**.
>
> dat Natura locum montique intervenit udum   15
>
> litus et in terras **scopulis pendentibus** exit.
>
> gratia prima loci, gemina testudines fumant
>
> balnea, et e terris occurrit **dulcis** amaro
>
> **Nympha** mari.

> But the delay was worthwhile. Curving cliffs on either side pierce crescent waters, making a calm recess. Nature provides space. The watery beach interrupts the heights, running inland between overhanging crags. The spot's first grace is a steaming bathhouse with twin cupolas, and from land a stream of fresh water meets the briny sea.

Statius' ecphrasis evokes Virgil's Carthaginian harbour through layout and diction. Both Statius and Virgil start their description elaborating on the site's natural formation of a harbour inlet (compare *secessu*, *Aen.* 1.159, with *recessu*, *Silv.* 2.2.13) through the presence of curving cliffs (*rupes* in *Aen.* 1.162 and *Silv.* 2.2.14) on both sides of an inlet (*hinc atque hinc* in *Aen.* 1.162 and *Silv.* 2.2.14). Both harbours also feature hanging rocks (*scopulis pendentibus* in *Aen.* 1.166 and *Silv.* 2.2.16), fresh water (compare *aquae dulces*, *Aen.* 1.167, with *dulcis ... / nympha*, *Silv.* 2.2.18–9) and references to nymphs (compare *Nympharum domus*, *Aen.* 1.168,

with *nympha*, *Silv*. 2.2.19).[523] As we have seen (pp. 198), most of these aspects feature in Homer's harbour of Phorcys as well.[524]

Pollius' harbour also features ominous language similar to that of the harbours of Carthage and Phorcys, although admittedly to a lesser extent: cliffs pierce the water (*perrumpunt*, *Silv*. 2.2.14), and a stream of fresh water attacks the sea (*occurrit*, *Silv*. 2.2.18).[525] The harbour area also contains some elements that are indicative of its owner. This includes the characterisation of the harbour as a *placido ... recessu* (*Silv*. 2.2.13), a calm retreat. This description recalls Statius' characterisation of Pollius as *placidus* only a few verses earlier (*placidi facundia Polli*, *Silv*. 2.2.9: see p. 189) and marks his villascape as a place of withdrawal – both physically, through its secluded geographic location, and metaphorically, offering a retreat from public life, politics, and empire.[526] As such, it also anticipates Statius' description of Pollius' retirement near the end of this poem, which is illustrated by the image of an arrival in a calm, Epicurean harbour (*Silv*. 2.2.140: I discuss this passage in more detail below, see pp. 225ff.). Other elements of this harbour area that are particular to Pollius include the prominence of artificial, man-made structures, namely his bathhouse.[527]

Statius' description of Pollius' harbour therefore evokes the harbours of Carthage and Phorcys both verbally and conceptually, from their corresponding layouts to the presence of ominous language and the unique association between the characteristics of the land and its owner. This plurality sets up divergent interpretations in accordance with each of these epic narratives, causing the reader to wonder how each evoked narrative is relevant and to whom. The poem opening's evocation of the Sirens and Statius' initial characterisation of his visit as

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[523] Although *nympha* in *Silv*. 2.2.19 indicates a stream of water, it undoubtedly evokes the mythical nymphs as well.

[524] This includes the cliffs on both sides (*Od*. 13.97–8), a calm inlet (*Od*. 13.99–101), and references to nymphs (*Od*. 13.103–4).

[525] Heinen (2011) 90 has pointed out the martial associations of *occurrit*, suggesting that the fresh water – which he interprets as indicative of Pollius' civilised villascape – rushes upon the uncivilised sea in battle. For interpretations of Pollius' villa as a military fortress, see n. 494 on p. 190 above.

[526] Cf. *OLD* s.v. *recessus* 1, 5, *TLL* 11.2.314.38–40 (Rey).

[527] The presence of man-made constructions contrasts with the harbours of Phorcys and Carthage, which are remarkable due to their natural features: they feature natural groves and caves dedicated to the nymphs. Homer's harbour of Phorcys does feature a few man-made objects (the nymphs own mixing bowls and jars and looms of stone: Hom. *Od*. 13.105–7), but Virgil's Carthaginian harbour does not feature any non-natural elements at all: even the nymphs' seats have been created in the living rocks (*vivoque sedilia saxo*, Verg. *Aen*. 1.167). In lieu of a natural cave, Pollius' harbour features artificially constructed baths (*gemina testudines fumant / balnea*, *Silv*. 2.2.17–8). These baths – and not the harbour's natural features – are the place's first grace (*gratia prima loci*, *Silv*. 2.2.17). Thus, Pollius' harbour is unique in its use and prominence of artificial, man-made structures, and these add to the charms of the place.

morae (*Silv*. 2.2.13) might lead the reader to interpret the poet's visit as a distraction from his journey back to Rome. This interpretation is supported by the poem's evocation of the Carthaginian harbour, drawing a connection between Aeneas' stay in Carthage and Statius' visit to Pollius' villa. At the same time, the poem opening's recalling of Aeneas' arrival in Italy suggests a true homecoming, and this interpretation is confirmed by the conceptual similarities between Pollius' harbour and Odysseus' arrival in Ithaca. As such, Statius' description of his arrival in Pollius' harbour area creates ambiguity: it indicates both a homecoming and an obstacle to homecoming at the same time. In addition to praising Pollius through the unique composition of his villascape, this ambiguity allows Statius to reflect on the generic composition of his poetry and to explore the possibility of experiencing his arrival in Pollius' harbour as a homecoming for himself, thus contemplating his professional and personal relations to the bay of Naples.

Crucial to Statius' navigation of Pollius' villa is the place where a stream of fresh water meets the salty sea (*Silv*. 2.2.18–9). This conflation of fresh water and the sea makes the location attractive to a group of sea creatures (*Silv*. 2.2.19–20):

> … **levis** hic **Phorci chorus** udaque crines
> **Cymodoce** viridisque cupit **Galatea** lavari.   20

> Here Phorcus' lightsome choir and Cymodoce with her dripping locks and sea-green Galatea delight to bathe.

This mini-catalogue continues Statius' evocation of homecoming narratives. Firstly, the mini-catalogue's inclusion of Phorcus (*Silv*. 2.2.19) calls to mind Odysseus' *nostos* in the harbour of Phorcys, thereby reinforcing the importance of Odysseus' homecoming to Pollius' villa.[528] At the same time, Statius' mini-catalogue of sea deities and nymphs evokes a similar Virgilian catalogue of sea creatures (Verg. *Aen*. 5.822–6):

> tum variae comitum facies, immania cete,
> et senior Glauci **chorus** Inousque Palaemon
> Tritonesque citi **Phorcique exercitus** omnis;

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[528] The name of this god, after which the Ithacan harbour is named, is written in Latin as *Phorcus*, *Phorcys*, and *Phorcyn*: see *RE* s.v. *Phorcys*.

> laeva tenet Thetis et Melite Panopeaque virgo,   825
> Nisaee Spioque Thaliaque **Cymodoce**que.

Then all his [Neptune's] retinue appeared, the huge sea beasts, Glaucus and his band of ageing dancers, Palaemon, son of Ino, the swift Tritons and all the ranks of Phorcys' army, while there on the left was Thetis with Melite and the maiden Panopaea, Nisaee and Spio, Thalia and Cymodoce.

This Virgilian catalogue features in the final leg of Aeneas' journey prior to his homecoming in Italy, when Neptune has promised Venus that Aeneas and his crew (minus Palinurus) will finally and safely arrive in Italy after all their adventures. A group of sea deities and nymphs then appears. Soon after, night falls and Palinurus dies. Aeneas and his crew are nearing the cliffs of the Sirens when Aeneas wakes up to find his ship without a *gubernator* and safely directs them to Cumae (Verg. *Aen.* 5.864–71). As such, Statius' engagement with Virgil's catalogue of sea creatures here recalls the precise narrative moment in both Virgil's *Aeneid* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* that the poet also evoked in the beginning of *Silvae* 2.2 (see p. 186).[529] Fittingly, this moment takes place when Aeneas' geographical location is rather close to the geographical location of Pollius' villa, on the Surrentine side of the Bay of Naples.

Statius' evocation of Aeneas' homecoming is further evidenced by the parallels between his mini-catalogue of sea creatures and that of Virgil, including a *chorus* of sea creatures, the reference to Phorcys, and Cymodoce. Kyriakidis has argued that Virgil's catalogue of sea creatures is an unprecedented catalogue that draws from varied myths and traditions including Homer, Apollonius, and Philodemus.[530] The evoked passages in these three authors are all concerned with safe sea voyages and/or *nostos*, just as the Virgilian catalogue occurs in the context of the final and safe sea voyage and homecoming of Aeneas and his crew. Thus, by alluding to Phorcys and through strong verbal correspondences with Virgil's catalogue of sea creatures that facilitates Aeneas' arrival in Italy, Statius' mini-catalogue continues the poem's evocation of Odysseus' and Aeneas' homecoming narratives.

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[529] Pavlovskis (1973) 16, van Dam (1984) 205 note the verbal similarities between Statius' mini-catalogue and Virgil's passages, but predominantly emphasise the difference between Pollius' civilised villa and the uncivilised sea.

[530] Kyriakidis (2000) with Hom. *Il.* 18.39–51, Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 4.1597–1600, Phld. 34 Sider (= *Anth. Pal.* 6.349). For a detailed commentary on Virgil's group of sea creatures, see Fratantuono and Smith (2015) 688–93.

Additionally, Statius' mini-catalogue lends itself to a metapoetic reading. Scholars usually interpret the presence of nymphs and sea deities as an indication of the place's artificial and civilised pleasures, claiming that these comforts appear to be more attractive to the sea creatures than the ocean's natural qualities.[531] But the presence of these sea creatures also emphasises the liminality of Pollius' harbour area, offering both traveller and reader an entrée to this private villa from the outside in.[532] And, as I mentioned earlier, this place is marked by a conflation of the sea's salty water on the one hand and the villa's fresh water on the other hand. Thus, as we move through Pollius' harbour, which becomes increasingly characteristic of Pollius' Epicurean calm, our entrance is accompanied by a progression from the ocean of epic to the smaller streams of lighter poetry. Moreover, it is precisely this liminal space in between epic and minor poetry in which the group of sea creatures delights. In other words, the conflation of genres here at the watery edge of Pollius' villascape illustrates Statius' transition from epic to occasional poetry as he composes a unique and generically ambiguous occasional poem that befits Pollius. This transition is exemplified by the composition of Statius' mini-catalogue of sea creatures.

Statius' catalogue clearly recalls Virgil's catalogue of sea creatures, but it also differs from it: it is much shorter, features vocabulary with different generic associations, and features a slightly different selection of nymphs and sea deities. As such, it moves us away from epic.

Firstly, where Virgil refers to Phorcus' group as an army (***Phorcique exercitus** omnis*, *Aen*. 5.824), Statius begins his catalogue by describing the 'Phorcus' lightsome choir' (***levis Phorci chorus***, *Silv*. 2.2.19). Statius' replacement of Virgil's military *exercitus* with the more harmonious *chorus* and his addition of the adjective *levis*, which is usually associated with genres lighter than epic, introduces a non-epic element as we move from the harbour area further into the villa.[533]

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[531] Statius' excessive praise of Pollius' luxurious and artificial villa – including the double baths – can be seen in the context of contemporary discourse about and criticism on luxurious building fashions. See e.g. Newlands (2011) 126: 'Since the Romans decorated their properties with mythological sculptures and friezes, St. simply goes one step further in making nymphs active participants here.' For a brief overview of the development of villas from agricultural centres to luxury resorts and status symbols, see Zarmakoupi (2014) 3–8. For villas as markers of social status, see especially Edwards (1993) 137–72, Bodel (1997), Hales (2003).

[532] Haller (2007) 221–3 explains that nymphs often inhabit marginal spaces away from society and interprets the cave of nymphs in Homer's harbour of Phorcys (Hom. *Od*. 13.347–50) as a transitional space, offering a progression from the foreign unknown to his familiar homeland, especially because Odysseus has made offerings to these nymphs before.

[533] *Contra* Newlands (2011) 126, who interprets *levis* as 'light in weight' and 'nimble', but does not appear to seek a generic interpretation.

Statius then mentions Cymodoce (*udaque crines / Cymodoce*, *Silv.* 2.2.19–20). In Virgil, Cymodoce receives emphasis because she concludes the catalogue of sea creatures (*Aen.* 5.826). In Statius, she receives emphasis as well, not only because she is mentioned where many others are not, but also because her name occupies the beginning of the verse and because she is awarded an adjective phrase. Her inclusion in both catalogues is very appropriate, as 'Cymodoce' literally means 'she who receives the waves', and the nymph is typically ascribed the ability to calm the stormy seas and to easily restrain the winds.[534] Cymodoce's appearance here therefore emphasises the calming of the sea, which is especially helpful in the context of safe sea voyages and homecomings, and which, as we will see, continues to be a prominent aspect of Pollius' villa. As such, Cymodoce's inclusion supports the poem's transition from the epic open seas to Pollius' calmer environment.

Finally, Galatea's inclusion into the catalogue is unprecedented. Van Dam suggests that Statius uses her name to evoke the general picture of a Nereid,[535] but perhaps there is more to it. Galatea's name would have recalled Theocritus' and Ovid's accounts of her story, in which the Cyclops Polyphemus sings a pastoral song to the nymph from the shore in an attempt to persuade her to join him in his rich and pastoral *locus amoenus*.[536] Thus, they are liminal figures on the edge between sea and land, with the Cyclops trying to seduce the nymph to leave her element, the water, in favour of his element, the earth. Although Polyphemus failed to lure Galatea to his pastoral paradise, Galatea is here depicted as tempted by and enjoying Pollius Felix' fertile *locus amoenus* with its many advantages, including the baths. It therefore seems that Pollius – in this scenario implicitly our Cyclops, whether he has actively tried to seduce the nymphs with his compositions or not – has succeeded where Polyphemus failed.[537] Galatea's presence in this mini-catalogue stresses the liminal aspects of Pollius' bathing area and introduces another non-epic, in this case pastoral, element into the villascape.

All in all, then, Statius' description of Pollius' harbour area is initially framed in epic terms: through its plural evocation of epic harbour arrivals, including Odysseus' homecoming in the harbour of Phorcys, Aeneas' arrival in Carthage, and Aeneas' arrival in Italy in the bay of

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[534] *LSJ* s.v. Κυμοδόκη: for the nymph's sea-calming ability, cf. Hes. *Theog*. 252–4. Vollmer (1898) 342 suggests that *udaque crines* is a tautologous translation of κυμοδόκη ('her hair just absorbs the water'), but van Dam (1984) 205 considers this unlikely because Virgil does not make such a pun and because there is not 'much analogy between the dripping tresses and the '*aufnehmen*' of water.'

[535] van Dam (1984) 205. Newlands (2011) 126–7 also refers to a Cymodocea ('perhaps a different nymph') who is gifted in speech and would therefore befit Pollius' literary tastes.

[536] Theoc. *Id*. 6, 11; Ov. *Met*. 13.738–899.

[537] Earlier, I mentioned that Pollius' *facundia* attracted Statius (p. 189): I discuss Pollius' compositions in more detail below (see pp. 219ff.).

Naples, it sets up divergent expectations, causing the reader to wonder which narratives are relevant and to whom. As we move through the harbour to a calmer environment that turns out to be increasingly unique to Pollius himself, Carthage disappears from view and Odysseus' and Aeneas' homecomings become more prominent. This transition is accompanied by a generic transition from epic to lighter poetry, which illustrates Statius' generically ambiguous departure from the composition of epic poetry in order to praise his Epicurean patron. In what follows, I discuss how the second part of Pollius' harbour description continues this trend, and how it tells us something about Statius and a great deal about Pollius.

Pollius' Epicurean Harbour

As Statius zooms in on the villa and leaves the initial arrival area behind, his description of the coastal temples of Neptune and Hercules and the harbour's pool increasingly focuses on the area's calm in imitation of its owner (*Silv.* 2.2.21–5):[538]

> ante domum **tumidae moderator caerulus undae**
> excubat, innocui custos laris; huius **amico**
> spumant templa **salo**. felicia rura tuetur
> Alcides; gaudet **gemino** sub **numine** portus:
> hic servat terras, hic saevis fluctibus obstat.   25

> Before his house the cerulean governor of the swelling wave keeps ward, guardian of the harmless home; his temple foams with the friendly surge. Alcides protects the happy

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[538] Scholars have sought to identify the location of Neptune's *domus* and Hercules' shrine of temple. As archaeological remains are rather scarce, interpretations differ. Shackleton Bailey (2003) 104 n. 8 takes *domum* to refer to Neptune's temple, while others suggest that it describes the baths on the shore. Vollmer (1898) 342 suggests this, but also considers it possible that *domum* refers to a small building near the shore. He rejects the possibility of *domum* referring to Pollius' villa on the cliffs. Mingazzini and Pfister (1946) 55, 65–7 also think that *domum* refers to the baths, but suggest that the baths were near the entrance of Pollius' home – therefore, they say, the use of the word *domum* here is not problematic. Others suggest that *domum* refers to Pollius' villa high on the rocks: see e.g. Håkanson (1969), Traglia and Aricò (1980) 792 n. 21, van Dam (1984) 206–7. This interpretation leads to the question if we are to imagine Neptune's temple high up on the cliffs as well: Beloch (1890) 272, Russo (2004) 136–7 do think so.

For the first temple of Hercules, probably to the east of the beach, see Beloch (1890) 272; Mingazzini and Pfister (1946) 65–6; Russo (2004) 133, 143. For the new temple of Hercules as described in *Silv.* 3.1, probably located to the west of the beach near Punta Croce, see Russo (2004) 146–51.

fields. The haven rejoices under its double deity. One protects the land, the other resists the savage waves.

Neptune and Hercules here facilitate the Epicurean serenity of Pollius' villascape. Their controlled protection of the port, couched in ethical diction, illustrates the poem's correlation between physical and moral control, which ultimately culminates in Statius' laudation of Pollius as a Lucretian sage (*Silv.* 2.2.120–42).[539] Neptune's characterisation as *tumidae moderator caerulus undae*, the 'heavenly ruler of the swelling wave', evokes epic: swelling waves feature frequently in epic, especially in the context of sea storms. But on this occasion, Neptune is not the cause of such a sea storm, but someone who can put a limit to it. This is not only suggested by his characterisation as *moderator*,[540] but also by the phrase's evocation of the moment in *Aeneid* 5 when Neptune calms down the sea near Surrentum, thereby allowing and enabling Aeneas and his crew to safely arrive in Italy (Verg. *Aen.* 5.819–21):

> **caeruleo** per summa levis volat aequora curru;
> subsidunt **undae tumidumque** sub axe tonanti   820
> sternitur aequor aquis; fugiunt vasto aethere nimbi.

> He sped lightly over the ocean in his sea-green chariot, the waves subsided and the expanse of swollen waters grew calm under the thunderous axle: the storm-clouds vanished from the open sky.

In Pollius' villa, Neptune performs a task similar to his previous tasks in the *Aeneid*: he placates the wild ocean and thereby simultaneously enables safe homecomings and ensures the serenity of Pollius' villascape.[541] In Pollius' haven, the sea water is no longer tumid or harsh (*tumidae*, *Silv.* 2.2.21 and *amaro*, *Silv.* 2.2.18), but friendly (*amico ... salo*, 2.2.22–3). As such, it is characteristic of Pollius himself.

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[539] Newlands (2011) 127.

[540] Newlands (2011) 127 notes that *moderator* has political overtones and sees this Neptune as 'a model for moral and civic discourse.'

[541] I therefore follow and expand on Newlands (2002) 168, (2011) 127, who also sees a connection between Statius' Neptune and Neptune calming down the sea in *Aeneid* 1 and 5.

In comparison to Neptune, Hercules' presence is only described very briefly (*felicia rura tuetur / Alcides*, 2.2.23–4).[542] This is perhaps reflective of his small shrine here in *Silvae* 2.2 as opposed to the much more elaborate description of the construction of his new temple in *Silvae* 3.1. From the latter poem, it becomes clear that Pollius' Hercules does not only have Greek traits, such as private cult celebrations and annual Greek athletic games, but that he also features some Epicurean aspects: in this philosophy, Hercules was seen as the victor over the fear of death.[543] His brief presence as a god here (*gemino sub numine*, *Silv*. 2.2.24) hints at this aspect of the hero-turned-god and illustrates Pollius' Epicureanism.

This Epicureanism is expressed more explicitly in the following few verses. The harbour itself revels in the presence of both gods (*Silv*. 2.2.24), who work together on the juxtaposed elements of water and earth to maintain the harbour's calm: Hercules serves the land (*hic servat terras*), while Neptune resists the savage waves (*hic saevis fluctibus obstat*, *Silv*. 2.2.25). This results in a pleasantly calm haven (*Silv*. 2.2.26–9):

> mira **quies** pelagi. ponunt hic **lassa** furorem
> **aequora** et **insani** spirant clementius **austri**.
> hic praeceps minus audet **hiems**, **nulloque tumultu**
> stagna modesta iacent dominique imitantia mores.

> Wonderful is the calm of the sea; here the weary waters lay their rage aside and the wild south winds breathe more gently. Here the headlong tempest bates its daring; the pool lies modest and untroubled, imitating its master's manners.

This modest and calm harbour is typically interpreted in this context as referring to Pollius' Epicurean affinities. The sea's *quies* here refers to a common image in contemporary philosophy: the silence of the sea in Pollius' direct environment is symbolic for his mental attitude and peaceful life enabled by his withdrawal from public life.[544] Statius' description of the calm harbour includes some similarly double-edged words with Epicurean meanings, such as *hiems* (2.2.28) and *nulloque tumultu* (2.2.28). These words relate the image of Pollius' quiet

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[542] van Dam (1984) 207–8, Newlands (2011) 128: through its pun on Pollius' *cognomen* '*Felix*', this description too illustrates the relation between Pollius and his villascape.

[543] Galinsky (1972) 167–9, 180, van Dam (1984) 208.

[544] van Dam (1984) 209–10, Newlands (2011) 128.

haven to an Epicurean state of *ataraxia* free from storms and disturbances.[545] His calm port is clearly linked with Pollius himself, both through the adjective *modesta*, used frequently in the *Silvae* as an adjective for persons and/or their morals,[546] and through the explicit expression *dominique imitantia mores* (*Silv.* 2.2.29). As such, this depiction connects the calm aspects of the harbour area that I have discussed earlier both to Pollius himself and to his Epicureanism. At the same time, it anticipates the more explicitly Epicurean discourse later in *Silv.* 2.2.139–42 (Pollius' permanent anchoring in a metaphorical harbour, see pp. 225ff. below).[547]

This passage also continues the poem's metapoetic transition from the ocean of epic to Pollius' Epicurean harbour. In epic poetry, tired waters (*lassa ... aequora*, *Silv.* 2.2.26–7) often refer to storms that have finished and epic adventures that have tired sailors.[548] Here, they lay their epic rage aside (*ponunt ... furorem*, *Silv.* 2.2.26) as they enter the harbour area, indicating that they are not at home in Pollius' calm villascape. This notion is furthered by the wild south winds that breathe more gently (*insani spirant clementius austri*, *Silv.* 2.2.27), thus losing their epic and destructive powers as the reader knows them from Ovid.[549] Likewise, the storm becomes less daring (*minus audit hiems*, *Silv.* 2.2.28) until finally the harbour's waters lie gentle, undisturbed by turmoil (*nulloque tumultu*, *Silv.* 2.2.28). These storms have an Epicurean layer and their abating adds to the harbour's calm and *ataraxia*, but they also emphasise that epic storms are not at home in Pollius' Epicurean harbour.[550]

Consequently, Pollius' villa is an undisturbed place, as many scholars have noted: its calm waters indicate peace or *ataraxia* in opposition to the stormy sea his villa overlooks – which, in ancient psychological terminology in general and in Epicureanism in particular, is symbolic of disturbances in other spheres, such as political life. Pollius' villa allows its owner to live like a god, high above mankind, both literally and metaphorically, just as an Epicurean would do

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[545] Nisbet (1978) 1–2, van Dam (1984) 211.

[546] Cf. *Silv.* 1.2.162 (Violentilla), 2.1.39 and 2.1.43 (Glaucias), 3.5.67 (Claudia), 4.2.42 (Domitian), and 5.1.118 (Priscilla).

[547] Nisbet (1978) 1, van Dam (1984), Newlands (2002) 169, Heinen (2011) 119–21.

[548] Cf. Luc. 5.703 (*lassatum… aequor*), Val. Fl. 3.661 (*vacuos cur lassant aequora visus*), Stat. *Theb.* 6.799 (*longa vagos lassarunt aequora nautas*). Indeed, Newlands (2011) 128 notes that '*lassus* … occurs esp. in non-epic genres.'

[549] Cf. Ov. *Met.* 12.511–2 (the battle between the Lapiths and the Centaurs): *dixit et **insanis** deiectam viribus **austri** / forte trabem nactus validum coniecit in hostem…*, 'He spoke, and finding a chance tree-trunk toppled by a furious southerly wind, he threw it at his powerful enemy.' The *Austri* are generally storm-bearing winds: Newlands (2011) 128.

[550] For sea storms as 'part of the furniture of epic' and indicative of the epic genre, cf. e.g. Morford (1967) 20–58, Gibson (2004) 160, Deremetz (2014) 59, as well as my discussion of the *Agamemnon*'s sea storm in chapter 3.

according to Lucretius.[551] For Statius' depiction of Pollius' lofty villa at the beginning of the poem (*Silv.* 2.2.3) and the ways in which Pollius, through his *ataraxia*, is able to view people's struggles from above (*Silv.* 2.2.131–2: see p. 224 below), are reminiscent of Lucretius' description of the way an Epicurean wise man gazes over the sea from afar (Lucr. 2.1–4):

> Suave, mari magno turbantibus aequora ventis,
>
> e terra magnum alterius **spectare** laborem;
>
> non quia vexari quemquamst iucunda voluptas,
>
> sed quibus ipse malis careas quia cernere suave est.

> Pleasant it is, when on the great sea the winds trouble the waters, to gaze from shore upon another's great tribulation: not because any man's troubles are a delectable joy, but because to perceive what ills you are free from yourself is pleasant.

Pollius' *celsa villa* (*Silv.* 2.2.3), looking out over the Bay of Naples, enables him to do precisely this. Thus, as we move from the harbour into Pollius' villa proper, the sense of homecoming increases as the sea calms down and the quiet pool is explicitly associated with Epicureanism, culminating in a direct comparison between the haven's calm water and Pollius' character. In what follows, I will discuss how these epic(urean) storylines play out on the watery edges of Pollius' villascape.

Leaving Carthage Behind (*Silv.* 2.2.100–6)

From his description of Pollius' harbour area, which evoked Aeneas' arrival in Carthage, Statius moves on to depict Pollius' villa. After guiding the reader from the colonnade leading up to the buildings on the cliffs with their rich decoration and views over the Bay to its special room directly overlooking Naples itself, Statius describes how a nymph emerges from the sea to steal some of Pollius' grapes (*Silv.* 2.2.100–6). This mythological vignette effectively ends the tour around Pollius' villa that started with the description of the harbour area,[552] and reintroduces the harbour area's coastal liminality as a sea-nymph leaves her element to enjoy the benefits of the countryside, only to be chased back into the water by keen satyrs.[553] As such,

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[551] van Dam (1984) 191. See also Nisbet (1978) 1–2, elaborated upon by Newlands (2002) 170ff.

[552] Cancik (1968) 71 nn. 83–5, van Dam (1984) 254.

[553] van Dam (1984) 253 notes the scene's contrast between land and water.

this scene picks up on the presence of the nymphs in the first half of the poem (*Silv.* 2.2.18–20), thus framing the beginning and ending of Statius' tour around Pollius' villascape thematically and narratologically. The similarities between Statius' harbour arrival and the end of his tour, culminating in a laudation of Pollius' career journey and identity, do not remain limited to the repetition of nymph imagery, but are also expressed through the return to epic(urean) narratives of homecoming and diversion.

The visit of this nymph highlights the Carthaginian dimensions of Pollius' villa that were initially evoked by the similarities between Pollius' harbour and that of Carthage. In fact, the Carthaginian subtext is reintroduced shortly before the actual emergence of the Nereid (*Silv.* 2.2.95–7):

> macte animo quod Graia probas, quod Graia frequentas   95
> arva, nec **invideant** quae te genuere Dicarchi
> **moenia**: nos docto melius potiemur alumno.

> Bless your heart that you favour things Greek and spend your days in Grecian country! Nor let Dicarchus' city that gave you birth be jealous. *We* shall more fitly possess our poet foster child.

Although Pollius has been actively involved in the public and political life of both cities, Statius works hard to depict Naples (*nos*, 2.2.97) as the most important spot for Pollius: this city is a much better home for his poetic activities than Puteoli, Pollius' native city.[554] Statius therefore creates an opposition between Puteoli and Naples, which is stressed by Puteoli's jealousy. This envy, phrased as *invideant ... moenia* (2.2.96–7), evokes a description of Carthage from Ovid's *Heroides* (7.119–20):

> urbem constitui lateque patentia fixi
> **moenia** finitimis **invidiosa** locis.   120

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[554] For Pollius' participation in the communities of Puteoli and Naples, see *Silv.* 2.2.133–6 (where Statius also refers to Naples as *meis*, 2.2.136) with van Dam (1984) 271–2. For Pollius as inhabitant of both cities, see also van Dam (1984) 192–3, Newlands (2011) 153.

> I [Dido] establish a city, and lay about it the foundations of wide-reaching walls that stir the jealousy of neighbouring realms.

Dido's focalisation of Carthage here responds to Aeneas' admiration of the Carthaginian walls in *Aeneid* 1.418–40, and renews her own pride of these glorious walls as articulated at the end of *Aeneid* 4 (*urbem praeclaram statui, mea moenia vidi*, 'I have founded a glorious city and lived to see the building of my own walls', Verg. *Aen.* 4.655). Her reconceptualisation of the walls as *invidiosa* here speaks to her changed feelings about Aeneas, whose admiration she now sees as jealousy. By picking up on Ovid's commentary on the *Aeneid*, Statius presents us with another angle on Carthage, namely one that relates it to its environs. Just as Dido's Carthage, Pollius' residence stirs the jealousy of neighbouring realms. The allusion is particularly appropriate as it introduces an implicit comparison between Dido and Pollius in terms of their ktistic qualities. Earlier in *Silvae* 2.2, Pollius was praised for his beneficial transformation of the rough Surrentine cliffscape both through language that recalls city-founding and colonisation and by comparison to powerful poets such as Arion, Amphion, and Orpheus, who also controlled and transformed (in)animate nature (*Silv.* 2.2.52–62).[555] As such, Pollius' landscape transformation is linked to his qualities as a city-founder and a general, and to his poetic ability. The allusion to the *Heroides* underlines the Carthaginian characterisation of Pollius and his villascape: after all, Dido has also founded a city and is now its leader, and her letter to Aeneas, although technically written by Ovid, can be seen as a product of her poetic ability.[556]

Soon after this allusion has recalled the idea of Carthage and thereby reasserted the city's importance for our understanding of *Silvae* 2.2, a Nereid emerges from the sea and climbs the rocks (*Silv.* 2.2.100–6):

> saepe per autumnum iam pubescente Lyaeo   100
> **conscendit scopulos** noctisque occulta sub umbra
> palmite maturo **rorantia lumina** tersit
> Nereis et dulces rapuit de collibus uvas.
> saepe et vicino sparsa est vindemia fluctu,

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[555] Cf. Stat. *Silv.* 2.2.52–62 with van Dam (1984) 227–32; Newlands (2002) 183, 192–3.

[556] For studies of this 'shared' authorship of the *Heroides*, see especially Lindheim (2003), Spentzou (2003), Fulkerson (2005).

et Satyri cecidere vadis, nudamque per undas   105
Dorida montani cupierunt prendere Panes.

Often in autumn, when Lyaeus is burgeoning, a Nereid has climbed the rocks and in night's secret shade wiped her dripping eyes with a ripened vine shoot and snatched sweet grapes from the hills. Often the vintage is sprayed by the adjoining flood. Satyrs fell into the shallows and the mountain Pans lusted to catch Doris naked in the waves.

The nymph's appearance and actions recall Virgil's depiction of Aeneas climbing onto a peak and watching over the sea in search of his lost friends, soon after his arrival in the Libyan harbour (Verg. *Aen*. 1.180–3):[557]

Aeneas **scopulum** interea **conscendit** et omne   180
prospectum late pelago petit, Anthea si quem
iactatum vento videat Phrygiasque biremis,
aut Capyn, aut celsis in puppibus arma Caici.

Meanwhile Aeneas climbed a rock to get a view over the whole breadth of the ocean and see if there was any trace of the storm-tossed Antheus or of the double-banked Trojan galleys, Capys perhaps, or Caicus' armour high on the poop.

The appearance of the nymph in Pollius' villa therefore recalls Aeneas' arrival in Carthage. The contexts of the passages differ to some extent: the Nereid climbs the rocks to benefit from the land's produce, whereas Aeneas ascends a peak to look out for his lost companions. Yet they have something more general in common. During Aeneas' visit to Carthage, it becomes clear that his stay there is only temporary. He then leaves, having profited from Dido's Carthaginian hospitality. The nymph's visit to Pollius' villa is of limited duration too: she grabs some grapes before being chased back into the ocean by lusty satyrs. Both characters therefore temporarily leave the ocean and briefly profit from the land's advantages.

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[557] Here Aeneas echoes Odysseus' behaviour too: cf. e.g. Hom. *Od*. 10.98, where Odysseus climbs a crag to scout his surroundings upon his arrival in the harbour of the Laestrygonians – a harbour that can also be seen in the context of epic harbour arrivals, as discussed above (p. 199).

The temporariness of the nymph's visit to Pollius' villa, evocative of the impermanence of Aeneas' stay in Carthage, is further underlined by the poet's description of her dripping eyes.[558] The phrase *rorantia lumina* (*Silv.* 2.2.102) is not common in extant Latin: we only find a similar phrase in Ovid's *Heroides*, and the identical phrase in Silius Italicus' *Punic Wars*. Both passages describe a woman mourning the departure of her beloved:

scribimur, et lacrimis **oculi rorantur** obortis

I write, and my eyes are wet with rising tears. (Ov. *Her*. 15.97)

in portus amens **rorantia lumina** flexit

Then in distraction she [Dido] turned her weeping eyes to the harbour. (Sil. *Pun*. 8.139)

Ovid's Sappho laments Phaon's departure and Silius' Dido grieves Aeneas' leaving. Both women end up dying by suicide in their grief. Whichever the direction of interaction between Statius and Silius Italicus, then, the intertextual interaction between the visiting Nereid's dripping eyes and those of Sappho, mourning Phaon's leaving, evokes a sense of departure.[559] As such, the nymph's brief stay in Pollius' villa, marked by her arrival and fleeing departure, highlights the idea of Carthage/Surrentum as only a temporary home. Where Statius' description of his arrival in Pollius' harbour evoked Carthage in the context of homecoming and diversion imagery, then, this mythological vignette picks up on this narrative by stressing the Carthaginian dimensions of Pollius' villascape and by explicitly depicting it as a place to stay for a limited duration of time. Moreover, just as Aeneas' departure from Carthage was accompanied by an evocation of the Siren song, so the next section of Statius' poem continues the notion of Pollius' villa as a Carthaginian distraction through returning to the motif of the Siren song.

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[558] While Vollmer (1898) 350 thinks that the nymph must have already eaten the grapes and brushes her eyes – dripping because she has just come out of the water – with the vine leaves, van Dam (1984) 255 suggests that her dripping eyes would have been normal in her natural environment, the sea, and argues that this description therefore contributes to the contrast between water and land in the poem. Newlands (2011) 147 suggests that Thetis similarly shakes off seawater at Stat. *Ach*. 1.30, and notes that, elsewhere in the *Silvae*, Statius also employs unusual instruments for the purpose of drying one's eyes, namely Cupid's feathers (*Silv*. 1.2.92–3) and Calliope's plectrum (*Silv*. 2.7.105–6).

[559] See p. 110 n. 299 for an overview of scholarly approaches to the dating and chronological composition of the *Punica*.

Pollius' Siren Song

Following the first half of the poem, comprised of Statius' tour around Pollius' villa, the second half of the poem is dedicated to direct praise of both Pollius and Polla. A transitional passage between both halves of the poem explicitly connects the land with his (literary) activities and his career journey. In this passage, the poet encourages the land to be happy and fertile (*felix*, *Silv.* 2.2.107) and to form a pleasant environment for him (*placeant*, *Silv.* 2.2.111). Because these words refer to Pollius himself elsewhere,[560] as we have seen, they strengthen the associations between Pollius and his villascape. In this lush and enjoyable environment, Pollius is depicted as composing literature (*Silv.* 2.2.112–5):

> hic ubi Pierias exercet Pollius artes
> (seu volvit monitus quos dat Gargettius auctor,
> seu nostrum quatit ille chelyn, seu dissona nectit
> carmina, sive minax ultorem stringit iambon) … 115

> Here Pollius plies Pierian skills, whether meditating the precepts of the Gargettian teacher or striking my lyre or turning unequal verses or unsheathing the avenging iamb in threatening vein.

Different suggestions have been made regarding the exact nature and genre of Pollius' literary work, especially with respect to his compositions with Epicurean affinities that are suggested through the reference to Epicurus (*Gargettius auctor*, *Silv.* 2.2.113). Scholars disagree on the meaning of *volvit*: their interpretations range from general philosophical contemplation to the writing of didactic poetry to the composition of philosophical prose.[561] Overall, Pollius appears to be composing literature that seemingly ranges from Epicurean subject matter to epic, elegy, and iambic poetry. The true nature and genres of Pollius' literary productions remain a matter of hypothesis: it suffices here to say that Pollius is depicted as a generically versatile and productive composer in a happy and fertile villa.

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[560] See pp. 189, 212.

[561] For general philosophical contemplation, see Vollmer (1898) 351, Cancik (1968) 72 n. 37; for prose, see van Dam (1984) 261, who suggests perhaps a translation of Epicurus or a treatise about his philosophy; and for didactic poetry, see Nisbet (1978) 1; Newlands (2002) 192, (2011) 149.

Statius further develops the explicit connection between Pollius and his villascape by describing the effects that Pollius' literary efforts have on their environment (*Silv.* 2.2.116–20):

> hinc levis **e scopulis meliora ad carmina Siren**
> advolat, hinc motis audit Tritonia cristis.
> tunc rapidi ponunt flatus, maria ipsa vetantur
> obstrepere, emergunt pelago doctamque **trahuntur**
> ad chelyn et blandi **scopulis** delphines **aderrant**.   120

> From this side the Siren flits lightly from her rocks to better songs than hers, from that Tritonia hearkens, nodding her crest. Then the swift winds subside, the very seas are forbidden to roar, winsome dolphins emerge from the water drawn to his accomplished harp, and wander by the cliffs.

This scene recalls the poem's opening: the Siren's appearance from her rocks (*e scopulis ... Siren*, 2.2.116) recalls its first lines (*notos Sirenum nomine muros / saxa*, *Silv.* 2.2.1–2), and thereby evokes Aeneas' impending arrival in Italy as described both in Virgil's *Aeneid* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. At the same time, Minerva listens approvingly (*Silv.* 2.2.117). These lines echo the location of Pollius' villa that was delineated in the poem's opening as 'between the walls known by the Siren's name', that is, Surrentum, and Minerva's sanctuary, which was probably located on Punta della Campanella on the very tip of the Surrentine peninsula (see Map 2 on p. 184).[562]

Earlier, Pollius' Siren song attracted Statius (*Silv.* 2.2.9: see p. 189). Pollius also managed to transform his villascape by enchanting it through his compositions, a feat that Statius compared favourably to those of Orpheus and Amphion (*Silv.* 2.2.54–62). Here, his compositions are so captivating that they attract the attention of several other creatures beyond his villa, including a Siren, Minerva, and some dolphins. The Siren-like aspect of their enchantment is illustrated through Statius' diction (*trahuntur … scopulis aderrant*, *Silv.* 2.2.119–20). While it is common for dolphins to be captivated by music, the Siren's enchantment is surprising: she is typically the one attracting travellers with her songs herself.

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[562] Newlands (2002) 192, (2011) 149 also sees a parallel between these two passages. For the location of Minerva's sanctuary (of which no traces have been found), see Mingazzini and Pfister (1946) 51–3. For a brief overview of references to said sanctuary in ancient literature (predominantly in Strabo and Statius), see van Dam (1984) 195.

Rather than distracting travellers with her music and threatening them with shipwreck and loss of *nostos*, then, this Siren does not pose any danger at all. Instead, she is attracted by the Siren-like power of Pollius' compositions.[563]

But while the Sirens usually represent a danger, either through their song or through their rocky haunts, Pollius' Siren song here has different effects: his audience does not have to fear shipwreck. Instead, they find a safe harbour at the only place on the Surrentine peninsula suitable to draw in a ship (see p. 192). As such, in Pollius' hands, the Siren song changes from a hazard into a benefit for sailors and visitors. This transformation of the Siren song should be seen in the context of the reception of the Sirens in ancient philosophy, particularly in Epicureanism.[564]

In ancient philosophy, the Siren song was usually interpreted as symbolising the appeal of learning in general and that of poetry in particular.[565] In Epicureanism, their song was generally associated with the distractions and destructive qualities of pleasure and therefore considered a danger to *ataraxia*. In his letter to Pythocles, for example, Epicurus urges his friend to hoist sail and evade the Siren song of all forms of traditional education.[566] This remark should be seen in the context of Epicurus' hostility to poetry as a means of education.[567] Later authors, including Philodemus, Cicero, Virgil, Quintilian, and Plutarch, engage with the ideas and imagery set forth in this letter, thereby demonstrating that this particular Epicurean interpretation of the Sirens and their association with poetry and education was still current in Roman times.[568] Through my discussion of Seneca's *Agamemnon* in chapter 3, I have demonstrated that Seneca also engaged with the epic and philosophical aspects of the Siren song, concluding that, at least for Seneca, there is philosophical-didactic potential in mythological poetry too.

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[563] In my interpretation of Pollius as a Siren, I expand on Lovatt (2007) 149–52, who primarily sees Pollius as an Orpheus, but who also suggests that Pollius '*replaces* the song of Siren [*sic*] with better songs, essentially silencing her' (pp. 151–2).

[564] In her book on the reception of Odysseus in ancient thought, Montiglio (2011) includes some useful discussion of the Siren song (pp. 132ff.). Ancient thinkers, from Plato to Cicero and Plutarch, contemplated the meaning and contents of the Siren song and wondered how much of it one should be allowed to absorb.

[565] Kaiser (1964).

[566] Diog. Laert. 10.6: παιδείαν δὲ πᾶσαν, μακάριε, φεῦγε τἀκάτιον ἀράμενος. Epicurus' warning evokes Circe's instructions regarding the Sirens in Hom. *Od*. 12.36–54.

[567] For a nuanced discussion of Epicurus' views on poetry as a means of education versus entertainment and their reception in ancient philosophy, see Asmis (1991), especially pp. 68–9.

[568] Phld. *PHerc.* 222 Col. 2.2–7, Verg. *Catal.* 5, Quint. *Inst.* 12.2.24, Plut. *Mor. Quomodo adul.* 15D. See e.g. Freer (2019) on Virgil's conception on the nature and function of poetry in the *Georgics* through engagement with the Sirens.

Statius' Siren and her seduction by Pollius' compositions should be seen in this context and can illuminated by this Epicurean discourse, especially by the following fragment from Philodemus' *On Flattery* (*PHerc.* 222 Col. 2.2–7):

ὁ δὲ σοφὸς ὅμοιον μ[ὲν]
οὐδὲν προσοίσεται κόλα[κι],
παρέξει δέ τισιν ὑπονοίαν [ὡς]
ἔστι τοιοῦτος, ὅτι κη[λεῖ φρέ]-
νας οὕτως ὃν τρόπον οὐδ' α[ἱ μυθι-]
καὶ Σειρῆνες.

The philosopher has nothing in common with the flatterer, but he can produce in some the suspicion that he is such a person, because he enchants people's minds, in a manner that not even the mythical Sirens can match.

In this fragment, Philodemus depicts the Epicurean philosopher as superseding the Sirens in his ability to captivate people's attention. This remark should be seen in the context of the changing dynamics between poetry and philosophy in the first half of the 1st century BC. Rather than rejecting poetry because it was part of the traditional education system, as Epicurus seems to have done, the relationship between poetry and philosophy was renegotiated. Lucretius' use of poetry to attract people to Epicurean philosophy is a particularly good, if extreme, example of this. Philodemus and his work should be understood in this context as well. Overall, Philodemus' activities seem to contradict Epicurus, who endorses poetry as a means of enjoyment but opposes its use in educational contexts. After all, Philodemus wrote prose about poetry, including, for example, *On the Good King According to Homer*, and composed poetry himself. But Philodemus still somewhat adheres to Epicurus' ideas: his prose – even when discussing poetry – aims to instruct and educate, and his poetry is merely a pastime. As such, Philodemus was an 'imperfect Epicurean', one who does study and enjoy poetry but who still observes Epicurus' standards.[569] The cited fragment from *On Flattery* illustrates this notion. The philosopher's Epicurean philosophy captivates people more so than the Sirens – that is, poetry – ever could.

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[569] Sider (1995) 56. See also Asmis (1991), especially pp. 90–3, for Philodemus as a 'new kind of Epicurean'.

At the beginning of this poem, Statius was lured across the bay of Naples by Pollius' Siren song and Polla's *gratia* (*Silv.* 2.2.6–12). I suggested that the combination of their charms also evoked Ovid's characterisation of Odysseus as a storyteller, tricking and flattering others for the purpose of his own benefit (Ov. *Met.* 13.127). In the context of epic, this is not necessarily a charming description, and even within Epicureanism, the reception of Odysseus was ambivalent, as I mentioned earlier (p. 189). We now see that Pollius' songs do not involve Odyssean flattery, but rather Epicurean philosophy.

Pollius' compositions, some of which are explicitly referred to as Epicurean (*Silv.* 2.2.113), captivate the undivided attention of his environment to such an extent that the local Siren is attracted to songs that are better than hers (*meliora ad carmina*, *Silv.* 2.2.116). This sentiment is identical to that in Philodemus' fragment, where the philosopher's appeal is characterised as one that cannot be matched by the Sirens (οὕτως ὃν τρόπον οὐδ' α[ἱ μυθι-] / καὶ Σειρῆνες, Phld. *PHerc.* 222 Col. 2.6–7). Thus, although Statius initially cast Pollius as a potentially dangerous Siren and himself as Pollius' eager audience, in the end Pollius turns out to sing the Siren song of philosophy. This transformation draws attention to Statius' professional relationship with Pollius: ultimately, he himself is the Odyssean parasite who flatters his patron Pollius through the versatile composition of an occasional poem. By depicting himself as being drawn to Pollius' philosophical compositions through the composition of a generically ambiguous occasional poem, Statius pays his patron the ultimate compliment a poet could give to another composer.

But while contemporaries worried about how to distinguish between a flatterer and a true friend, namely through the practice of παρρησία or 'frankness', Statius' tongue-in-cheek role reversal suggests that he depicts himself as simultaneously a flatterer as well as a good friend.[570] This is a clever technique: after all, the composition of occasional poetry for a patron is characterised by inequality in power and status, and thus does not allow for true παρρησία. In what follows, we will see Statius come as close to παρρησία as he can get in his patron-poet relationship with Pollius, as he praises Pollius' life journey while also reflecting on his own poetic career.

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[570] On friendship, frankness, and flattery in Philodemus and Plutarch's *Quomodo adulator ab amico internoscatur*, *On How To Tell A Flatterer From A Friend*, see Engberg-Pedersen (1996), Glad (1996), Konstan (1996). See also Kemp (2010) on Philodeman flattery and frankness in Horace in particular.

The Fog Disperses: Coming Home and Moving On

Following his description of Pollius' compositions, Statius describes and praises other aspects of Pollius' identity and career journey. Statius' laudation of Pollius not only tells us something about Pollius' life, but also about Statius' poetic career. It does so firstly by praising Pollius' decisions and life journey in relation to those of others, including Statius himself, and secondly through the employment of language and imagery that work on both epic and Epicurean levels. This plurality no longer creates divergent expectations: Statius' laudation of Pollius solves the poem's complex nexus of homecoming and diversion narratives, specifying which narratives are relevant to whom.

Statius begins his laudation by wishing Pollius a long life, full of things more valuable than wealth and luxury, and unplagued by politics, the fickle crowd, and war. He then includes himself in this crowd (*Silv.* 2.2.129: *nos, vilis turba*), thus contrasting his dependence on Fortune to Pollius' morally superior point of view from the high citadel of his mind, from where he looks down upon their wanderings and laughs at human joys (*Silv.* 2.2.131–2: *celsa tu mentis ab arce / despicis errantes humanaque gaudia rides*). As mentioned earlier, this phrasing and imagery clearly recalls the proem to Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* 2, confirming the poem's depiction of Pollius as an Epicurean, even Lucretian, sage with a villa that befits and exemplifies his sagacity.[571]

But Pollius has not always viewed life through the lens of Epicurean philosophy (*Silv.* 2.2.133–9):

> tempus erat cum te geminae suffragia terrae
> diriperent celsusque duas veherere per urbes,
> inde Dicarcheis multum venerande colonis,   135
> hinc ascite meis, pariterque his largus et illis

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[571] Nisbet (1978) 1–2 provides an excellent and comprehensive overview of the Epicurean aspects of this part of the poem, and the ways in which they relate to the poem opening. See also Newlands (2002) 171, (2011) 150ff., who adds the relevance of Verg. *G.* 2.495–540 and Sen. *Thy.* 399–403 for this passage's construction of Pollius' exemplary virtue.

The reader could also think of Virgil's Aeolus at the beginning of the *Aeneid* (1.56–7): *... **celsa** sedet Aeolus **arce** / sceptra tenens mollitque animos et temperat iras*, 'Aeolus sits in his high citadel, holding his sceptre, soothing their [the winds'] spirits and tempering their angry passions.' The allusion to these Virgilian verses that describe the god moderating the wild winds in philosophical language casts Pollius in a similar role. He too is moderating his villascape and maintaining its quiet. As such, Pollius is also reminiscent of Neptune's moderation of his harbour at *Silv.* 2.2.21–5: see Krüger (1998) 69–70, 81–2.

ac iuvenile calens **rectique errore** superbus.
at nunc **discussa rerum caligine** verum
aspicis. illo **alii** rursus **iactantur in alto**,
sed tua **securos portus placidamque quietem**   140
intravit **non quassa ratis**. sic perge, nec **umquam**
emeritam in **nostras puppem** demitte **procellas**.

Time was when the suffrages of two lands tore you apart and you were borne aloft through two cities, much venerated on one hand by the people of Dicarchus, on the other hand adopted by mine, equally generous to both, in the fire of youth and proud in your mistaken values. But now the fog of things is shaken apart and you see the truth. Others in their turn are tossed upon that ocean, but your bark has made safe harbour and tranquil rest, unshaken. So continue, nor ever send your ship into our storms; her voyaging is over.

Pollius had once been involved in public life in both Puteoli and Naples, and very successfully so – but, so Statius notes, during his participation in politics, Pollius was wrong about what he judged to be morally right (*rectique errore*, *Silv*. 2.2.137).[572] Statius follows this remark by noting that 'now the fog of things is shaken apart and you see the truth' (*at nunc **discussa rerum caligine** verum / aspicis*, *Silv*. 2.2.138–9). This phrase works on several levels that are characterised by a plurality of addressees and a plurality of generic discourses.

   Firstly, Statius addresses Pollius, praising him for having seen the truth. The dispersal of fog illustrates Pollius' realisation that public life and involvement in politics were not for him anymore, causing him to retreat to his villa across the bay. In prior scholarship, this fog has been taken to indicate a fog of general 'intellectual darkness'.[573] But it also has a specifically Epicurean meaning: in Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*, the philosopher is characterised by his ability to break through epistemic darkness with his combative gaze.[574] Pollius has succeeded in doing so, thus confirming his Epicurean sagacity. Consequently, he no longer wanders through life without a clear purpose, but he has come home in his Epicurean and blessed harbour of philosophy, in which his ship of life has retired (*emeritam … puppem*, *Silv*. 2.2.142).

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[572] *OLD* s.v. *rectus* 10: see Newlands (2011) 154 for a discussion of the varying emendations and interpretations of this phrase.
[573] van Dam (1984) 273; cf. *OLD* s.v. *caligo* 7a, *TLL* 3.0.157.44–67 (Meister).
[574] Cf. Lucr. 1.146–8, 2.59–61: see Newlands (2011) 154.

The dispersal of the fog not only has philosophical connotations, but it also works on an epic level. In my discussion of Odysseus' homecoming to Ithaca, I noted that Odysseus initially did not recognise his home due to a fog which was cast upon him by Athena (pp. 198ff.). Only when Athena disperses it, does Odysseus recognise that he has finally reached his home island (Hom. *Od*. 13.352–4):

ὣς εἰποῦσα θεὰ **σκέδασ᾽ ἠέρα**, εἴσατο δὲ χθών·
γήθησέν τ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἔπειτα πολύτλας δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς
χαίρων ᾗ γαίῃ, κύσε δὲ ζείδωρον ἄρουραν.

So spoke the goddess, and scattered the mist, and the land appeared. Glad then was the much-enduring, noble Odysseus, rejoicing in his own land, and he kissed the earth, the giver of grain.

Just as the scattering of the mist enabled Odysseus to recognise the true nature of his location, so too the dispersal of the fog facilitates Pollius' recognition of the truth, namely the geographical and metaphorical location of his true home: this villa is his Ithaca. At the same time, the fog's scattering clears up the ambiguity about homecoming experienced by the poet-protagonist, Statius himself, who now recognises that the bay of Naples cannot be his permanent home: others, including himself, are still tossed about on the seas with their storms (*Silv*. 2.2.139, 142). As such, the dispersal of the fog also dissolves the confusion of the reader, who has been trying to untie this poem's nexus of homecoming and diversion narratives. The polyvalent meaning of this phrase is further illustrated by its phrasing: 'you see the truth', *verum / aspicis* (*Silv*. 2.2.138–9), which not only addresses Pollius, but also, by means of apostrophe, the audience external to the poem, and perhaps even Statius himself: the ambiguity about homecoming has facilitated an exploration of his own experience of this place as home and simultaneously not-home. Thus, the disappearance of the fog tells us something about Pollius' life journey, but also allows for a fairly frank reflection on Statius' relation to Pollius, his own career as a poet, and his multiple homes in both Naples and Rome.

This reflection takes places through the continued opposition between Pollius' life of Epicurean *ataraxia* and the public lives of others. When Statius describes how others are still tossed about on the seas (*alii ... iactantur in alto*, *Silv*. 2.2.139), he recalls the famous *prooemium* of the *Aeneid* (1.1–4):

arma virumque cano, Troiae qui primus ab oris

Italiam fato profugus Lavinaque venit

litora, multum ille et terris **iactatus et alto**

vi superum, …

I sing of arms and of the man, fated to be an exile, who long since left the land of Troy and came to Italy to the shores of Lavinium; and a great pounding he took by land and sea at the hands of the heavenly gods …

Once again, Pollius' serene villa is contrasted to the outside world with its epic and imperial associations.[575] Others still roam around in this outside world, and Statius is one of them. After all, he includes himself in the company of *nos* who wander (*errantes*, *Silv.* 2.2.132) and advises Pollius not send his ship back into 'our storms' (*in nostras … procellas*, *Silv.* 2.2.142).[576] The wandering, the being buffeted on the sea, and the epic storms mark him as not being an Odysseus or an Epicurean as Pollius is, but rather as an Aeneas: someone who cannot stay in Carthage, however much he would like to, and someone who must continue his journey to Rome and return to the composition of epic. For Statius, then, his stay in Pollius' villa is not an Epicurean nor even an epic homecoming. Rather, it is a Siren-like Carthage: an alluring distraction and an attractive generically ambiguous dwelling, but one that he must move on from. After all, this is an *occasional* poem.

Thus, through framing his visit to Pollius' villa with generically ambiguous homecoming and diversion imagery, Statius is able to reflect on his career as a poet and on the generic composition of his corpus, as well as on his spatial and professional relation to Rome and the imperial court. As such, his method of reflection is similar to that of another poem in which a poet reflects on his career as a poet and his relation to Rome, namely Virgil's *Catalepton* 5:[577]

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[575] Newlands (2002) 154–98, Heinen (2011) 90.

[576] On sea storms as indicative of the epic genre, see n. 550 on p. 213 above.

[577] Although there has been intense debate regarding the authorship of the poems of the *Appendix Vergiliana*, *communis opinio* is generally that *Catalepton* 5 is authentically Vergilian in authorship. See Salvatore (1994), Chambert (2004) 43–4. Scepticism regarding Virgil's authorship of the *Catalepton* is expressed by Holzberg (2004), Peirano (2012) 74–116.

Even if Virgil did not write the *Catalepton*, he was associated with this work (and with the *Culex*) in the 1st century BCE: cf. Quint. *Inst*. 8.3.27–9; Stat. *Silv*. 1 *pr.*; Mart. 8.55.20, 14.185; Suet. *Vita Luc*. with Chambert (2004), Keith (2018) 189. Thus, Statius might well have been familiar with this poem and associated it with Virgil regardless of its authorship. For *Catalepton* 5 as an Epicurean harbour arrival, see Auricchio (2004), Clay (2004), and for a more detailed discussion of the poem's reflection of the diction, theory, and practice of Epicurean philosophy in 1st century BCE Italy, see Keith (2018).

Ite hinc, inanes, ite, rhetorum ampullae,

inflata rhoezo non Achaico verba;   2

…

nos ad beatos vela mittimus portus

magni petentes docta dicta Sironis,

vitamque ab omni vindicabimus cura.   10

ite hinc, Camenae, vos quoque ite iam sane,

dulces Camenae (nam fatebimur verum,

dulces fuistis), et tamen meas chartas

revisitote, sed pudenter et raro.

Leave us, leave now, jugs filled with the hollow bombast of the orators,

words swollen with a droning that is hardly Achaean;

…

We are setting sail for the harbours of the Blessed

on our way to the learned precepts of great Siro;

we will free our life of every care.

Leave us too, Roman Muses. I am serious, leave!

– sweet Muses – to tell the truth,

you were once sweet. Even so

return and visit my scrolls, but discreetly, rarely.

In this poem, Virgil depicts himself as setting sail for the Epicurean 'harbours of the blessed'. The poem's sailing imagery and dismissal of the Siren song of the Latin Muses (*Catal.* 5.11–4) are evidently a response to Epicurus' injunction to Pythocles, urging his student to 'hoist sail and evade the Siren song of all forms of traditional education.'[578] As such, this poem reflects Virgil's decision to quit his studies in rhetoric and instead spend time with the Epicurean Siro in the Bay of Naples, a contemporary hotspot for people with these

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[578] Clay (2004), Liefferinge (2012) xv–xx. The association between Sirens and Muses was not uncommon. Cf. e.g. Alcm. 10D, Pl. *Resp*. 10.616b–7b. For my discussions of the Siren song in Epicureanism, see pp. 122ff. and p. 221.

philosophical interests. Yet Virgil could not say a final farewell to poetry: he still invites the Muses to return to him discretely and rarely (*pudenter et raro*, *Catal*. 5.14).[579] And we all know that the poet eventually returned to the service of the Muses.

Silvae 2.2 employs harbour arrivals and Siren imagery in a similar fashion. Just like Virgil, Statius wanders off the traditional and expected path: rather than returning to Rome, he spends time with his Epicurean patron and friend Pollius in the bay of Naples. As I have demonstrated, Statius' initial harbour arrival deliberately creates confusion about the length and duration of his visit. This might very well be *his* homecoming in an Epicurean blessed harbour and *his* dismissal of the Muses. Yet ultimately, this is Pollius' homecoming, and Statius realises that he cannot stay. Just as Virgil, he leaves his Muses and enjoys an Epicurean retreat, but only to return to Rome and (epic) poetry in the end.

Many scholars have pointed out the presence of Epicurean language and imagery in this poem and demonstrated the ways in which this imagery tells us something about Pollius Felix' philosophical leanings and life journey. I hope to have added nuance and additional evidence to this discussion, primarily by bringing to light the poem's interactions between Epicurean and epic imagery. The poem's dynamic between Epicurean and epic imagery not only conveys an impression of Pollius Felix' identity and life journey, but also forms a way for Statius to reflect on his own identity and career as a poet. The poem's complex interactions between epic and Epicureanism, spatially anchored in Rome and the bay of Naples, testify to Statius' role in society as a 'full-range professional poet' who writes epic as well as occasional poetry.[580] Because of this, Statius has to be able to move between Rome and Naples, between epic and occasional poetry, and between public life and private withdrawal. Thus, unlike Virgil, Statius does not linearly move through genres. Instead, he comfortably fluctuates between them, often within the same work of poetry.

Ultimately, Statius' plural sense of belonging in both Rome and Naples and in both epic and occasional poetry is illustrated by his characterisation of the Via Appia at the beginning of this poem. Just as the Via Domitiana, this road enables Statius to mediate his life and his career options: the queen of long roads (*longarum … regina viarum*, *Silv*. 2.2.12) emphasises not only the long distance, but, through her familiar path (*limite noto*, *Silv*. 2.2.11), also the

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[579] This ambiguous stance regarding Epicureanism in relation to poetry seems to have characterised at least parts of Virgil's poetic career: see e.g. Freer (2019) for a discussion of Virgil's emphasis on the limitations of poetry as a mode of *didaxis* in the *Georgics* through interaction with Epicurean Siren imagery.
[580] Bessone and Fucecchi (2017a) 4.

connectedness between the bay of Naples and Rome, and between occasional poetry and epic. Although they might seem worlds apart, Statius is at home in both.

Conclusion

> And if you find her poor, Ithaca won't have deceived you.
> Like this, you will have become wise, with so much experience,
> And already you will have understood what these Ithacas mean.
>
> C. P. Cavafy, *Ithaca*, 33–5

We started our journey by looking at a passage from Albinovanus Pedo, observing a Roman fleet that looked out into the unknown and began to question its way of understanding the world and the place of the Roman Empire in it. Since then, we have returned to Italy with Julius Caesar, followed the imperial construction of a road that increased Rome's accessibility to Romans and non-Romans alike, come home to a collapsing Argos with Agamemnon, and, finally, contemplated the possibility of not returning to Rome with Statius in the Bay of Naples. As we look back on our travels, we join Silius Italicus' Hannibal, watching Italy grow smaller as he leaves for Carthage (Sil. *Pun*. 211–7):

>   … omnis in altum
> Sidonius visus converterat undique miles;
> ductor defixos Itala tellure tenebat
> intentus vultus, manantesque ora rigabant
> per tacitum lacrimae, et suspiria crebra ciebat,   215
> haud secus ac patriam pulsus dulcesque penates
> linqueret et tristes exul traheretur in oras.

While all the Carthaginian soldiers bent their gaze upon the sea, Hannibal kept his eyes steadily fixed on the Italian coast; the silent tears flowed down his cheeks, and again and again he sighed, like an exile driven to a dismal shore, who leaves behind his native land and the home he loves.

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Throughout the *Punica*, Hannibal has repeatedly defined himself in Roman terms, destabilising his identity as Rome's Carthaginian enemy.[581] This vignette encapsulates that paradox: while his soldiers quite literally look forward to returning home, their gaze directed towards the Carthage they cannot yet discern, Hannibal, his eyes fixed on the Italian earth, feels as if he is leaving home rather than returning to it.[582] Hannibal's ambiguous identity, simultaneously non-Roman and Roman, is not only illustrated through the opposing directions of his gaze and that of his soldiers and through the passage's contrasting notions of departure and return, but also by his portrayal more generally.

The image of the sorrowful leader, sighing as if he is being exiled from his *patria*, evokes a range of literary, historical, and mythological predecessors: we are reminded of Virgil's Aeneas, leaving his ancestral Troy in search of a new home, we think of Lucan's Pompey, tearfully leaving Italy forever and thereby surrendering the Roman state to Julius Caesar, and we may even think of Lucan's Caesar himself, who lurks below the surface of many of Silius' descriptions of Hannibal.[583] While Hannibal's crisis of identity is superficially limited to his narrative world, then, the reader recognises that they have witnessed moments such as this before. As I have demonstrated over the course of this thesis, these scenarios of journeys through liminal spaces formed an opportunity for authors and readers alike to explore and articulate issues of identity and empire, especially through conflicting notions such as departure and return, home and not-home, same and other, and Roman and non-Roman. As such, Silius' Hannibal epitomises the ambiguities and tensions that characterise and facilitate the navigations of self and empire undertaken by the Roman poets examined in this thesis.

My examinations were built on the premise that the imperial and colonial securing and demarcation of foreign ground as one's own, accompanied by the ordering of its histories and memories, was fundamental to the foundation and growth of the Roman state and to formations of Roman identity. This system of definition and its accompanying ways of seeing, thinking, and understanding the world is effective as long as there are lands left to explore, conquer, and incorporate, but it becomes problematic once 'empire' becomes functionally synonymous with 'world', as it did in the *imperium sine fine* in the early imperial period.

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[581] Stocks (2014) *passim*, but especially pp. 231–4.

[582] Augoustakis (2010a) 151–5 discusses Hannibal's (displaced) attachment to the Italian *tellus*, as part of his discussion on the epic's transformation of *patria* into mother-earth as constitutive of male warriors' new identity.

[583] Cf. Verg. *Aen*. 3.8–12, Luc. 3.4–6. See Mills (2009) as well as Augoustakis (2010a) 151–3, who also notes the passage's evocation of Imilce's separation from Hannibal in Sil. *Pun*. 3.155–7 and its engagement with Livy's account of Hannibal's departure from Italy (Liv. 30.20.7).

The works of poetry studied in this thesis testify to the destabilisation of this system of definition: by creating conflicting expectations about the directions and destinations of journeys, Lucan, Seneca, and Statius contemplate their social and political functions in society and empire as Roman citizens, articulate understandings of imperial power and empire, and (re)consider Rome's position as the centre of the world. Although they do not necessarily come to the same conclusions, their methods of exploration and articulation demonstrate commonalities. The poets all interact with binary oppositions that previously functioned as productive methods of understanding and defining self and empire: throughout their poems, they collapse and recreate boundaries and distinctions between home and not-home, between same and other, and between Roman and non-Roman. While they do not all seem equally comfortable in doing so, their attempts at defining Romanness and empire suggest inclusion, rather than exclusion, of the other, the not-home, and the non-Roman.

Crucial to these practices, as I have shown, is the poets' engagement with a plurality of generic discourses. By drawing on specific generic discourses and imagery, poets comment on topics such as imperial power, Romanness, and their changing roles in society and empire as Roman citizens. Alongside poets' tendency to innovate, explanations for this multigenericity and the changing landscape of genres have been sought in the changing socio-cultural and economic circumstances of the 1st century CE. Literature increasingly came to have a social and pragmatic function, serving as a medium of communication between writers and their addressees and as an object of consumption for a wider audience of readers.[584]

Additionally, I suggest that poets' generic interactions are affected by and illustrative of contemporary practices of Roman imperialism and their accompanying ways of seeing, thinking, and understanding the world. The repeated redrawing of imperial boundaries through expansions of empire finds a parallel in the repeated breaking down and rearticulation of generic boundaries, resulting in destabilisations and expansions of genre – sometimes to such an extent that a poem cannot be readily identified as a certain genre (we think of Bonadeo's characterisation of the *Silvae* as 'non-genre').[585] Thus, poets' developments of genres follow the same 'logic of expansive becoming' that is central to expansions of empire and formations of Roman identity. This phenomenon is facilitated by the 'cartographic impulse' of many ancient genres, that is, the associations of generic discourses with (aspects of) specific places or landscapes, such as the association between epic poetry and natural barriers, or the

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[584] Bessone and Fucecchi (2017a) 6–7.
[585] Bonadeo (2017).

connections between pastoral poetry and *loci amoeni*.[586] Just as the Roman emperors questioned where to locate the boundaries of the Roman Empire, then, poets sought the limits of Romanness and empire, a journey that could not be limited to the realm of epic, but that increasingly required expansion into other genres. Thus, manifestations of genre's 'logic of expansive becoming' are instrumental in early imperial poets' constructions of empire and Roman identity, as I have demonstrated in relation to the works of poetry studied in this thesis.

Lucan's Rubicon crossing and Statius' construction of the *Via Domitiana* overtly redraw imperial and generic boundaries in conjunction with each other, thereby commenting on and constructing imperial power, contributing to narratives of empire, and (re)defining Romanness. In his narration of the Rubicon crossing, Lucan depicts Caesar as a catalyst of change who inverts Roman ways of making sense of self and destabilises the centrality of Rome and the Empire in the world. Caesar applies the *res publica*'s diplomatic fetial rituals, designed for interactions with foreign peoples, to *Patria* herself, thereby conveying a conflation of Roman and non-Roman to the Roman state and causing a collective crisis of Roman identity. Through engagement with Roman foundational myths and historical and contemporary practices of Roman imperialism, Lucan suggests that this crisis of identity is in fact characteristic of Roman identity: reiterative and self-directed violence has played and continues to play a formative role in the continued existence of empire and formations of Roman identity. This notion is illustrated by the *Civil War* as a work of poetry as well: by intertextually connecting with similar narratives of Roman war beginnings and broken treaties, the epic draws attention to itself and thereby to the nature of epic as an act of reiterative and self-directed violence that facilitates the continued existence of (narratives of) empire.

Several decades after Lucan's composition of the *Civil War*, Statius' celebration of the Via Domitiana in *Silvae* 4.3 presents us with a similar scenario: the construction of the imperial road threatens to break down Roman ways of understanding the world and the fixed centrality of Rome and the Empire in it by providing easy access to the capital for non-Roman peoples. Where Lucan catastrophises such a development, teasing out its consequences for the Roman state and definitions of Romanness over the course of his epic, Statius actively contributes to and celebrates the expansion of Romanness facilitated by the construction of the Via Domitiana. Key to this celebration is Statius' navigation of memories and stories through genres. By intergenerically ordering Campania's memories and stories and combining them with images of the East, Statius builds a Campania that collapses the Roman West and the non-

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[586] Biggs and Blum (2019) 4–5.

Roman East, a transgressive contraction of spaces that paradoxically confirms the stability of the Roman Empire: now, Romans and non-Romans alike can come to Rome, praise the emperor, and contribute to the perpetuation of empire. Thus, Lucan alerts us to the repeated and violent destabilisation of Roman systems of (self-)definition, a development that he sees as characteristic of the Roman Empire, and Statius' poem confirms that this destabilisation is fundamental to his understanding of the Empire as well – but Statius suggests that it is not necessarily accomplished by violence and can be achieved by imperial and poetic euergetism instead.

Where Lucan's *Civil War* and Statius' *Silvae* 4.3 redraw generic boundaries while defining the limits and nature of empire and collective Romanness, Seneca's *Agamemnon* and Statius' *Silvae* 2.2 break down and redefine generic boundaries in their articulations of their own social and political functions in society and empire as individual Roman citizens. By engaging with themes of homecoming and displacement, these works of poetry explore the (im)possibility of withdrawal from public life and politics. The *Agamemnon* taught us that, while withdrawal from public life and politics can be justified under some circumstances, it is not always practicable: sometimes a return to and participation in one's geographical and political home community is unavoidable and must be endured, even if said community is too diseased to be helped. Seneca's employment of a wide range of genres is crucial to the conveyance of this message: his pluralistic employment of intertextuality addresses spectators of all walks of life and comments on the inextricable relation between poetry, philosophy, and politics. As such, the *Agamemnon*'s intergenericity not only suggests the inescapability of empire and the importance of endurance, but is also indicative of Seneca's understanding of his role in society, namely to make himself useful to and benefit others by encouraging them to pursue self-improvement, including – if need be – the emperor.

In *Silvae* 2.2, Statius too reflects on the (im)possibility of retreat from public life and the imperial court, but he does so through a different philosophical lens: by engaging with Epicurean discourse alongside epic narratives, Statius indulges in the possibility of withdrawal. In the end, Statius' homecoming in the bay of Naples turns out to be a way station rather than an Ithaca, and he must return to Rome, the imperial court, and the composition of epic poetry. Thus, Statius seems to understand his role in society as that of a poet who has to contribute to the narratives and legitimisation of emperor and empire: he has become a 'full-range professional poet', writing epic as well as occasional poetry, thereby celebrating and

(de)legitimising different aspects of early imperial culture.[587] Although Seneca's and Statius' emphases and philosophical approaches are different, then, they employ similar imagery and come to the same conclusion, namely that indefinite withdrawal from public life and politics in Rome and escape from empire is not possible, feasible, or recommendable for everyone. Retreat into interior spaces can provide only a limited sense of security: the boundaries of separation between self and empire offered by the notion of withdrawal are, in practice, the territory of fiction – in other words, stories.

Over the course of this thesis, then, we have observed both differences and similarities in poets' navigations of self and empire – but primarily similarities. Lucan's, Seneca's, and Statius' destabilisation of generic boundaries and their journeys' generic heterogeneity function as a way of negotiating changing socio-cultural, political, and economic circumstances, contemplating and constructing imperial power, and expressing increasingly complex conceptualisations of Romanness. Perhaps we may find an explanation for these multifaceted understandings of Romanness, which suggest inclusion, rather than exclusion, in these poets' own backgrounds and experiences: as we have seen, each poet had multiple social and geographic homes and navigated changing relations to Rome and the imperial court. Thus, whether their journeys led us to Rome, home, or both, more important is what we have learned along the way.

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[587] Bessone and Fucecchi (2017a) 4.

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