Rereading Lucan:
Reception(s) of the *Bellum Civile* in Fourteenth-Century Italy

By

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Abstract

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My dissertation reappraises the reception of Lucan's *Bellum Civile* in fourteenth-century Italy and especially in the Latin and Italian works of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. I investigate how the "tre corone" approached the figure of Lucan as a poet and refashioned his poem to support their diverse literary, political, and philosophical agendas. Throughout the dissertation I make use of late-medieval exegesis of Lucan and writings by "minor" *Trecento* authors, in order to assess how the *Bellum Civile* was interpreted in fourteenth-century literary culture more generally.

Rejecting previous scholarly assumptions, I argue that the *Bellum Civile* was a major source of inspiration for the articulation of early-humanistic concepts of literature, ethics, and politics. When discussing the specific features and functions of Lucan's fourteenth-century reception, my study demonstrates that the *Bellum Civile* was interpreted and reused in profoundly different ways. The poem was read variously as both a pro-Caesar and an anti-Caesar work, and redeployed to both authorize and criticize autocracy; in a related development, Lucan’s poem was regarded as exemplifying different notions of "tragedy". Furthermore, I contend that it is possible to identify a shift in the way Lucan and his work were regarded between the early and the late fourteenth century: in the latter part of the *Trecento*, a greater emphasis was placed on Lucan's biographical history and on the contrast between Lucan's and Virgil's epics.

While drawing on the methods and approaches of philology, literary criticism, and intellectual history, as applied to medieval and humanist textual culture, my analysis also takes into account recent studies on Lucan and reception theory. Contemporary critics [Brisset, Johnson, Masters, Bartsch] have complicated previous interpretations of the *Bellum Civile*, pointing out that Lucan's poem is characterized by strong internal tensions which produce a fragmented narrative, at war with itself, and that the poem contains both an anti-Caesar and a pro-Caesar discourse. In line with recent work on classical reception [Martindale, Hardwick], which emphasises how texts are continuously redefined by readers, my study identifies and analyzes the remarkable diversity of ways in which the *Bellum Civile* was received in fourteenth-century Italy, explaining it as motivated by both the innate complexity of the poem and the differing interests which late-medieval and early-humanist authors brought to the study of Lucan's text.

My first chapter reassesses the redeployment of the *Bellum Civile* in Dante's literary corpus. While keeping the *Comedy* as my main point of reference, I focus closely on Dante's other, less-studied works (especially *Monarchia*, *Epistles*, *Convivio*). I point out that, partly in line with high-medieval Latin commentators and unlike later humanists, Dante combines Lucan's and Virgil's "high-style" poems as consonant with, rather than opposite to, each other, and regards the great ancient epic poets as belonging to the same literary and moral universe. Lucan's and Virgil's texts are refunctionalized to support Dante's philo-imperial agenda; in so doing, Dante overturns the pessimism of Lucan's historical account and effaces the contrast between Roman Republic and Empire. Moreover, Dante appropriates Lucan's *figura* as a Stoic philosopher in his social-philosophical criticisms of riches.

My second chapter claims that, unlike Dante, Petrarch adopts a strongly biographical approach to Lucan: basing himself on Suetonius, he highlights Lucan's moral shortcomings and emphasizes the concept of his rivalry with Virgil. Nevertheless, Petrarch views Lucan as an important exponent of the epic canon and places him alongside, though firmly subordinate to, Virgil. Moreover, Petrarch does not regard Lucan as a single-mindedly anti-Caesarian writer, as scholars once held; rather, he reads the *Bellum Civile* as simultaneously sympathetic towards, and critical of, both Caesar and Pompey. Petrarch exploits the intrinsic tensions of Lucan's text to trace a persistently ambivalent portrait of Caesar and to give voice to his ever-present hopes and anxieties about "Caesarist" autocracy. Lucan's poem, and the story of Pompey in particular, is rearticulated by Petrarch as a powerful source of tragic *pathos*. Finally, Petrarch points to Lucan as an authority on ethics, although he dilutes the rigor of the poet's Stoicism, sketches the limits of his pagan thought, and translates many Lucanian concepts into metaphysical, Christian terms.

My third chapter shows that Boccaccio follows Petrarch in condemning Lucan's moral attitudes and challenge to Virgil's primacy, while yet always naming Lucan as a major ancient Latin poet and an emblem of high style. What Boccaccio stresses is, rather, the fundamental difficulty of classifying Lucan's poetry according to well-defined conventions of genre and style. For Boccaccio, the *Bellum Civile* is first and foremost the "tragedy" of Pompey, whose dramatic vicissitudes he himself commemorates with pity and admiration. The pro-Guelph Boccaccio reads the *Bellum Civile* mostly as expressive of Republican sentiments and embraces Lucan's criticism of Caesar at least in part; however, his approach to Lucan's text is not strongly politicized. Boccaccio's interest in the *Bellum Civile* is at the same time poetic and erudite: he reuses the poem both as a repertory of literary motives and as a mythological, historical, and geographical source; what is more, he produces a systematic theoretical attempt to explicate the multifarious meanings of the ancient myths transmitted by Lucan and other classical poets.

For Luca, Davide, and Alessandro

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INTRODUCTION

LUCAN: A VERY CONTROVERSIAL ANCIENT AUTHOR

Lucan (Córdoba 39 AD - Rome 65 AD) was a Latin poet of the Imperial age who achieved high literary distinction under Nero, but whose career was cut violently short at the age of 25, when he was forced to commit suicide because of his involvement in Piso's conspiracy against the emperor. Lucan's *Bellum Civile* (also known as *Pharsalia*)[1] is an unfinished Latin epic poem in ten books about the civil war between Caesar and Pompey (49-45 BC), which led to the end of the Roman Republic and the establishment of Caesar's autocratic dictatorship. Unlike its immediate epic predecessor, Virgil's *Aeneid*, the *Bellum Civile* is based on a contemporary historical subject, lacks the traditional mythological apparatus of gods, and is characterized by a pervasive pessimism and the absence of any explicit teleology, as it does not recount the providential birth of Roman power, but rather its dramatic conflagration in a self-inflicted carnage. Opening with a possibly ironic eulogy of Nero, the poem relates the ruinous events of the battle of Pharsalus, in which the gods seem either hostile or indifferent to the Romans, and provides a dark portrait of Caesar. Moreover, Lucan's work does not revolve around a well-identified epic protagonist, but rather around the vicissitudes of the "Roman people" as determined by three major, contrasting characters: the demonic Caesar, the old and wavering Pompey, and the wise Cato. [2]

Overall, the *Bellum Civile* is a complex text, which raises disquieting questions about human history and the divine, and challenges models of classicism with its baroque style, dark tones, unorthodox views, and biting skepticism. Subject of some criticism already in antiquity, the poem enjoyed a varying popularity over the centuries.[3] Lucan's work suffered considerable neglect in "classicizing" periods such as the French seventeenth century. Still in early-nineteenth to early-twentieth century academia (ca. 1830 – ca. 1920), the *Bellum Civile* was often regarded as a violently anti-Caesar pamphlet written by a young, extravagant poet, and remained widely understudied, in contrast with the contemporary exaltation of Virgil's *Aeneid* and its sober elegance. Other epochs and contexts, however, found the poignant and disharmonic narration of the *Bellum Civile* very congenial. Lucan's poem raised the enthusiasm of artists such as Hölderlin, Baudelaire, and Huysmans, and the last five decades attest a growth of interest in it among critics and readers. From the Romantic period onwards, the re-evaluation of Lucan's poem has often gone hand in hand with the appraisal of its "mannerist" style, as opposed to Virgil's "restrained classicism," and the exaltation of Lucan's Republicanism.[4]

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[1] The widespread assumption that the title of Lucan's poem was *Pharsalia* rests on a misunderstanding of Lucan. IX, 985-86 (cfr. Tarrant, "Lucan," 215, n. 1).

[2] For an overview on Lucan and the *Bellum Civile*, cfr. for example Ahl, *Lucan*; Brable, "Lucan;" Narducci, *Lucano: Un'epica contro l'impero*; and the studies and bibliography contained in Tesoriero, ed., *Lucan*; Asso, ed., *Brill's Companion to Lucan*.

[3] On critiques to Lucan in classical antiquity, see pp. 6-7 below. On Lucan's reception in general, see for exaample: Fischli, *Studien zum Fortleben* (pp. 18-44 on the Middle Ages); Malcovati, "Sulla fortuna di Lucano;" Paoletti, "Sulla fortuna di Lucano" (from the Middle Ages to Romanticism); Bartsch, "Lucan," 494-96; Braden, "Lucan;" Walde, "Lucan". On the transmission and reception of Lucan's "opere minori," see: Esposito, "Un esempio"; Id., "Sulla fortuna;" Lebek, "Das angebliche Lucan-Fragment."

[4] On Lucan's varying popularity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see Schrijvers, *Crise poétique*, 5-17; Fraenkel, "Lucan as the Transmitter," 15-17; Von Moos, "Lucan au Moyen Âge," 89-92, 188; Brena, "Premessa al testo," 23-4; Narducci, *La provvidenza crudele*, 9-14; Martindale, *Redeeming the Text,* 64-70; Id., *Latin Poetry*, 218-28.

CONTEMPORARY STUDIES ON THE *BELLUM CIVILE*

Many twentieth-century studies on the *Bellum Civile* have emphasized Lucan's anti-imperialism, and related it to his perceived "anti-Virgilianism". Moving from Thierfelder's definition of Lucan as an "anti-Virgil," scholars such as Thompson and Bruère have highlighted Lucan's parodic subversion of Virgil's "ideology" in the *Bellum Civile*.[5] In his book, significantly entitled *La provvidenza crudele: Lucano e la distruzione dei miti Augustei* (1979) Narducci similarly highlights Lucan's polemical overturning of the optimistic ideals of Virgil's *Aeneid* from a strongly philo-Republican and anti-imperial perspective.[6]

Other scholars have underlined Lucan's "philo-Republican" standpoint in connection with his participation in Piso's conspiracy; Lucan's denunciation of Caesar and supposedly favourable representation of Pompey in the poem have often been read in the context of Lucan's opposition to the Julio-Claudians and his nostalgia for Republican *libertas.* In his *Lucan*: *An Introduction* (1976), for example, Ahl argues that Lucan is "a poet implacably hostile to tyranny in general and to the Caesars in particular" and that there is little doubt that the poet "espoused the Republican point of view in the civil wars."[7] A similarly anti-Caesarean interpretation of the *Bellum Civile* underlies older studies by Marti, Momford, and others.[8]

Recent works on Lucan have, however, complicated our interpretation of this difficult poet. Already in 1964, Brisset suggested that Lucan's poem is not an expression of Republican nostalgia, but describes, rather, the death throes of the Roman Republic as a "fatal" and inevitable phenomenon, due to the internal weakness of Republican institutions. According to Brisset, Lucan considered *libertas* to be potentially reconcilable with the principate, and did not oppose autocracy itself, but rather its excesses, as observable under Nero.[9]

In his important book *Poetry and Civil War in Lucan's* Bellum Civile (1992), Masters similarly remarks that, in his view, "Lucan is a less passionately dedicated republican than is usually supposed."[10] Masters points out that the *Bellum Civile* contains both an anti-Caesar and a pro-Caesar discourse and is characterized by strong internal tensions which produce a fragmented narrative, at war with itself: the narrator ostensibly blames the tyrannical, "demoniac" Caesar and supports the Roman Republican cause, and yet he does so in such an unconvincing and self-contradictory way that he undermines the credibility of his presumed stance. According to Masters, Lucan's "fractured voice" deconstructs Republicanism from within and displays the impossibility of a consistent ideology or heroism of any kind.[11]

Johnson's *Momentary Monsters* (1987) claims that the *Bellum Civile* has three, implausible and unconvincing, heroes: Cato's arrogant orthodoxy appears useless and grotesque; the vain and flawed Pompey represents the illusions of history, of which he is a victim; while

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[5] Thierfelder, "Der Dichter Lucan" (cfr. Burck, *Vom römischen Manierismus*, 94); Thompson and Bruére, "Lucan's Use of Virgilian Reminiscence;" Id., "The Virgilian Background of Lucan's Fourth Book." There are many other examples of this interpretive trend: see, for instance, Danese, "L'anticosmo di Eritto."

[6] Narducci, *La provvidenza crudele*; Id., *Un'epica contro l'impero.*

[7] Ahl, *An Introduction*, 35, 55.

[8] Momford, *The Poet Lucan*; Marti, "The Meaning of the *Pharsalia*."

[9] Brisset, *Les idées*, 35-165 and especially 171-223. Along the same lines, see Lebek, *Lucans Pharsalia* (reviewed by Griffin, "Review of Lebek's *Lucans Pharsalia*"); Mayer, "On Lucan and Nero." On the question, cfr. Martindale, "The Politician Lucan."

[10] Cfr. Masters, *Poetry and Civil War*, 87.

[11] Masters, *Poetry and Civil*, see in part. pp. 78-90.

Caesar, with his megalomaniac fury, is "a funny freak and a fatal monster."[12] Overall, Johnson states, "the *Pharsalia* [...] has no privileged center except for the energetic, bitter, and witty skepticism that devotes itself to demolishing the structures it erects as fast as it erects them; Lucan's heroes lend their zestful assistance to this demolition, and that is their chief function."[13]

Bartsch's *Ideology in Cold Blood* (1997) attempts to reconcile an "ideological" and a "deconstructionist" reading of the *Bellum Civile*, focusing on Lucan's problematic representation of Pompey. Bartsch shows how, in Lucan's poem, Pompey is both a greedy, would-be *tyrannus* and a Stoic *proficiens*, and the narrator both erodes and enacts belief in him, using a "narratorial voice that so unsubtly and unjustifiably favors Pompey that it alienates, rather than persuades, his readers."[14]

What is more, scholars have recently questioned the conception of a clear-cut opposition between the *Aeneid* and the *Bellum Civile*. For instance, Casali and Walde have pointed out how both poems are internally complex, characterized by ambivalences and contradictions. As "neither Virgil nor Lucan can be conceived of as monolithic texts" and "Virgil cannot be identified *tout court* with the Augustan voice," it follows that "the formula of Lucan as anti-Virgil is therefore problematic."[15]

These latter studies on the complexities of the *Bellum Civile* as well as of the *Aeneid* are crucial for my understanding of Lucan and the contrasting medieval receptions both of the *Bellum Civile* itself and of its relationship to Virgil.

LUCAN IN THE LATIN MIDDLE AGES

Lucan's masterpiece appears to have been extremely popular from late-Antiquity to the end of the Middle Ages, when it was at least as widely read and studied as Virgil's *Aeneid*.[16] Circulating in hundreds of manuscripts,[17] the *Bellum Civile* represented a very influential literary model,

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[12] Johnson, *Momentary Monsters*, 35-134.

[13] Johnson, *Momentary Monsters*, x.

[14] Bartsch, *Ideology in Cold Blood*, 8-9 (cfr. pp. 73-101). On the problem of Lucan's Pompey see also Conserva, *L'eroe debole*, with bibl.

[15] Casali, "The *Bellum Civile*," 81; Cfr. Walde, *Lucan und Dante*, 60-2. This approach, which develops from a "Harvard school" reading of Virgil's *Aeneid*, was already hinted at in Narducci's *La provvidenza crudele*, 35-6 and finds some acknowledgment in Narducci's more recent *Lucano. Un'epica contro l'impero* (2002), xi-xii, 79-80. In his book *The Other Virgil*, Kallendorf shows that several Renaissance authors, including Filelfo and Milton, already engage in "pessimistic" rereadings of the *Aeneid*.

[16] A list of studies that support this claim can be found in D'Angelo, "La *Pharsalia*," 391, n. 12. On Lucan's reception in the Middle Ages, bibliography up to the 1960s can be found in Rutz, "Lucan," 323-27; Id., "Lucan. Zweiter Nachtrag," 255-56; more recent studies and surveys are: Walde, "Einleitung;" Von Moos, "Lucan au Moyen Âge" (expanding and revising his previous works on the topic); Finiello, "Auswahlbibliographie;" D'Angelo, "La *Pharsalia*;" Id., "Lucan" (an exhaustive and up-to-date annotated bibliography on Lucan's reception in medieval Latin literature). On Lucan's *fortuna* in late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages, see for example: Vinchiesi, "Antonini;" Ead., "Servio;" Ead., "Tarda Antichità e Medioevo" (I); Ead., "Tarda Antichità e Medioevo" (II); Esposito, "Lucano nel commento di Servio;" cfr. Green, "Ausonius's Use;" Fletcher, "Imitationes." Jennings, "Lucan's Medieval Popularity" (Lucan in the medieval *exemplum* tradition); Moya del Baño, "Nota" (the medieval interpretations of Lucan. VI, 490); Deproost, "La mort" (Lucan in Arator); Phillips, "From Man" (Lucan in Isidore); Rota, "Ennodio" (Ennodius as an anti-Lucan); Skutsch, "Lucan" (Lucan in Sedulius Scottus); Esposito, "Ricontestualizzazioni" (Lucan in the sixth century *Contra philosophos*); D'Angelo, "Lucano nel Waltharius?".

[17] See Tarrant, "Lucan," 215ff. with bibl. ("The great popularity of Lucan's *Bellum ciuile* in Antiquity and the Middle Ages is reflected in the richness of the tradition: more than 400 complete and partial copies, including fragments of three ancient books, five complete ninth-century manuscripts and a fragment of a sixth, and two sets of ancient commentary"); Munk Olsen, *L'étude,* 17-83; Id., "La popularité", 177; Sanford, "Manuscripts." Italian manuscripts of the *Bellum Civile* have been studied and described by Badalì ("I codici romani di Lucano;" "I codici

which was frequently quoted in medieval Latin literature[18] and also underlay the narration of some popular vernacular works, such as the medieval French *Li Fet des Romains* or the medieval Spanish *Primera Crónica General* and *General Estoria.*[19] In the High Middle Ages, Lucan's epic was an important part of the school curriculum and canon.[20] Intense exegetical study of it produced several *accessus*, *vitae*, *scholia* and full commentaries.[21]

Studies on Lucan's presence in medieval Latin literature are often narrowly focused and rather unsystematic.[22] Nevertheless, the critical surveys and discussions of medieval Latin authors and commentators by Marti, Sanford, Von Moos, and others have provided us with some insights into the nature of Lucan's medieval reception in its general outline.

In the Middle Ages, the author notoriously defined as *ardens et concitatus*[23] was studied and imitated as a great rhetorical example of high, "tragic" or magnificent style (*sermo grandiloquus*).[24] Fueling a long-standing debate which dates back to the age of Quintilian and Servius, medieval scholars and commentators often discussed whether the *Bellum Civile* should rightly be classified as poetry or as history (*An Lucanus sit poeta an historicus?*).[25] In high-medieval literary culture, however, these two possible definitions of Lucan's works were not

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bolognesi di Lucano"). On the manuscript tradition of Lucan see also Werner, *The Transmission* (on manuscripts and *scholia*); Gotoff, *The Transmission* (on the transmission of the *Bellum Civile* in the ninth century); Huelsenbeck, "A Twelfth-Century Manuscript."

[18] Quotations from Lucan in medieval Latin authors are collected by Manitius, "Beiträge zur Geschichte;" Sanford, "Quotations;" Vinchiesi, "Antonini;" Ead., "Tarda Antichità e Medioevo" (I and II).

[19] On Lucan in the *Faits des Romains*, see for example: Bessi, "Pulci, Lucano;" on his influence in French medieval literature: Crosland, "Lucan" (old French epic) and Bendena, *The Translations*. On Lucan in the Spanish Middle Ages, and particularly the thirteenth century, see for example: Solalinde, "Una fuente;" Herrero Llorente, "Influencia de Lucan;" Almazan, *Lucan*; García Yebra, "Traducciones (?);" Gonzalez Rolan, "Lucano;" Rubio, "Un fragmento;" Biglieri, *Las ideas*, 145-49.

[20] See Glauche, *Schullekultüre*, 62-64; cfr. Munk Olsen, *I classici*, 4-6, 30, 37-40; Id., "Les poètes," 199, 210; Montefusco, "La presenza," 80-1.

[21] *Scholia* from more than one hundred and fifty manuscripts are collected in the third book of Weber's edition of the *Bellum Civile* (Weber, *Lucani Pharsalia, vol. III continens scholiastas,* pp. III-LIX; but cfr. Rossi, "Benvenuto da Imola," 167, n. 11: "vasta, ma farraginosa, panoramica"). See also: Sanford, "Manuscripts" and Huygens, *Accessus ad auctores* (on *accessus and marginalia*); Ramminger, "Quellen" and Id., "Varronisches Material" (*scholia*). For a survey of the medieval commentaries on Lucan, cfr. Marti, ed., *Arnulfi Aurelianensis Glosule*, XXX-XXXI, and the studies by Esposito (Esposito, "Problemi e prospettive;" Id., "Un commento inedito;" Id., "Per un'introduzione;" Id., "Importanza della scoliastica;" Id., "Early and Medieval Scholia"). The important commentary of Anselm of Laon, contained in the ms. *Berol.* 1016 and partially studied by Marti, is still unedited (Marti, "Literary Criticism"). Of the many *scholia* and fragmentary commentaries on Lucan, some have been published from the 1970s-80s onwards. See Wilson, "Manuscript Fragment" (I and II); Cavajoni, "La tradizione;" Id., "Gli Scholia inediti" (I and II); Id. "Glosse;" Bianchi, "Il commento a Lucano;" Badal, "Sulle glosse;" Werner, "The Scholia;" Ead., "The Text;" Antonetti, "Un commentario" (on a fifteenth-century humanistic commentary); Porro, "Prisciano." On the published full commentaries on Lucan, see p. 6 below. On the lives of Lucan, see Braidotti, *Le vite antiche*; Szelest, "Vitae Lucani;" Brugnoli, "Osservazioni," and Martina, "Le vite" (Lucan's *vitae*); Marti, "Vacca" (*Vacca* commentary).

[22] Cfr. D'Angelo, "La *Pharsalia*," 389: "Quello della fortuna di Lucano [...] è un capitolo della medievistica dalla storia, tutto sommato, anomala e per ampi tratti ancora da definire [...] il Cordovese non ha ancor trovato né un suo Knoche né un Comparetti."

[23] Quint. *Inst.* 10, 1, 90.

[24] On the rhetorical study of Lucan's poem, see for example: Sanford, "Quotations," 4, 17-18; Von Moos, "Lucan au Moyen Âge," 115; cfr. Marti, "Literary Criticism;" Kelly, *Ideas and Forms*, 83-84.

[25] On the problem of Lucan as a poet or a historian there is abundant bibliography. For the Middle Ages, see for example Von Moos "*Poeta* und *historicus*;" Id. "Lucan au Moyen Âge,"102-28; Sanford, "The Manuscripts," 278-95. On the ancient roots of this debate (*Inst. Or.* 10, 1, 90; Serv. *Ad Aen*. I, 382; Isid. *Et*. 8, 7, 10), see Sanford, "Lucan and his Roman Critics," 233-57; Vinchiesi, "Antonini," 43ff.; Quaglio, "Boccaccio e Lucano," 164ff.; Martellotti, "La difesa," 266-70; see also pp. 6-7 below.

necessarily perceived as mutually exclusive. In many instances, the *Bellum Civile* was considered a paradigm of epic (*carmen heroicum*) with a historical, rather than mythological, subject, and as characterized by a mixture of history and poetic *fictio*;[26] Lucan appeared to be, and was imitated as, both a historian and a poet, both an authority on the civil wars and a source of inspiration for the description of battle scenes and heroes.[27]

Lucan was also regarded as a teacher of moral values. Medieval writers and readers appreciated the ethical significance of Lucan's characters as emblems of heroic virtues, and often recalled the poem's *sententiae* on moral topics such as loyalty, friendship, and poverty. In addition, especially from the eleventh century onwards, the *Bellum Civile* was interpreted overall as an exhortation against the risk of civil war (*dehortatio a civili bello*).[28] As scholars have pointed out, following Fraenkel's influential study, medieval authors also absorbed Lucan's taste for *pathos* and his fundamentally tragic, pessimistic conception of life.[29] Finally, Lucan was quoted as an *auctoritas* on geographical, astronomical, historical, and mythological questions, and used as a source for antiquarian interests.[30]

The High Middle Ages

In eleventh- to thirteenth-century Latin literature, the *Bellum Civile* is frequently quoted and reused with a variety of purposes: high-medieval authors draw from Lucan's complex text to substantiate diverse literary and political agendas. [31] For example, in his *Policraticus* John of Salisbury quotes Lucan as an authority on scientific and astrological matters as well as a point of reference for his own treatment of the prerogatives and, especially, the limits of monarchical authority.[32] Lucan's trenchant reflections on the evils of unrestrained ambition are reused by satirists and authors like Alain of Lille, John of Hauvilla and Peter the Chanter in their critiques of institutional corruption and their eulogies of poverty.[33] By contrast, Lucan's Caesar is recalled as an openly "positive" hero in some philo-imperial or philo-monarchical works. For instance,

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[26] Marti, "Literary Criticism," 246-47; Sanford, "Manuscripts," 285-86.
[27] Sanford, "Quotations," 4, 16, 18.
[28] Marti, "Literary Criticism," 250-52; Sanford, "Manuscripts," 283-85; Ead., "Quotations," 4, 11-14; Von Moos, "Lucan au Moyen Âge," 100-101.
[29] Fraenkel, "Lucan as the Transmitter;" Von Moos, "Lucan's Tragedia;" Id., "Lucan au Moyen Âge," 128-39, 152-76; see also Feo, "Tradizione latina," 330. However, D'Angelo has pointed out that such characteristics do not necessarily connote medieval "Lucanian" epic, where the imitation of Lucan is often exclusively stylistic, rather than ideological (D'Angelo, "La *Pharsalia*").
[30] Sanford, "Manuscripts," 292-94; Ead., "Quotations," 4.
[31] Alongside the above-mentioned studies of a general character (Manitius, "Beiträge zur Geschichte;" Sanford, "Quotations;" Fischli, *Studien zum Fortleben*; D'Angelo, "La *Pharsalia*") see also: Von Moos, "Cornelia" (Lucan in Eloise); Id., "Lucan und Abelard;" Worstbrock, "Ein Lukanzitat;" and Laurie, "The Letters" (Lucan in Abelard); Adams, "The Influence" (Lucan in Suger of Saint-Denis); Bataillon, "Virgile" (briefly aknowledging the presence of Lucan in Peter the Chanter); Guaglianone, "Gli epigrammi" (Lucan in Vincent of Beauvais); Wright, "*Industriae testimonium*,"and Haahr, "William of Malmesbury's Roman Models" (Lucan in William of Malmesbury); Rossberg, "Ein mittelalterlicher Nachahmer" (Lucan in Theofrid's *Vita of Willibrord*); Brugnoli, "Gli auctores" (Lucan in Saxo Grammaticus); Von Moos, "Lucan's Tragedia," 147-61, and Id., "Lucan au Moyen Âge," 153-64 (Lucan in Otto of Freising); Id., "Lucan's Tragedia," 161-64, and Id., "Lucan au Moyen Âge," 164-76 (Lucan in the *Vita Henrici VI*).
[32] Cfr. Sanford, "Quotations," 10; Von Moos, "Lucan's Tragedia," 167-74, 185-86 and Id., "Lucan au Moyen Âge," 176-86 (on chapter VIII, 23 of the *Policraticus*); Lounsbury, "The Case" (on John's letters). Much work remains to be done on Lucan in the *Policraticus*; Webb's and Dotti's editions point out numerous references to the *Bellum Civile.*
[33] Cfr. Sanford, "Quotations," 13-15; D'Angelo, "La *Pharsalia*," 432-6; Schmidt, ed., *Architrenius*, 59-61; Ratkowitsch, *Descriptio picturae*, 269-71; Waddell, "The Exordium Cistercii."

the anonymous author of the *Gesta Friderici* and Gunther of Pairis redeploy the *Bellum Civile* in their epics in praise of the Emperor Frederick I; in comparing the emperor to the energetic and unyielding Caesar, these texts support the (supposedly anti-Lucanian) cause of absolute monarchy.[34] Similarly philo-monarchical reuses of the *Bellum Civile* characterize works by Suger of St. Denis, Odo of Magdeburg, and others.[35]

An especially outstanding example of the high-medieval reception of Lucan is given by Walter of Châtillon's *Alexandreis* (ca. 1180). In this ten-book epic, Walter draws repeatedly upon the *Bellum Civile* and reproduces the ambiguities of Lucan's Caesar in the *virtus* and *hybris* of his own epic hero, Alexander the Great. The topic of Lucan's presence in the *Alexandreis* is well-studied: while older works focus on Walter's formal imitation of his "model," more recent studies underline the deeper ideological implication of Walter's reuse of Lucan in connection with his very nuanced and ambivalent view of Alexander.[36]

The High Middle Ages also produced a number of important commentaries on Lucan, such as the *Commenta Bernensia,* the *Adnotationes super Lucanum,* and Arnulf of Orleans' *Glosule*, to cite the main published examples.[37] As various scholars have remarked, and as I will demonstrate, these understudied para-textual materials are very useful for understanding and contextualizing late-medieval interpretations and readaptations of Lucan's poem.[38]

Lucan's "unpopularity": doubts, assumptions, and challenges

Despite and alongside Lucan's prominence in this period, the Middle Ages simultaneously inherited a long-standing tradition of his negative or problematic characterisation, first expressed by classical authors including Quintilian, Petronius, Servius, and Isidore, and intrinsically linked to the question of whether Lucan was a poet or rather, and

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[34] Sanford, "Quotations," 8; D'Angelo, "La *Pharsalia*," 411-15; Jakobi, "Zur Rezeption," 79.

[35] In Odo of Magdeburg's *Ernestus*, Otto the Great is assimilated to Caesar (cfr. D'Angelo, "La *Pharsalia*," 428-31. On Suger of St. Denis see Adams, "The Influence of Lucan;" cfr. also Bond, "Lucan" on Coluccio Salutati.

[36] Older studies are: Christensen, *Das Alexanderlied*, 14-101; Hellegourac'h, "Un poète latin;" Zwierlein "Cäsar und Kleopatra;" Id., *Der prägende Einfluss*, 8-20 (cfr. also the bibliographical note provided by Leonardi, "Gauthier de Châtillon"). More recent works include: Kratz, *Mocking Epic* (proposing the rather excessive concept of the *Alexandreis* as a "mockery" of pagan heroism); Tilliette, "L''Alexandréide';" Ratkowitsch, "Troja-Jerusalem-Babylon-Rom;" Meter, *Walter of Châtillon's* Alexandreis; Lafferty, "Nature;" Ead., *Walter of Châtillon's* Alexandreis; Wiener, *Proles vesana*. A summary of the question can be found in Von Moos, "Lucan au Moyen Âge," 139-52 with bibl. On Lucan and Walter see also Esposito, "Un esempio;" Lebek, "Das angebliche Lucan-Fragment." Although there are no studies on the subject, Walter's moral-satirical poems also contain numerous references to Lucan (cfr. Traill, ed., *The Shorter Poems*, 339).

[37] For the *Commenta Bernensia*, the standard edition is that by Usener (Lipsia, Teubner, 1896); for the *Adnotationes*, that by Endt (Stuttgart, Teubner, 1909). The *Supplementa* to the *Adnotationes* have been edited by Cavajoni, *Supplementum adnotationum* (3 vols.); the *Berolinensis* 35 (an enlarged thirteenth century version of the *Adnotationes*) is included in Endt's edition and in Weber, ed., *Lucani Pharsalia*, vol. III. On the *Adnotationes* cfr. the studies by Szelest, "Vitae Lucani;" Ead., "Vergil in den Adnotationes" I and II); Ead., "Die augusteischen Dichter;" Ead., "Die nach-augusteischen Dichter;" Werner, "On the History" (which latter is on the history of both the *Commenta Bernensia* and the *Adnotationes*); Esposito, "Virgilio e Servio" (on Virgil and Servius in these two commentaries). Arnulf's *Glosule* have been edited by Marti (Rome, American Academy, 1958); cfr. the studies by Walter, "Textkritische Beiträge" and Murgatroyd, "Arnold and Lucan." On the history and present state of the editions of medieval commentary on Lucan, see the bibliographical indications given at n. 21 above (and especially Esposito's most recent studies on the topic).

[38] On the need for further study of these materials, cfr. Rossi, "Benvenuto da Imola," 167; Von Moos, "Lucan au Moyen Âge," 100ff.; Esposito, "Problemi e prospettive;" Id., "Importanza della scoliastica;" Id., "Early and Medieval Scholia," 463.

"merely," a historian.[39] Although these medieval discussions did not necessarily intend to discredit or disparage the *Bellum Civile*, Lucan tended to emerge as a less obvious poetic model than Virgil.[40] Moreover, Lucan's suicide, his opposition to Caesar, and his reputation as a presumably agnostic poet, made him a troublesome thinker for the Christian Middle Ages.[41]

Edoardo D'Angelo has recently cast some doubts on the thesis of Lucan's medieval popularity. According to him, medieval Latin epic shows no substantial imitation of the *Bellum Civile*, whose ideological framework appears to have inspired almost no medieval authors apart from a very few exceptions, such as Otto of Friesing and Walter of Châtillon.[42] D'Angelo's revisionist argument has in turn been questioned by Von Moos' later study;[43] in fact, D'Angelo's work consists of a preliminary survey of the relevant critical editions and the related critical bibliography, more than an in-depth analysis of particular cases.[44] Nevertheless, D'Angelo and von Moos agree with each other and with the most recent authors on the topic (e.g. Crevatin and Bond) in pointing out the lack of specific and wide-ranging studies on Lucan's medieval *fortuna*, and in wishing for more research on the subject.[45] In particular, Von Moos has observed that not enough work has been done on Lucan's influence on the Italian fourteenth century — a period not considered by D'Angelo — or on the connections between reception of Lucan in the twelfth-century and in the early-humanistic period.[46]

Indeed, works on Lucan's medieval reception are rather scant and often constrained by disciplinary boundaries. In particular, the medieval Latinists and the scholars of the Italian *Trecento* who have approached this topic so far have worked in relative isolation from each other.[47] Moreover, as Von Moos has pointed out, scholars of "Lucan in the Italian *Trecento*"

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[39] Quint. *Inst. Or.* 10, 1, 90; Petr. *Sat.* 118; Serv. *Ad Aen*. I, 382; Isid. *Et*. 8, 7, 10 (cfr. Sanford, "Lucan and his Roman Critics," 233-57; Quaglio, "Boccaccio e Lucano," 164ff.; Martellotti, "La difesa," 266-70; Vinchiesi, "Antonini," 43ff.; Von Moos, "*Poeta* und *historicus*," 100-102). On the medieval echoes of this ancient debate, see also p. 4 above.

[40] Some scholars have argued that these judgments are not negative in absolute terms (Quadlbauer, "Lukan im Skema;" Martellotti, "La difesa;" cfr. pp. 90, 94 below).

[41] On Lucan's medieval reputation for agnosticism, see for example: Von Moos, "Lucan au Moyen Âge," 187-88. The potential dangers of reading Lucan are, for example, evident in Otloh of St. Emmeram's account of his own experience of the Latin poet: "Legente itaque me ibi subito *ventus urens* [*Exod*. 10, 13; *Ier.* 4, 11; 18, 17] et vehemens ab australi parte adveniens vicibus adeo invasit tribus me, ut post vicem tertiam extra tectum residere illic ultra non auderem [...]" ("While I was reading there, a scorching wind, blowing with great force from the southern lands, suddenly overwhelmed me three times, so that, after the third time, I did not dare to remain there, without shelter [...]" *Lib. vis*. 3, ed. Schmidt p. 45, 5-9; my transl.).

[42] D'Angelo, "La *Pharsalia*."

[43] Von Moos, "Lucan au Moyen Âge," 97-98.

[44] In this regard, a symptomatic case is that of Joseph of Exeter. D'Angelo quotes the few parallels reported in Gompf's edition of the *Ilias* and concludes that "l'apporto della *Ph*[*arsalia*] è quantitativamente limitato, e parrebbe più probabile un contatto antologico da florilegio." However, Gärtner's later study has fully revealed Joseph of Exeter's deep classical erudition and has especially highlighted many other quotations of, and allusions to, Lucan in the *Ilias*. This suggests that Joseph of Exeter relies significantly on the *Bellum Civile* for the description of warfare and tragic scenes in his high-sounding epic on the Trojan war (D'Angelo, "La *Pharsalia*," 426; Gärtner, *Klassische Vorbilder*; cfr. also Tilliette, "Introduction," 24-25).

[45] D'Angelo, "La *Pharsalia*," 389-90; Id., "Lucan," 477-79; Crevatin, "La presenza," 237-38; Bond, "Lucan," 480; cfr. also Paoletti, "La fortuna," 146-7.

[46] Von Moos, "Lucan au Moyen Âge," 98-99.

[47] An exception to this phenomenon is the excellent article by Violetta De Angelis which focuses on Dante's imitation of Lucan in light of the medieval commentaries (De Angelis, "... e l'ultimo Lucano").

have predominantly focused on Dante's vernacular masterpiece (the *Divine Comedy*): very few studies concern Lucan's reception by other, and later, Italian authors writing in Latin.[48]

As I will discuss in my second and third chapters, this relative lack of critical attention to the subject of Lucan's early-humanist reception is partly connected with the scholarly debate over the classicism of Lucan's style and his heterodox personality and views. Lucan's flamboyant style, presumed anti-Caesarism, and death by suicide were often viewed as being at odds with the views and sensibility of the Christian, "classically inspired" early-humanists. Lucan's presence in the works of Petrarch and Boccaccio was disregarded, if not actively denied, by scholars until the 1960s,[49] and has been only partially reconsidered in more recent scholarship.[50]

Taking the above-mentioned tradition of studies on Lucan's medieval *Fortleben* as my point of departure, and aware of the spaces it leaves open, I will examine the reception of this controversial author in fourteenth-century Italy, with particular emphasis on his reception by the three major authors of the period: Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. I will consider both Latin and Italian works, well-known and unedited materials, literary works and commentaries, all written in the *Trecento*. This project will allow me to reconsider both the most common and the more particular understandings of Lucan's figure and work between the late Middle Ages and the dawn of Humanism, and to reappraise the extent and significance of Lucan's presence in early-humanist Latin and Italian literature at different levels: poetic, historical, political, philosophical, and scholarly.[51]

THE PLURALITY OF THE TEXT: CLASSICAL RECEPTION STUDIES

At a general level, my project falls within the scope of so-called "Classical Reception Studies." In the following paragraphs I will briefly summarize the history of this field, following De Pourcq's recent and illuminating overview of the topic.[52] Before the 1990s, studies on the relation of continuity and change between ancient Graeco-Roman culture and its later readaptations were commonly referred to as "studies in the Classical Tradition," a definition clearly emblematic of the attitude that was then predominant. Resting on the assumption that ancient classical heritage possessed a perennial value for Western literary cultures, scholars aimed at writing a history of the "influence" of classical literature and art on later ages. A major emphasis was placed on the concept of "tradition," in the etymological sense of *tradere*: "transmitting, handing down to posterity." The British-born classicist Gilbert Highet, who taught for many years in the United States. may be posited as a representative exponent of this approach. In his famous book, *The Classical Tradition* (1949), Highet states his intention to trace "the river of Greek and Roman influence" in Western canonical literatures:[53] the metaphor of the river is revealing of Highet's and his fellow scholars' belief in the unitary and continuous influence of the classical past in later literary traditions.

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[48] Von Moos, "Lucan au Moyen Âge," 98-99; cfr. D'Angelo, "Lucan," 467-70.

[49] Nolhac, *Pétrarque et l'humanisme*, 194-95; Fischli, *Studien zum Fortleben*, 41-42; Hortis, *Studj sulle opere latine*, 405-7; Mazza, "La biblioteca," 24 (see pp. 51 and 90 below).

[50] Bruère,"Lucan and Petrarch's *Africa*;" Martellotti, "Lucano come fonte;" Velli, *Petrarca e Boccaccio*; Crevatin, "La presenza;" Leigh, "Petrarch's Lucan," 243 (see pp. 51 and 90 below).

[51] In his article on Suger of St. Denis, Adams distinguishes between "ornamental," "artistic," "philosophical," and "political" use of Lucan (Adams, "The Influence"). While I do not intend to adhere strictly to Adams's taxonomy, it represents a good methodological example.

[52] De Pourcq, "Classical Reception Studies."

[53] Highet, *The Classical Tradition*, 541: "We have traced the river of Greek and Roman influence in literature from its first mingling with the life of modern Europe […]"

In the late 1960s, Jauss's theory of *Rezeptionsästhetik* ("aesthetics of reception") promoted a significant shift in literary theory outside classical studies. In response to the presumed shortcomings of Formalism and Marxism, Jauss called attention to both the historicity of texts and the aesthetic response of readers in the present.[54] Jauss's research implied and prompted a significant turn to the reader (which is also characteristic of later approaches, such as reader-response criticism).

Jauss's work is mentioned as an important theoretical paradigm by scholars such as Charles Martindale and Lorna Hardwick, who in the late 1990s emphasized the need for a change in studies on the afterlife of classical antiquity and introduced a new name, "Classical Reception Studies" to replace "the Classical Tradition." Questioning uncritical notions of "classicism" and "tradition," these scholars proposed to focus on the act of reception, instead of considering it as a natural product of the legacy and prestige of the classical past. According to Hardwick and Martindale, classical literary works should not be regarded as static objects having immanent value, but rather as dynamic entities, again and again received and (re)appropriated by different cultural communities. The transition from studies in the Classical Tradition to Classical Reception Studies has also involved a broadening of the research agenda to include receptions of classical culture in non-Western, non-literary, and non-canonical contexts.[55]

The term "reception" has, in turn, been criticized on the grounds that it sounds "too passive" and not indicative of the dynamics of resistance and appropriation that define cultural identities in relation to the past. Another objection is that some classical elements do not merely constitute an inert set of materials that recipients activate from time to time, but rather have an intrinsic force, as well as enduring qualities that transcend the reach of particular individuals and cultural communities.[56] In their recent (2014) book, Michael Silk, Ingo Gildenhard, and Rosemary Barrow deliberately restore the expression "the classical tradition". According to these scholars, "classical" and "tradition" have a positive connotation which the word "reception" does not possess: therefore, the phrase "the classical tradition" acknowledges the prestige of classical antiquity, and particularly of some "special and privileged" elements of it, as the intrinsic reason for the existence of later "receptions" of the classical. The editors of *The Classical Tradition* also claim that, unlike "reception," "tradition" implies diachronicity and distance in time. In their view, "the classical tradition" is, nevertheless, a broader field than "classical reception studies," and in fact incorporates it; indeed, "tradition" comprises the various, direct and indirect, developments of classical ideas, features, and motifs in later literature, art, and thought, including evolutions which do not imply an act of "reception" (e.g. the emergence of the Romance languages from Latin) and engagements with earlier readings of classical antiquity, rather than with classical antiquity itself.[57]

In my study, I will use the word "reception" for two reasons. First, I want to avoid the implications of value attached to the word "classical" as a "special and privileged" section of the Graeco-Roman world, especially as I am dealing with Lucan, a late-imperial author whose style has long been considered "anti-classical" and whose role in the history of classicism is less obvious than that played by "Homer's *Iliad*, Plato's dialogues, the ruined glories of Phidias'

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[54] Jauss, "Literaturgeschichte als Provokation;" Id., *Literaturgeschichte als Provokation*; Id., *Die Theorie der Rezeption*.
[55] Hardwick, *Reception Studies*; Hardwick-Stray, *A Companion to Classical Receptions*; Martindale, *Redeeming the Text*; Id., *Latin Poetry and the Judgement of Taste*; Martindale and Thomas, *Classics and the Uses of Reception*.
[56] De Pourcq, "Classical Reception Studies," 224 with bibliography.
[57] Silk, Gildenhard and Barrow, *The Classical Tradition* (see pp. 3-9 in particular).

marbles" (the examples of the "classical" provided by Silk, Gildenhard, and Barrow).[58] Moreover, I will consider direct engagements with, and conscious rewritings of, Lucan's text by fourteenth-century authors and scholars, which all presuppose an act of reception.

Nonetheless, my choice of the term "reception" does not prevent me from benefitting from the insights of scholars of "the classical tradition," nor do I intend to suggest that Lucan's text functioned as inert matter to be reshaped by fourteenth-century writers. It was precisely Lucan's *auctoritas* and canonical status in the late Middle Ages that spurred and justified the many rewritings and reinterpretations of the *Bellum Civile* in this period. Lucan's poem was rewritten by Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, and their contemporaries, but at the same time provided them with inspiration, words, and critical categories, possibly orienting and influencing fourteenth-century discourses on politics, ethics, and poetics. My study repeatedly highlights how fourteenth-century readers (re)activated the intrinsic tensions of Lucan's text and redeployed elements which are already present in the *Bellum Civile*.

In my view, it may thus be fruitful to speak of reception as an *encounter* between the ancient text (or phenomenon) under consideration — with its cultural weight, manifold potential, and inner complexities — and a recipient who should also be regarded as an active and multifaceted subject. The reception of Lucan's poem is a particularly interesting case study, given the many-sidedness of the text and the many diverging ways in which it has been interpreted and reused, both in the Middle Ages and in subsequent periods. Throughout my dissertation, I will point to the remarkable differences among fourteenth-century interpretations of the *Bellum Civile*, explaining them as motivated by both the inner complexity of the poem and the diverse agendas with which late-medieval and early-humanist authors approached Lucan's text.

MAIN POINTS OF MY PROJECT

The chief contributions of my dissertation are the following. First, and at a general level, I underscore the presence and relevance of Lucan in the Latin-Italian *Trecento*. Contesting long-standing scholarly assumptions, I argue that Lucan is a major point of reference for the articulation of fourteenth-century discourses on politics, ethics, and poetics. Although fourteenth-century authors such as Petrarch and Boccaccio characterize Lucan in morally equivocal terms, imitation and reuse of Lucan in this period is quantitatively and qualitatively significant, is both formal and substantial, and concerns the contents as well as the deeper critical structures of the *Bellum Civile*: Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio draw on Lucan's poet as a means of literary embellishment and a historical, geographical, and mythological "encyclopaedia," but also as a paradigmatic text providing important literary and political-ideological categories. Fourteenth-century authors constantly name Lucan as a canonical ancient Latin poet and quote, or allude to, the *Bellum Civile* as an important literary model, a major historical source, and a repository of enduring ethical wisdom.

For the "*tre corone*" and their contemporaries, the *Bellum Civile* turns out to have a shifting and many-sided generic identity. Explicitly defined as *poeta* or *vates*, in fourteenth-century texts Lucan is often mentioned alongside the other ancient epic or hexametric poets (Homer, Virgil, Ovid, Statius); at the same time, however, the *Bellum Civile* appears as a fundamental account of ancient Roman history, and as such it is quoted and reused in historical-political treatises which range from Dante's *Monarchia* (1308-21?) to Petrarch's *De gestis Cesaris* (1368-71). In the view of fourteenth-century authors, the long-standing debate on

[58] Silk, Gildenhard and Barrow, *The Classical Tradition*, 4.

Lucanus poeta an historicus apparently does not require a univocal answer; even for Boccaccio, who rearticulates the problem in fresh terms, highlighting the difficulty of categorizing Lucan's poetry in terms of genre and style, Lucan is, ultimately, an excellent author, "whatever style he may have adopted."[59]

Authors of this period also highlight the profoundly philosophical nature of Lucan's poetry, and often invoke the Cordovan poet as a moral-philosophical *auctoritas*. Like their medieval predecessors, Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, and their contemporaries extrapolate from the *Bellum Civile sententiae*, *exempla*, and moral lessons of durable significance, especially in connection with the values of fortitude and sobriety. In the works of the "Three Crowns," Lucan is combined with Seneca and Boethius as a radical lover of poverty and a critic of riches.[60]

Second, moving to discuss the specific characteristics and functions of Lucan's fourteenth-century reception(s), my study demonstrates that, far from being interpreted univocally, the *Bellum Civile* was read and reused in profoundly different, even opposite, ways. Fourteenth-century (re)interpretations of Lucan's poem diverge both regarding the poem's overall focus and purpose and on the related questions of Lucan's political stance and his representation of Caesar. Moreover, far from being factors that always and indiscriminately influence the reception of the *Bellum Civile* in the fourteenth century, ideas about Lucan's controversial personality, his challenge to Virgil's primacy and his opposition to Nero (ending in a sanguinary suicide) are not particularly emphasized in the first half of the century, and acquire particular significance only in Petrarch's and later rereadings of Lucan's poem. In the following section, I will synthesize my findings on these three important issues (i.e. the focus of the poem, the representation of Caesar, and the image of Lucan), as a counterpoint to the structuring of my material by author in the body of the dissertation.

Tragedy

Although this is the aspect least directly addressed in my dissertation, a preliminary discussion of late-medieval interpretations of Lucan's poem, its focus and purpose, in the context of contemporary ideas of "tragedy" is beneficial to, and almost necessarily implied by, the development of my analysis. Indeed, my work overall suggests that fourteenth-century readers and authors regarded Lucan's poem as exemplifying different notions of "tragedy."

As is well known, "tragedy" was a rather broad and vague concept in the Middle Ages, where the terms *tragedia* and *tragedìa* did not denote a clearly identified genre: they could indicate tales ending in sorrow, but also, and more simply, narrations about noble characters marked by a high style. In medieval literary culture, the genres of epic and tragedy were subsumed under the rubric of "tragic style."[61] As has already been mentioned, in high-medieval Latin commentaries on the *Bellum Civile*, Lucan is frequently defined as a tragedian, meant as a master of the high style (*sermo grandiloquus*).[62] In the twelfth century, the classification of Lucan's poem as tragedy became quite canonical: Honorius Augustodunensis names four castles

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[59] See pp. 95-96 below. On this matter, see also Crevatin, "La presenza," 238-45 with bibl.; Rossi, "Benvenuto da Imola," 180.
[60] See pp. 42-46, 80-3, 115 below.
[61] For an overview, see Kelly, *Ideas and Forms*; Id., *Tragedy and Comedy*; cfr. Berrigan, "Early Neo-Latin Tragedy," 85-86.
[62] Cfr. Kelly, *Ideas and Forms*, 83-84 (cfr. p. 4 above).

in the city of Grammatica: Tragedy, Comedy, Satire, and Ode; the castle of tragedy has Lucan as its castellan.[63]

For Dante too the difference between tragedy and comedy is a matter of high versus low, in both style and subject matter. As he explains in *De vulgari eloquentia*, tragedy is written in a lofty style and deals with noble subjects: arms, love, and virtue. Dante's mentions of Lucan in the *Comedy* and the *De vulgari eloquentia* suggest that he may have regarded the *Bellum Civile* as an exemplar of the tragic style. This is, at least, the interpretation provided by fourteenth-century commentators on the *Comedy*. Echoing the canonical high-medieval classification of literary genres and their ancient representatives, Jacopo Alighieri, the *Ottimo Commento*, and Benvenuto da Imola all state that Lucan is, for Dante, an illustrious author of tragedy.[64]

What late-medieval readers might deem to be the focus of Lucan's "tragedy" is not, however, entirely clear. Fourteenth-century authors read the *Bellum Civile* variously, as the "tragedy" of Caesar, of Pompey, or of both the combatant generals. The substantial redeployment of Lucan's poem in high-medieval Latin epics in praise of the Emperor, such as the *Gesta Friderici* and Gunther of Pairis' *Ligurinus*, suggests that these writers may have seen Caesar as the true hero of the *Bellum Civile*.[65] Along the same lines, Mussato explicitly defines Lucan's text as a tragedy: it employs a high style to recount "military triumphs," which likely means "Caesar's triumphs":

> Dicitur itaque tragedia alte materie stilus, quo dupliciter tragedi utuntur. Aut enim de ruinis et casibus magnorum regum et principum, quorum maxime exitia, clades, cedes, seditiones et tristes actus describunt – et tunc utuntur hoc genere iambicorum, ut olim Sophocles in Trachiniis et hic Seneca in hiis decem tragediis; aut regum et ducum sublimium aperta et campestria bella et triumphales victorias – et tunc metro heroyco ea componunt, ut Ennius, Lucanus, Virgilius ac Statius.[66]

Caesar, whose impetuous energy prompts and magnetizes Lucan's narration, could easily appear as the protagonist of Lucan's "tragedy." Similarly, in Dante's reception of Lucan, the figure of Pompey is almost invisible and Lucan's Caesar stands as the undisputed and unparalleled military leader, who is celebrated alongside his "spiritual" counterpart: Cato.

As for Dante, so too for the young Boccaccio the *Bellum Civile* is seemingly a "tragic" work in that it is written in a high style and has an elevated subject matter. In his earlier writings, Boccaccio highlights the elevated style as well as the noble, epic-military topic of Lucan's poem, and often cites it alongside Virgil's, Ovid's, and Statius' works.[67] Later in his career, Boccaccio shows awareness of the difference between Lucan's style and Virgil's "heroic style" or the

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[63] Cfr. Fraenkel, "Lucan as the Transmitter," 18; Kelly, *Ideas and Forms*, 83, 97 (cfr. pp. 164, 206-7 for later examples of Lucan's classification as "tragedian").

[64] Cfr. pp. 22 below.

[65] See pp. 5-6 above.

[66] *Vita Senece*, 134-142 ("Tragedy is thus the style suitable to a high subject matter, and it is used by tragedians in two different ways. For they deal either with the ruin and disaster of great kings and princes, especially describing their encounters with death, destruction, slaughter, insurrection, and sorrowful circumstances (and then they use the iambic metre, as once did Sophocles in his *Trachiniae* and Seneca in these ten tragedies), or they deal with the open battle fields and triumphal victories of excellent kings and commanders, and then they write in heroic meter, as did Ennius, Lucan, Virgil, and Statius." My translation). See Staüble, *L'idea di tragedia*, 48-49; Kelly, *Ideas and Forms*, pp. 138-41 (more in general, on Dante's and Mussato's ideas of tragedy, see also Pastore Stocchi, "Dante, Mussato e la tragedìa"). Also in Mussato's *De Lite inter Naturam et Fortunam,* ms C, f. 29v, Lucan's poem is recalled with reference to Caesar's victories.

[67] See chapter III, pp. 91-94.

properly "tragic" style of Seneca's dramatic works and, as has been mentioned, reflects on the difficulty of classifying the genre and style of Lucan's poetry.[68]

Moreover, as has also been mentioned, for Boccaccio the *Bellum Civile* describes the ruin of Pompey, regarded as the protagonist of the poem. Boccaccio's reading and rewriting of Lucan's poem emphasize Pompey's misfortune and mark Pompey as the tragic hero *par excellence*.[69] At least in his later years, Boccaccio is well aware of the difference between Lucan's poem and dramatic tragedy. Nevertheless, he views the *Bellum Civile* as a tragedy in a figurative sense, in the same way in which Dante's *Divine Comedy* is a comedy in a figurative sense: based on the plot movement, which in the *Bellum Civile* goes from prosperity to adversity.[70] Boccaccio's interpretation of Lucan is in line with, and likely influenced by, Trevet's distinction between tragic form and tragic matter and his naming of the *Bellum Civile* as an example of the latter.[71]

Petrarch was arguably familiar with the generic distinction between epic and tragedy;[72] throughout his corpus, he often mentions Lucan alongside the greatest epic poets: Homer and Virgil.[73] As he regards Lucan as the poet of both Caesar and Pompey, Petrarch is sensitive and responsive to Lucan's handling of both characters. While reusing Lucan's passages about Caesar to discuss ancient and contemporary autocracy, Petrarch also singles out Pompey as an *exemplum* of the instability of fortune and the precariousness of glory. In so doing, Petrarch reelaborates a tradition that links Lucan, Valerius Maximus, and Seneca, and is fully developed by Boccaccio.[74]

Petrarch possibly saw the *Bellum Civile* as alluding to the ruin of Caesar himself, according to an interpretation which finds its basis in Lucan's descriptions of Caesar's sufferings and his anticipations of the dictator's death. This reading finds a precedent and an echo in the common late-medieval interpretation of Lucan's poem as a *dehortatio a civili bello*, which characterizes not only twelfth-century Latin commentaries, but also Benvenuto da Imola's later exegetical work on Lucan.[75]

Caesarism

The problem of the focus and purpose of Lucan's poem is intrinsically related to the question of his ambiguous portrayal of Caesar. My work demonstrates that, in fourteenth-century

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[68] See chapter III, pp. 94-97.

[69] See chapter III, pp. 100-109.

[70] See chapter III, pp. 101-2.

[71] See chapter III, p. 102.

[72] Petrarch seems to have been aware of the specific characteristics of the tragic genre. His attention to, and knowledge of, tragic metres is revealed by a passage of the *Contra medicum* (III, 62), where Petrarch accuses his enemy of not knowing what tragedy is, and of not knowing what it means to have moved from tetrameters to iambics: "nescire te quid sit tragedia, aut quid de tetrametris in iambicos transisse" (the passage implies an allusion to Aristotle's explanation of the origins of tragedy: cfr. Kelly, *Tragedy and Comedy*, 9, n. 38; id., *Ideas and Forms*, 118; Haas, "Chaucer's 'Montk Tale,'" 48-9). In his commentary on Dante, Francesco da Buti quotes a lost letter by Petrarch, where the latter said he was confused by Dante's choice of the title *Comedy* for his work (cfr. Kelly, *Chaucerian Tragedy*, 80). However, Petrarch's definition of his *Triumphi* as "matter fit for buskins, not for slippers" ("materia di coturni, e non di socchi") echoes late-medieval concepts of "tragic matter" (*Tr. cup.* IV, 88, cfr. Barański, "The Triumphi," 81).

[73] See chapter II, pp. 53-59.

[74] See chapter II, pp. 72-73. Boccaccio's early vernacular works could have inspired and influeced Petrarch's later treatment of the topic in his Latin works.

[75] See chapter II, pp. 75-76.

Italy, Lucan was not necessarily regarded as a single-minded opponent of Caesar: the *Bellum Civile* was, rather, read variously as a pro-Caesar, anti-Caesar, or politically nuanced work, and reused to authorize, criticize, or negotiate models of autocracy. Through a historicizing reading of fourteenth-century texts, and at the same time in dialogue with recent studies on Lucan's "fractured voice," my study shows how late-medieval readers of the *Bellum Civile* exploited the tensions of Lucan's poem to their own ends.[76]

Dante does not delve explicitly into the problem of Lucan's political views, but he does reuse the *Bellum Civile* in a strongly political and, specifically, philo-imperial way, in line with previous rewritings of Lucan's text by late-medieval Latin writers such as Suger of Saint Denis, the anonymous author of the *Gesta Friderici*, Gunther of Pairis, and Odo of Magdeburg.[77] Like his medieval predecessors, Dante perceives a fundamental continuity between the ancient Roman empire, established by Caesar and enhanced by Augustus, and the Holy Roman Empire of his own times.

In the *Inferno*, Dante evokes Lucan's dark portrait of Caesar and depicts the Roman dictator as morally and spiritually inferior to the almost-divine Cato, whom he glorifies in the *Purgatory*, as well as in the the *Monarchy* and the *Convivio*, with consistent allusions to the *Bellum Civile*. Nevertheless, in Dante's eyes, Caesar's possible flaws as a private man do not interfere with his providential historical-political role as founder and representative of the divinely ordered Roman empire. Within the philo-imperial discourse of the *Purgatory* and *Paradise*, Dante draws on Lucan's implicitly positive representations of Caesar's promptness and rapidity to provide eulogistic descriptions of the Roman commander.[78]

Dante's philo-imperial redeployment of the *Bellum Civile* is also and especially apparent in the *Monarchy* and *Epistles*. These Dantean works amplify the philo-Roman elements of Lucan's text and convert Lucan's polemical and pessimistic stance into a celebration of the rightful and holy *Romanum imperium* from a Christian, providential perspective. Here as in the *Comedy*, Dante assumes unity between ancient Roman Republican and Imperial deeds and models of character and praises the imperial system, with the order and justice it grants, as the exemplary fulfilment of, and prerequisite for, individual *virtus*. Lucan's condemnation of civil war is transformed by Dante into an attack on fourteenth-century anti-imperial opposition and anarchy; presenting strong imperial power as the ideal palliative for civic unrest, Dante praises Henry VII as the heir of both Caesar and Augustus.[79]

Unlike Dante and his medieval predecessors, Petrarch is fully aware of the historical implications of the civil war and of the historical fracture entailed by the establishment of Caesar's autocratic dictatorship and the concomitant end of the Roman Republic. Rejecting long-lasting scholarly assumptions, however, I argue that Petrarch does not consider Lucan a determined opponent of Caesar: rather, he sees in Lucan the poet of both Caesar and Pompey, and a narrator who is able to embrace the standpoint, and illuminate the virtues and faults, of

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[76] In this respect my project finds its most immediate methodological precedents in: Adams's article on Lucan's reception by the eleventh-century author Suger of Saint-Denis (Adams, "The Influence of Lucan"); Bond's article on Lucan's reception by Coluccio Salutati (Bond, "Lucan"); the sections of Martindale's studies that specifically deal with the reception of Lucan (Martindale, *Redeeming the* Text, 64-74 ["Lucan Restored"]; Id., *Latin Poetry,* 217-36 ["The Aesthetic Turn: Latin Poetry and Aesthetic Criticism. *Lucan*"]); and Paleit's book on Lucan's reception in early modern England, 1580-1650 (Paleit, *War, Liberty, and Caesar*, 17-24, 93-127, 202-5).

[77] See pp. 5-6, 12 above.

[78] See chapter I, pp. 39-42.

[79] See chapter I, p. 42.

both his opposing characters.[80] Petrarch's works reproduce the ambiguities of Lucan's descriptions of both Caesar and Pompey.

Martellotti and Baron are partly right in claiming that Petrarch's later writings, composed after his disappointment with Cola di Rienzo and his reading of Suetonius and Caesar's own works, show greater admiration for Caesar as a historical figure and political role model than his earlier work. As other scholars have argued quite recently, however, Petrarch's representation of Caesar contains positive elements even in his earlier works and is characterized throughout his career by strong contrasts. My work demonstrates that the *Bellum Civile* plays an important role in this respect, as Lucan's text is reused by Petrarch throughout his career to provide a consistently ambivalent portrait of the Roman dictator: like Lucan, Petrarch repeatedly praises Caesar's energy and readiness, but his judgment on Caesar's attack on his homeland and unconstitutional political conduct is always negative or, at least, undecided.[81]

In both his earlier and later works, Petrarch repeatedly redeploys Lucan's text, and especially Lucan's narration about Caesar, to make a claim for individual, centralized political authority in support of diverse political leaders: Cola, the Pope, the emperor, and later the *signore* Francesco Carrara. At the same, time, however, Petrarch also reuses some philo-Republican passages of the *Bellum Civile* to give voice to anxieties and reservations about the possible dangers of autocracy.[82]

Likewise, Petrarch follows Lucan in emphasizing the limits of Pompey's heroism, his weakness, and his vulnerability to the twists of fate. In Petrarch as already in Lucan, Pompey is a noble and yet imperfect hero who lived too long and had his previous glory annihilated by reversals of fortune in his old age.[83]

Among the "Three Crowns," Boccaccio is the only one who expressly mentions, indeed emphasizes, Lucan's anti-Nero stance and his participation in Piso's conspiracy against the emperor. Possibly in connection with this, Boccaccio depicts Lucan as "the poet of Pompey," the author who celebrates the virtue of the philo-Republican leader and laments his defeat.[84] Boccaccio is, thus, alone among the three major fourteenth-century Italian authors in, arguably, reading the *Bellum Civile* as a philo-Republican, anti-Caesar work.

Nonetheless, Boccaccio's reuse of Lucan's poem does not appear to be a strongly politicized one. Boccaccio does redeploy some elements of Lucan's critique of Caesar, but he indiscriminately names Caesar, Pompey, and the other ancient *viri illustres* as exemplary moral-political models, beyond, and regardless of, party affiliations and specific political ideals. Unlike later humanists, Boccaccio does not establish a connection between ancient and contemporary debates on Caesarism and Republicanism.[85]

Historical transition

My study also argues that, in the fourteenth century, Lucan's work and his poetic *persona* were not always, or necessarily, regarded as opposed to Virgil's. I contend that it is possible to identify a shift between the early and the late *Trecento*: in the latter part of the century, a greater

[80] See chapter II, pp. 59-62.
[81] See chapter II, pp. 63-69.
[82] See chapter II, pp. 69-71.
[83] See chapter II, pp. 73-75.
[84] See chapter III, pp. 97-101.
[85] See chapter III, pp. 109-115.

emphasis was laid upon Lucan's biographical history and upon the contrast between Lucan's and Virgil's epics.

Dante mentions Lucan as a poetic *auctoritas* but shows no interest in the details of his biography or in his moral and political choices as a private individual. In keeping with the existing medieval Latin commentary tradition, moreover, Dante frequently associates Lucan with Virgil and cites, or alludes to, their poems as concordant and compatible, integrating each other, and belonging to the same historical, literary, and moral framework.[86] Dante cites Lucan alongside Virgil in his philo-imperial rereading of ancient Roman history (*Monarchy*, book II), as well as in his philosophical reflection on material goods and moral virtues, built by means of substantial paraphrases and translations of ancient classical sources (*Convivio*, book IV).[87]

By contrast, Petrarch lays a great deal of emphasis on Lucan's biography as reported by Suetonius, underlining Lucan's arrogant challenge to Virgil's literary supremacy and his bloody, suicidal demise.[88] Petrarch's biographical approach to ancient Latin epic and his emphasis on the dynamics of rivalry internal to the ancient epic canon appear to have been highly influential for the reception of the figure and work of Lucan by later humanists, from Boccaccio to Poliziano.[89]

Drawing upon Suetonius and Tacitus, Boccaccio also mentions Lucan's opposition to Virgil and his violent, cowardly suicide, as well as underscoring the poet's anti-Neronian stance.[90] Therefore, the concepts of Lucan's anti-Virgilianism and anti-imperialism, which inform late-nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century interpretations of the *Bellum Civile*, are much more nuanced in fourteenth-century receptions of the poem, where they emerge only gradually and in a very limited sense. Even Petrarch and Boccaccio, with their humanist interest in the personalities of the great authors of antiquity, highlight Lucan's "anti-Virgilianism" and "anti-imperialism" as biographical traits more than as elements which become part of stylistically or ideologically characterized readings of the *Bellum Civile*.

Furthermore, and as I will mention in the conclusion, it is probably possible to trace another kind of transition in the way Lucan's work was reused between the fourteenth century, considered as a whole, and the fifteenth century, when the conflict between Caesar and Pompey was perceived as more directly related to contemporary discussions of absolutism and republicanism. In fourteenth-century redeployments of the *Bellum Civile* we find neither a clear-cut opposition between Roman Republic and empire nor a straightforward connection between ancient and contemporary political systems, concepts, and debates. Dante does not perceive any sense of historical fracture between the Republican and Imperial phases of Roman history; Boccaccio cites Caesar and Pompey as concordant, rather than opposed, moral and political *exempla*. Petrarch's rewriting of the *Bellum Civile* establishes a stronger association between ancient and contemporary Caesarism, but Petrarch's supposedly "republican" and "monarchical" phases are unified by a common set of concerns: Petrarch constantly supports strong centralized leadership and conflates Caesar with Scipio. In the works of early-fifteenth-century humanists like Coluccio Salutati, Paolo Vergerio, Giovanni Conversino, and Leonardo Bruni, the characters of the *Bellum Civile* instead appear to become the symbols of the opposing ideals of Republicanism and monarchy that characterized Italy in the age of the *Signorie.*

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[86] See chapter I, pp. 20-31.
[87] See chapter I, pp. 32-38, 41, 47-49.
[88] See chapter II, pp. 53-58.
[89] See chapter II, p. 55.
[90] See chapter III, pp. 97-99.

DANTE'S LUCAN

Much has been written about Lucan's presence in Dante's works and especially in the *Divine Comedy*. Alongside Walter of Châtillon and Abelard, the vernacular Dante is, indeed, the medieval author whose reception of the *Bellum Civile* has been investigated the most thoroughly.[91] Between the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, scholars such as Moore, Belloni, Proto, and Ussani produced a series of detailed surveys on the topic;[92] from the 1960s onwards Paratore, Marsili, and others developed this basis, highlighting that Dante's imitation of Lucan's poem reveals a first-hand knowledge of it, is substantial, and involves ideological affinities that go beyond formal reverberations.[93]

As a result, Lucan's importance to Dante is no longer a matter of scholarly debate. Critics have repeatedly noticed that the quantitatively and qualitatively significant citations of the *Bellum Civile* in the *Comedy* are accompanied by open acknowledgments of Lucan's importance in the *Vita Nova*, *De vulgari eloquentia* and *Convivio*.[94] Already in 1897, Moore pointed out that Lucan was mentioned or quoted by Dante around 50 times, only following Virgil (ca. 200 times) and Ovid (ca. 100 times) and preceding Statius (ca. 30 or 40 times). Sixty years later, Paratore argued that the *Bellum Civile* is, after the *Aeneid*, the ancient text mostly systematically exploited by Dante, and all the later authors on the topic agree that Lucan is a central figure in Dante's poetic canon.[95]

Paratore has emphasised in particular that quotations of the *Bellum Civile* in Dante's *Comedy* tend to polarize around the opposing figures of Caesar and Cato, who are described in

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[91] For bibliographic indications, cfr. Medeossi, "Dante e Lucano;" De Angelis, "... e l'ultimo Lucano," 145ff.; Von Moos, "Lucan au Moyen Âge," 98; D'Angelo, "Lucan," 467.

[92] Belloni, "Dante e Lucano;" Ussani, *Dante e Lucano*; cfr. Oeschger, "Antikes und Mittelalterliches;" Venturi, *Le similitudini dantesche*; Moore, "Lucan;" Proto, "Dante e i poeti latini" (I), 23ff., 221; (II), 7ff., 277ff.; (III), 79ff., 149ff.; Gmelin, "Dante," 57-60; Fischli, *Studien zum Fortleben*, 32-40. As these and later studies have pointed out, among the most significant quotations of Lucan in the *Comedy* are: the reference to "Iulia, Marzia e Corniglia" in *Inf.* IV, 128; the mention of Caesar "con li occhi grifagni" in *Inf.* IV, 123 (cfr. Lucan. I, 204-12; VII, 557-71, 785-96); Erichtho, the Furiae, and prophecy in *Inf.* IX and XX (Lucan. VI, 413ff.); the character of Arunte in *Inf.* XX, 46ff. (Lucan. I, 584); the allusion to the episode of Cato advancing in the Libyan desert in *Inf* XIV, 13-15 (Lucan. IX, 371-949); the metamorphoses of *Inf.* XIV-XV (Lucan. IX: Lucan is explicitly recalled and systematically imitated in these *canti*); Ulysses' speech in *Inf.* XXVI, 112ff. (Lucan. I, 549-52; I, 299-302); Curio in *Inf.* XXVIII, 86-102 (Lucan. I, 272-81; IV 805-6); Antaeus in *Inf.* XXXI, 112-45 (Lucan. IV, 589-655); the character of Cato in *Purg.* I-II (Lucan. II, 303-3, 372-91, 341-44; IX, 254-83, 554-86); the mention of Manfredi's body *Purg.* III, 130 (Lucan. VIII, 698-99); the character of Metellus in *Purg.* IX, 138 (Lucan. III, 154ff.); the description of the Appennines in *Purg.* XIV, 31-32 (Lucan. II, 394-438); the allusion to Caesar's rapidity in *Purg.* XVIII, 101-2 (Lucan. III, 453-55) and *Par.* VI 61-72 (Lucan. IX, 950-99; X, 275); the character of Amyclas in *Par.* XI, 67-69 (*Lucan.* V, 515-31). Further echoes are pointed out by Medeossi, "Dante e Lucano," 223ff.; De Angelis, "'...e l'ultimo Lucano,'" 150-65 and 183-95. References and allusions to Lucan in Dante's masterpiece were easily identified by medieval readers, as is demonstrated by fourteenth-century commentaries on Dante's *Comedy*, among which are Boccaccio's *Esposizioni* (cfr. pp. 25, 117, 119 below).

[93] Paratore, "Lucano e Dante;" Id, *Dante e Lucano*; Id., "Dante e Lucano;" Id., "Lucano;" Marsili, *Lucano e Dante*; Fraenkel, "Ancient Pathos," 36-41; and for more recent studies: Walde, "Lucan und Dante;" Marchesi, "Lucan at Last;" Martindale, "The Aesthetic Turn," 223-24; Id., "The Aesthetic Turn," 69-70:

[94] See p. 20-22 below.

[95] Moore, *Studies in Dante*, I, 4; Paratore, "Lucano," 697; cfr. *Id.* "La storia di Roma;" 7; *Id.*, "Lucano e Dante," 3-4. Paratore's statement is reasserted by Scott, "Cato," 75; Bon, "Lucano all'*Inferno*," 71, 103-4. On Lucan's importance in Dante's poetic "pantheon," see for example Fischli, *Studien*, 33; Fraenkel, "Lucan as the Transmitter," 36-41; Barolini, *Dante's Poets*, 188-96; Butler, "Statius, Lucan," 5-6; Wetherbee, "*Poeta che mi guidi*," 303; Montefusco, "La presenza," 83-85; Vazzana, "Lucano e Stazio," 297; Picone, "Dante and the Classics."

keeping with Lucan's text and treated somewhat paradoxically by the Florentine poet. For the author of the *Comedy*, Caesar is the first Roman emperor, founder of a divinely ordered kingdom: Dante's strenuous support of the imperial cause leads him to assign the worst punishment to Caesar's murderers, Brutus and Cassius. Nevertheless, the armed, "falcon-eyed" Caesar is located by Dante in Limbo (*Inf.* IV, 123), whereas Cato, the moral hero of the *Bellum Civile*, appears as spiritually superior to his rival and, despite his pagan faith and suicide, is elevated to guardian of Purgatory (*Purg.* I-II). Dante seems to distinguish between the historical-political role of the great Roman *viri* and their private moral conduct, which led them to different degrees of salvation or perdition.[96]

To date, Dante's glorification of Cato and his concurrent ambivalence towards Caesar have been the subject of most scholarly works dealing with Dante's rewriting of Lucan's epic.[97] Similarly well-studied are Dante's appropriation of Lucan's Erichtho and Antaeus,[98] his reuse of Lucan in representing Ulysses,[99] and his reliance on the *Bellum Civile* for his description of monstrosity and various aspects of Hell.[100] This substantial quantity of research has disclosed Dante's deep familiarity with, and creative reuse of, Lucan's poem. Scholars have observed that Dante regards the *Bellum Civile* as an outstanding exemplar of the poem of high *pathos*,[101] and draws from it congenial phrases and episodes of interest, which he readapts by condensing Lucan's flamboyant narration and freely combining passages that are distinct in the original.[102]

However copious and valuable these studies may be, they nonetheless leave various paths open to research and reassessment. First, Dante's redeployment of Lucan has only very seldom been analyzed in the context of medieval cultural practices of reading and interpretation of classical texts. In 1989 Medeossi remarked that scholars often overlook the problem of how Dante's approach to the *Bellum Civile* was possibly influenced by the reading patterns and study techniques of medieval schools of rhetoric.[103] De Angelis' article on Dante's reuse of Lucan in the light of medieval commentaries on the *Bellum Civile*, published in 1993, can be considered a

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[96] Other relevant examples in this regard are the anti-Caesar Metellus, praised by Dante in *Purg.* IX, 46-48 (with an echo of Lucan. II, 154ss.), and the Caesarian Curio, who exhorted Caesar to cross the Rubicon, and whom Dante places among the "seminatori di discordia" (*Inf.* XXVIII, 91-102; cfr. Lucan. I, 272-81 and IV, 805-6). See Paratore, "Lucano e Dante;" 6-12; Id., *Dante e Lucano*, 9, 12-23, 33-43; Id., "Lucano," 701-2 (after Proto, "Nuove ricerche;" Fischli, *Studien*, 37-40; Davis, *Dante and the Idea*, 115ff.; Renucci, *Dante disciple*, 296-311); cfr. D'Ovidio, "Il primo canto del Purgatorio," 123-34; Marsili, *Dante e Lucano*, 14-17 and 34-37; Fraenkel, "Ancient Pathos," 38-41.

[97] See for example De Angelis, "... e l'ultimo Lucano;" Weigel, "Dante's Ambivalence;" Scott, "Cato;" Id., *Understanding Dante*, 247-50; Manescalchi, "Una nuova interpretazione;" Clogan, "Dante's Appropriation;" Boggion, "La custodia;" Mazzotta, *Dante, Poet of the Desert*, 14-65; Stull-Hollander, "The Lucanian source," 33-42; Marchesi, "Lucan at Last;" Walde, *Lucan und Dante*, 72-3; Wetherbee, "*Poeta che mi guidi*;" Montefusco, "La presenza," 103-4 with bibl.

[98] On Erichtho, see: Gentili, "La necromanzia" (on Dante's reuse of the *Bellum Civile* in the episodes of Erichtho and the soothsayers) Wilson, "Prophecy by the Dead" (on Lucan as a point of reference for Dante's narration about Erichtho and Ciacco); Clogan, "Dante's Appropriation." On Antaeus: Hollander, "L'Anteo dantesco;" Butler, "Statius, Lucan."

[99] Stull-Hollander, "The Lucanian Source;" Bon, "Lucano all'*Inferno*," 98-103; Gualandri, "'Infin che 'l mar';" cfr. Montefusco, "La presenza," 99-103.

[100] Bosco, "La gara;" Bon, "Lucano all'*Inferno*;" Vezzana, "Lucano e Stazio;" Wetherbee, *The Ancient Flame*, 61ff.

[101] Fraenkel, "Ancient Pathos," 17-18; cfr. Fischli, *Studien*, 32-33.

[102] On Dante's stylistic strategy in reusing Lucan, cfr. Paratore, "Lucano," 698; Id., "Lucano e Dante," 8, 32; Marsili, *Dante e Lucano*, 25, 46; Marchesi, "Lucan at Last,"223ff.; Vezzana, "Lucano e Stazio," 299-300; Montefusco, "La presenza," 98-99, 108.

[103] Medeossi, "Dante e Lucano," 220-1.

benchmark in the field, but found no significant continuation.[104] Therefore, as Von Moos has highlighted in his recent study, there is a substantial hiatus between studies of Lucan's reception in high-medieval Latin literary culture and his reception in fourteenth-century Italy.[105]

Moreover, and in connection with this, Dante has often been treated as an isolated giant in the *Trecento*. In particular, the numerous works on Lucan in the *Comedy* do not consider continuities and differences between reuses of the *Bellum Civile* by Dante and by late fourteenth-century humanists such as Petrarch and Boccaccio, whose redeployment of Lucan is a much less studied topic, as I discuss in chapters II and III.[106]

Partly as a result of this lack of engagement with the cultural-historical context in which the *Comedy* was written and began to circulate, many recent accounts of the "Dante and Lucan" relationship rely on historically inaccurate assumptions about Lucan's figure as an author. Scholars are especially inclined to over-emphasize, and anachronstically ascribe to Dante, post-medieval views of Lucan as an anti-Virgil, and of the *Bellum Civile* as a "nihilistic" negation of the optimistic ideals of the *Aeneid*. According to Wetherbee, Butler, Hollander, and others, Dante's allusions to Lucan's text in the *Comedy* challenge the authority of Virgil (as a character and an author) through irony, parody, and mockery.[107] However, these interpretations take no account of the possible divergences between medieval and contemporary interpretations of the *Bellum Civile* in relation to the *Aeneid*.

Finally, studies of Dante's reception of the *Bellum Civile* are strongly focused on, if not exclusively limited to, the *Comedy*. Although Lucan is frequently mentioned and cited also in Dante's "minor" poems, epistles, and treatises, these references have been more noted than studied or interpreted.[108] While creating an obvious lacuna in scholarly literature, this critical disproportion also increases the sense of a fracture between rewritings of Lucan by Dante and by other medieval authors.

In this chapter I intend to reexamine Dante's reception of the *Bellum Civile* in relation both to the previous medieval Latin commentary tradition stemming from Lucan's poem and to the subsequent, pre-humanist developments in the interpretation and reuse of Lucan's text. While taking the *Comedy* as my point of reference, I will expand the investigation to consider Lucan's presence in Dante's "minor" works, such as the *Monarchia*, *Epistles*, and *Convivio*. I will point

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[104] De Angelis, "... e l'ultimo Lucano;" cfr. also De Angelis, "Il testo di Lucano. " Some remarks on Dante's reading of Lucan through medieval commentaries (Arnulf's *Glosule*, the *Adnotationes*, and the *Commenta Bernensia*) are present, for example, in Montefusco, "La presenza," 98, 101-2, 104-6; Gentili, "La necromanzia," 36; however, he has not studied the topic systematically.

[105] Von Moos, "Lucan au Moyen Âge," 98-99.

[106] See again Von Moos, "Lucan au Moyen Âge," 98-99; cfr. pp. 51 and 90 below.

[107] Hollander, "L'Anteo dantesco;" Butler, "Statius, Lucan;" Wetherbee, "Lucan, Vergil." On the supposed opposition between Lucan and Virgil in Dante's eyes cfr. also Wetherbee, "*Poeta che mi guidi*," 308; Quint, "The Epic Tradition;" Picone, "Dante and the Classics," 337; Montefusco, "La presenza," 94-96. See pp. 23-26 below.

[108] Dante's quotations of Lucan in his "minor" works are listed in Paratore, "Lucano." Studies on Dante's Cato have tangentially considered the references to this character in the *Convivio* and *Monarchy*. Other references to Lucan in the *Convivio*, *Monarchy,* and *Epistles* have been analyzed only very sporadically. Martellotti, "Dante e i classici,"134-35 mentions Dante's citation of Lucan about the topic of riches in *Conv.* IV, xxvii, 2; Asso, "And Then it Rained Shields," discusses *Mon*. II, iv, 4-6; Barolini, *Dante's Poets*, 197 and Buck, "Antike Autoren," 275-76 point out the importance of Lucan in the *Monarchy* (list of quotations without interpretation). The mention of Lucan in the *Epistle to Cangrande* has received some critical attention: see Fraenkel, "Ancient Pathos," 36; Fischli, *Studien*, 33 Marchesi, "Lucan at Last," 484-5. Wilson, "Prophecy" highlights an allusion to Lucan in Dante's *Epist.* VI; Heil, "Dantes 'Thessalien'" deals with Dante's *Epistle* V. Dante's reuse of Lucan in the *petrose* has been noticed in commentaries and specific studies on the *Rime* (Contini, ed., *Rime*; Santagata, ed., *Canzoniere*; Durling-Martinez, *Time and the Crystal*; see below, p. 30).

out that, partly in line with high-medieval Latin commentators and unlike later humanists, Dante combines Lucan's and Virgil's epics with a conciliatory attitude and regards the great ancient epic poets as belonging to the same literary and moral universe. Lucan's and Virgil's texts are refunctionalized to support Dante's philo-imperial agenda; in so doing, Dante builds on the philo-Roman and philo-Caesarean aspects of Lucan's historical account, overturning its fundamental pessimism, and effaces the contrast between Roman Republic and Empire. Moreover, Dante cites Lucan as a reliable philosophical authority: he appropriates Lucan's *figura* in his social-philosophical criticisms of riches and brings to the *Bellum Civile* the same allegorizing reading he adopts for the *Aeneid*.

LUCAN AND VIRGIL

Dante's direct mentions of Lucan unquestionably acknowledge the latter as a canonical poet; however the specific nature and internal organization of Dante's canon leave room for debate. Lucan appears in the *bella scola* of *Inf.* IV, next to Homer, Virgil, Horace, and Ovid:

> Lo buon maestro cominciò a dire:
> "Mira colui con quella spada in mano,
> che vien dinanzi ai tre sì come sire:
> quelli è Omero poeta sovrano;
> l'altro è Orazio satiro che vene;
> Ovidio è 'l terzo, e l'ultimo Lucano.
> Però che ciascun meco si convene
> nel nome che sonò la voce sola,
> fannomi onore, e di ciò fanno bene".[109]

Scholars have often wondered about Dante's epithetical characterization of Lucan as "the last one." Critics such as Paratore and Marsili explain this enigmatic phrase as referring to Lucan's historical-chronological "posteriority" in relation to the Augustan poets, more than as an indicator of Lucan's low, subordinate position within a precise taxonomic ranking of ancient poetry.[110]

Lucan's standing as major ancient poet is, in fact, repeatedly confirmed throughout Dante's corpus, in which ancient poetry is classified in a notably open and plurivocal way. The

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[109] *Inf.* IV, 85-93 ("My kindly master then began by saying: 'Look well at him who holds that sword in hand, who moves before the other three as lord. That shade is Homer, the consummate poet; the other one is Horace, satirist; the third is Ovid, and the last is Lucan. Because each of these spirits shares with me the name called out before by the lone voice, they welcome me — and, doing that, do well" (transl. Mandelbaum, *The Divine Comedy*, I, 34).

[110] Cfr. for example Paratore, "Lucano e Dante," 3-4; Id., *Dante e Lucano*, 6-7 (interpreting "ultimo" in a chronological sense); Marsili, *Dante e Lucano*, 5-6 (referring to reasons of chronology and rhyme). According to Marchesi, Lucan's position has both chronological and taxonomic grounds (Marchesi, "Lucan at Last," 481-83). The problem is raised already in medieval commentaries on the *Comedy*: Guido da Pisa and the later commentator of the *Codice cassinese* attribute Lucan's position to his identity as a historian, while in the *Ottimo commento* and in the work of the Anonimo Selmiano, Lucan is defined as a poet and compared to Virgil (*Expositiones*, ed. Rinaldi, I, 315; *Il codice cassinese*, ed. Monaci di S. Benedetto, 37; *L'ottimo commento*, ed. Torri, I, 42; *Chiose anonime*, ed. Selmi, I, 25) A compromise solution is offered by Benvenuto's commentary on the *Comedy*: after mentioning the two possible explanations for Lucan's placement (chronology or the *historicus* vs *poeta* controversy), Benvenuto concludes that Lucan wrote in poetic forms and often called himself *poeta*, and thus he is rightfully included by Dante among the major ancient poets (ed. Lacaita, I, pp. 152-53; cfr. also Benvenuto I, ed. Promis-Negroni, pp. 28-29). The same judgment appears in Benvenuto's commentary on Lucan (Rossi, "Benvenuto da Imola," 180; Crevatin, "La presenza," 239).

same four Latin poets who make their appearence in the *bella scola* are listed in *Vita Nova* XXV, 9, where Dante provides examples of the various sorts of literary personification:

> Che li poete abbiano così parlato come detto è, appare per Virgilio; lo quale dice che Iuno, cioè una dea nemica de li Troiani, parloe ad Eolo, segnore de li venti, quivi nel primo de lo Eneida: *Eole, nanque tibi,* e che questo segnore le rispuose, quivi: *Tuus, o regina, quid optes explorare labor; michi iussa capessere fas est*. Per questo medesimo poeta parla la cosa che non è animata a le cose animate, nel terzo de lo Eneida, quivi: *Dardanide duri*. Per Lucano parla la cosa animata a la cosa inanimata, quivi: *Multum, Roma, tamen debes civilibus armis*. Per Orazio parla l'uomo a la scienzia medesima sì come ad altra persona; e non solamente sono parole d'Orazio, ma dicele quasi recitando lo modo del buono Omero, quivi ne la sua Poetria: *Dic michi, Musa, virum*. Per Ovidio parla Amore, sì come se fosse persona umana, ne lo principio de lo libro c'ha nome Libro di Remedio d'Amore, quivi: *Bella michi, video, bella parantur, ait*. E per questo puote essere manifesto a chi dubita in alcuna parte di questo mio libello.[111]

Here the names of Virgil, Lucan, Horace, and Ovid are listed in a different order than in the (later) passage of *Inf.* IV; taken together, these texts suggests no rigid or immutable hierarchy in Dante's view of the ancient poetic canon.

In *DVE* II, vi, 7, Lucan is mentioned within a different taxonomic scheme, namely within the traditional medieval canon of four hexametric poets (Virgil, Ovid, Statius, Lucan), whose technique of *constructio* should, according to Dante, be particularly imitated:

> Nec mireris, lector, de tot reductis autoribus ad memoriam: non enim hanc quam suppremam vocamus constructionem nisi per huiusmodi exempla possumus indicare. Et fortassis utilissimum foret ad illam habituandam regulatos vidisse poetas, Virgilium videlicet, Ovidium *Metamorfoseos*, Statium atque Lucanum, nec non alios qui usi sunt altissimas prosas, ut Titum Livium, Plinium, Frontinum, Paulum Orosium, et multos alios, quos amica solitudo nos visitare invitat.[112]

Dante's association of Lucan with Virgil as members of the "bella scola" and great hexametric poets worthy of imitation appears of relevance in relation to Dante's ideas on tragedy. In *DVE* II, iv, 6-8, Dante explains that tragedy is written in magnificent verses ("superbia carminum"), is characterized by a lofty *constructio* and an excellent vocabulary ("constructionis elatio et

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[111] "That poets have written as I have said above is evident in Vergil, who says that Juno, who is a goddess enemy of the Trojans, spoke to Aeolus, Lord of the winds, in the first book of the Aeneid: *Eole, nanque tibi* [Oh Aeolus, to you], and this Lord replied: *Tuus, o regina, quid optes explorare labor; michi iussa capessere fas est* [Yours, o queen, is the task of examining your wishes; mine, the duty of carrying out orders]. Through the same poet speaks an inanimate thing to things animate, in the third book of the *Aeneid*, with: *Dardanide duri* [You hard Trojans]. Through Lucan a thing animate speaks to a thing inanimate, with: *Multum, Roma, tamen debes civilibus armis* [Much, of Rome, do you nevertheless owe to civil wars]. Through Horace one speaks to one's own poetic faculty as to another person — and not only are they Horace's words, but he speaks them while reciting in the manner of the good Homer — here in his *Art of Poetry*: *Dic michi, Musa, virtum* [Tell me, oh muse, about the man]. Through Ovid, Love speaks as if it were a human being, in the beginning of the book entitled *The Book of the Remedies of Love*, with: *Bella michi, video, bella parantur, ait* [Wars against me, I see, wars are being prepared, he says]. And all this should manifest to whoever objects to any part of my little book" (Transl. Cervigni-Vasta, *Vita Nuova*, 109-11).

[112] "Nor should you be surprised, reader, if so many authorities are recalled to your memory here; for I could not make clear what I mean by the supreme degree of construction other than by providing examples of this kind. And perhaps it would be most useful, in order to make the practice of such constructions habitual, to read the poets who respect the rules, namely Virgil, the Ovid of the Metamorphoses, Statius, and Lucan, as well as others who have written excellent prose, such as Livy, Pliny, Frontinus, Paulus Orosius, and many others whom an affectionate interest invites us to consult" (transl. Botterill, *De vulgari eloquentia*, 67).

excellentia vocabulorum"), and deals with noble subjects: arms, love, and virtue (*salus, venus,* and *virtus*). In the *Comedy*, Dante defines the *Aeneid* as "alta mia tragedia" (*Inf.* XX, 113), implying that Virgil's epic owns the relevant features of high style and subject matter.[113] Most likely, Dante could similarly have read the *Bellum Civile* as an example of the tragic style.[114] At least, this is what fourteenth-century commentators on the *Comedy* infer. In commenting on Dante's mention of Lucan in the "bella scola," Benvenuto states that Dante acknowledges Lucan's merit as an illustrious author of tragedy; similar judgments are present in other Dantean commentators. [115]

The authority of the poetic foursome of *DVE* II, vi is indirectly reasserted in *Conv.* IV. Here, Dante's examples of the four ages of human life (*adolescenza*, *gioventute*, *senettute*, and *senio*) are drawn from Statius, Virgil, Ovid, and Lucan. In reusing the story of Cato and Marcia to exemplify *senio*, Dante significantly calls Lucan a "great poet" ("quello grande poeta Lucano").[116]

Lucan is, thus, recalled by Dante as a pre-eminent ancient author and as a great hexametric poet in particular. Yet, recent studies on Dante and the classical tradition have tended to emphasise the relative subordination of Lucan in Dante's epic canon, based on a restricted set of textual elements. In *Inf.* XXV, 94-99 Dante compares the incredible transformations he is going to describe to the prodigies recounted by Lucan and Ovid, in what Marchesi has defined an "emulative canon confirmation":[117]

> Taccia Lucano omai là dov'e' tocca
> del misero Sabello e di Nasidio,
> e attenda a udir quel ch'or si scocca.
> Taccia di Cadmo e d'Aretusa Ovidio,
> ché se quello in serpente e quella in fonte
> converte poetando, io non lo 'nvidio;
> ché due nature mai a fronte a fronte
> non transmutò sì ch'amendue le forme
> a cambiar lor matera fosser pronte.[118]

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[113] On Dante's idea of tragedy, cfr. Kelly, *Ideas and forms*, 144-57; Id., *Tragedy and Comedy*, pp. 1-10 in particular (the likely spurious *Epistle to Cangrande* is characterized by a different conception of tragedy and comedy as to Dante's other works, based on the plot movement rather than on style and subject matter). Cfr. also Mengaldo, "Stili, dottrina degli."

[114] Cfr. Fraenkel, "Lucan as the Transmitter," 18; Paoletti, "La fortuna," 147-48.

[115] "Accepit Dantes tres insignes poetas Latinos in triplici stilo, Horatium in satira, Ovidium in comedia, Lucanum in tragedia" ("Dante approved three Latin poets, illustrious in three styles, Horace in satire, Ovid in comedy, and Lucan in tragedy;" transl. Fraenkel, "Lucan as the Transmitter," 17-18; cfr. pp. 11-12 above. As Fraenkel remarks, definitions of the *Bellum Civile* as a "tragedy" by fourteenth-century Dantean commentators are based more on the customary high-medieval classification of literary genres than on the specific formulation given by Dante in his treatise). Lucan is mentioned as a representative of tragedy also in Jacopo Alighieri's commentary on *Inferno* and in the second version of the *Ottimo commento* (ed. Piccinini, pp. 43-44; ed. Scarabelli, p. 97; cfr. Kelly, *Ideas and Forms*, 151, 153, 157; Paoletti, "La fortuna," 148).

[116] *Conv.* IV, xxviii, 13-19 (see p. 47 below).

[117] Marchesi, "Lucan at Last," 486.

[118] ("Let Lucan now be silent, where he sings of sad Sabellus and Nasidius, and wait to hear what flies off from my bow. Let Ovid now be silent, where he tells of Cadmus, Arethusa; if his verse has made of one a serpent, one a fountain, I do not envy him; he never did transmute two natures, face to face, so that both forms were ready to exchange their matters;" transl. Mandelbaum, *The Divine Comedy*, I, 218).

Linking these lines with the passage from *Inf.* IV discussed above, some scholars have claimed that Dante draws an implicit and yet clear distinction within the group of four *poetae regulati*, representing Virgil and Statius as superior to, and more dignified than, Lucan and Ovid. This thesis, first supported by Renucci and variously reasserted by Barolini, Picone, and Montefusco, is grounded in the fact that in *Inf.* IV Lucan and Ovid are named at last and without remarkable literary epithets and in *Inf.* XXV they are silenced by Dante with an agonistic attitude which appears very different from the respectful consideration that the poet shows to Virgil and Statius, allegedly the main models for his Christian *epos*.[119]

I agree that Dante could have perceived numerous affinities between Lucan and Ovid, based on their common engagement with extraordinary marvels and mythic history. As in *Inf.* XXV, so too in *Mon*. II, vii, 9-10 Lucan and Ovid are cited together as the main authors recounting the fight between Antaeus and Hercules ("cuius Lucanus meminit in quarto *Farsalie* et Ovidius in nono *De rerum transmutatione*"). It is also true that Dante demonstrates a special predilection for Virgil, his *maestro* and *autore* (*Inf.* I, 85): as is well known, the author of the *Aeneid* stands as Dante's guide in the first part of the journey described in the *Comedy* and is elsewhere defined as the major Roman poet.[120]

Nevertheless, in my opinion the opposition between Lucan and Virgil has been exaggerated by scholars of Dante. The limited textual evidence of *Inf.* IV and XXV has informed interpretations which are ultimately based on contemporary understandings of the *Bellum Civile* as an anti-*Aeneid*, characterized by the absence of *pietas* or providential vision, the choice of history instead of myth, and an anti-imperial stance. Montefusco, for instance, underlines the ideological and generic "eccentricity" of Lucan's poem and suggests that Dante might want to exclude the Cordovan poet from the epic canon he implicitly traces in his *Inferno*.[121] Wetherbee, who speaks of "Lucan's fleeting appearance as the last of the 'bella scola' in Limbo and the dismissive naming of him in *Inferno* 25," similarly insists on the anti-Virgilian character of Lucan's work and attributes to Dante a conception of the *Bellum Civile* as "mockery," "parody," and "caustic exploitation" of the *Aeneid*. [122] Assumptions of this kind especially underlie recent readings of the episodes of Erichtho and Antaeus, in which Virgil the character indirectly cites, or refers to, Lucan's narration.

The first of these two instances occurs in *Inf.* IX, where the pilgrims approach the entrance of the City of Dis. Dante, who distrusts Virgil's experience of the path, asks his guide whether any soul has ever descended from Limbo into lower Hell. Virgil replies that, in fact, he himself did so when Erichtho asked him to bring back a soul from Judas' circle:

> "In questo fondo de la trista conca
> discende mai alcun del primo grado,
> che sol per pena ha la speranza cionca?".
> Questa question fec' io; e quei "Di rado
> incontra", mi rispuose, "che di noi
> faccia il cammino alcun per qual io vado.

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[119] Renucci, *Dante disciple*, 330; Barolini, *Dante's Poets*, 194-95 with bibl.; Picone, "Dante and the Classics," 330; Montefusco, "La presenza," 88-97. However, Barolini points out that in *Inf.* XXV Dante limits criticism to Ovid, excluding Lucan (*Dante's Poets*, 225).

[120] *Conv.* IV, xxvi, 8: "lo maggiore nostro poeta" ("our greatest poet," transl. Lansing, *Dante's Il Convivio*, 226).

[121] Montefusco, "La presenza," 94-97.

[122] Wetherbee, *The Ancient Flame*, 61-95.

Ver è ch'altra fïata qua giù fui,
congiurato da quella Eritón cruda
che richiamava l'ombre a' corpi sui.
Di poco era di me la carne nuda,
ch'ella mi fece intrar dentr' a quel muro,
per trarne un spirto del cerchio di Giuda.
Quell' è 'l più basso loco e 'l più oscuro,
e 'l più lontan dal ciel che tutto gira:
ben so 'l cammin; però ti fa sicuro."[123]

This story, which finds no precise literary parallels outside the *Comedy*, has puzzled ancient and modern commentators, since it is seemingly anachronistic or, at least, presents some chronological difficulties: Virgil was alive at the time Erichtho was active according to Lucan (i.e. around 48 B.C.). Moreover, Virgil's tale seemingly endorses the belief that black magic can recall the souls of the damned from Hell.[124]

The second episode takes place in the Well of Giants of *Inf.* XXXI. Wishing to move from the eighth to the ninth circle, Virgil seeks Antaeus' help through a flattering speech which recalls the giant's legendary strength and deeds:

Noi procedemmo più avante allotta,
e venimmo ad Anteo, che ben cinque alle,
sanza la testa, uscia fuor de la grotta.
"O tu che ne la fortunata valle
che fece Scipion di gloria reda,
quand'Anibàl co' suoi diede le spalle,
recasti già mille leon per preda,
e che, se fossi stato a l'alta guerra
de' tuoi fratelli, ancor par che si creda

[123] *Inf.* IX, 16-30 ("'Does anyone from the first circle, one whose only punishment is crippled hope, ever descend so deep in this sad hollow?' That was my question. And he answered so: 'It is quite rare for one of us to go along the way that I have taken now. But I, in truth, have been here once before: that savage witch Erichtho, she who called the shades back to their bodies, summoned me. My flesh had not been long stripped off when she had me descend through all the rings of Hell, to draw a spirit back from Judas' circle. That is the deepest and the darkest place, the farthest from the heaven that girds all: so rest assured, I know the pathway well;'" transl. Mandelbaum, *The Divine Comedy*, I, 72).

[124] Doubts of this sort are raised by Boccaccio: "[...] Ma ciò non può esser vero, per ciò che a quei tempi Virgilio era vivo e visse poi molti anni, sì come chiaramente si comprende per Eusebio, *in libro Temporum*; e che istoria questa si fosse non mi ricorda mai aver nè letta né udita, da quello in fuori che di sopra n'è detto. Oltre a questo, non pare a' santi in alcuna guisa si debba credere che alcuna anima dannata, e molto meno l'altre, per alcuna forza d'incantamento si possa trarre d'inferno e rivocare per cagione alcuna in questa vita [...]" ("[...] This cannot be true, however, for in those times Virgil was still alive and would still be living many years later, as we can clearly see in Eusebius's *Chronicon*. I do not recall having read or heard anything more about this story than what is written here. Moreover, it does not seem that the theologians believe in any way that a damned soul could be brought out of Hell through an incantation and returned to this life for any reason;" *Esp*. IX, esp. litt. 17-18; transl. Papio, *Expositions*, 406). Benvenuto also observes that there are some chronological difficulties: "[...] Sed hoc est omnino impossibile, quia Virgilius erat tunc iuvenis, vel mortuus est tempore Augusti, ut iam dictum est capitulo I [...]" ("However, this is absolutely impossible, as Virgil was then a young man, and he died in Augustus' times, as I already said in chapter I [...]"; Ed. Lacaita, vol. I, p. 308; my transl.). But on chronology, cfr. Chiavacci Leonardi: "se Eritone viveva nel 48 a.C. (al tempo di Farsalo), poteva benissimo essere ancora in vita l'anno della morte di Virgilio (19 a.C.)" (*Inferno*, 277).

ch'avrebber vinto i figli de la terra;
mettine giù, e non ten vegna schifo,
dove Cocito la freddura serra.
Non ci fare ire a Tizio né a Tifo:
questi può dar di quel che qui si brama;
però ti china, e non torcer lo grifo.
Ancor ti può nel mondo render fama,
ch'el vive, e lunga vita ancor aspetta
se 'nnanzi tempo grazia a sé nol chiama."
Così disse 'l maestro; e quelli in fretta
le man distese, e prese 'l duca mio,
ond'Ercule sentì già grande stretta.
(...)[125]

In this extract the character of Virgil appropriates Lucan's narration about Antaeus. In particular, the association between Hercules' fight with the giant and the later encounter between Scipio and Hannibal (ll. 115-17), is a feature of Lucan's text (Lucan. V, 656-60) upon which medieval commentators often expanded.[126] Dante openly acknowledges Lucan's role as a source on the Hercules-Antaeus episode in the above-referenced passage of the *Monarchy* (*Mon*. II) and the importance of the *Bellum Civile* for these lines of the *Inferno* was noted by fourteenth-century commentators on the *Comedy*, before modern scholars.[127]

The two passages from *Inf.* IX and XXXI have often been read as ridiculing the character of Virgil through parodic intertextuality. Barolini and Clogan both point out that Virgil's supposed familiarity with Erichtho's nefarious world casts a shadow on him in *Inf.* IX;[128] other scholars take the argument a step further and read Dante's allusions to Lucan as intrinsically threatening to Virgil's authority. According to Butler, Dante juxtaposes Virgil against Lucan and Statius (the later innovators of the epic genre) to expose the former's fallibility: Virgil's unacknowledged quotation of Lucan on Erichtho suggests dishonesty, and creates an anachronism we are meant to notice, while the Antaeus episode represents a similar "intertextual struggle" with Lucan in which, while "unknowingly" affirming "the truth presented in Lucan's text," Virgil appears unable to produce a reliable response to the *Bellum Civile*.[129] Likewise,

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[125] *Inf.* XXXI, 112ff.: "And we continued on until we reached Antaeus, who, not reckoning his head, stood out above the rock wall full five ells. 'Oh you, who lived within the famous valley (where Scipio became the heir of glory when Hannibal retreated with his men), who took a thousand lions as your prey — and had you been together with your brothers in the high war, it seems some still believe the sons of earth would have become the victors — do set us down below, where cold shuts in Cocytus, and do not disdain that task. Don't send us on to Tityus or Typhon; this man can give you what is longed for here; therefore bend down and do not curl your lip. He still can bring you fame within the world, for he's alive and still expects long life, unless grace summons him before his time.' So said my master; and in haste Antaeus stretched out his hands, whose massive grip had once been felt by Hercules, and grasped my guide" (transl. Mandelbaum, *The Divine Comedy*, I, 115-17).

[126] *Commenta Bernensia*, ed. Usener, 657; Arnulf, *Glosule*, ed. Marti, 244.

[127] Guido da Pisa, comm. *Inf.* XXXI, 100 and 118 (pp. 901 and 907-8 ed. Rinaldi) quotes Lucan. IV, 596-97; IV, 601-2; and summarizes Lucan. IV, 593-655. Pietro Alighieri, III, *Comm. Inf*. XXXI, par. 35-40 (p. 261 ed. Chiamenti 2002) quotes Lucan III, 316-20; IV, 595-96; IV, 656-58; IV, 592-94; IV, 597, 601-2. Many references to Lucan characterize also the first and second redactions of Pietro's commentary (ed. Nannucci, pp. 260-2; ed. Della Vedova-Silvotti, pp. 413-17). Guglielmo Maramauro, *comm. Inf*. 31, 47-65 (pp. 458-61 ed. Pisoni) quotes Lucan. IV, 593-96; IV, 602; IV, 652, following Pietro II, 413-14.

[128] Cfr. Clogan, "Dante's Appropriation," 114; Barolini, *Dante's Poets*, 205.

[129] Butler, "Statius, Lucan," 9f. and 15-17.

Hollander argues that Virgil's reuse of Lucan's account of Antaeus is comic in that the predecessor "steals" from his imitator, and not vice versa.[130]

Other scholars highlight the inherent contrast between Lucan's and Virgil's texts in Dante's eyes. In his analysis of the Erichtho episode, Quint emphasizes the divergence between the Virgilian descent to the underworld (*Aen*. VI) and the conjuration scenes described by Lucan and Statius: confronted with the two options, Dante would choose the Virgilian model, by which "divine significance enters the poetic universe."[131] Wetherbee similarly remarks that the horrific tones and dark humour of Lucan's poem make it a very apt model for Dante's *Inf.* IX, whereas Virgil's *Aeneid* appears an inappropriate precedent at this stage, given its very high seriousness.[132]

These readings are, of course, possible, and grasp the structural dissimilarities between Virgil's and Lucan's epics. Yet, they are primarily based on modern views of Lucan's text as anti-Virgilian, in line with an interpretive trend championed by Narducci and other recent critics.[133] The idea of a "radical opposition" between the *Aeneid* and the *Bellum Civile* has, however, recently been revisited by scholars who have underlined the complexity of both poems[134] as well as the problematic nature of Lucan's supposed anti-Caesarism.[135] Second, and more importantly, this modern interpretation of Lucan's work as anti-Virgilian hardly corresponds with Dante's view of the *Bellum Civile*. Already thirty years ago Marsili suggested that there are fundamental differences between medieval and contemporary, post-Enlightenment, understandings of the *Bellum Civile* and its "ideology;" Paratore similarly pointed out that Dante's understanding of the relation between Lucan and Virgil is open to question: as a medieval reader, Dante was likely to appreciate the similarity and integration, rather than the opposition, between the most representative texts of the great, ancient Latin epic.[136]

Indeed, we have already seen that, in the *Comedy* as well as in the *De vulgari eloquentia* and the *Convivio*, Dante often mentions Lucan *alongside* Virgil, and that he defines Lucan as "a great poet" without any suggestion of the *Bellum Civile*'s generic ambiguity. What is more, Dante demonstrates no interest in Lucan's controversial personality or in the idea of his poetic rivalry with Virgil. These elements will be emphasized later in the fourteenth century, by the early humanists Petrarch and Boccaccio, who rely on Suetonius and take a much more biographical approach to ancient Latin epic.[137] With all his greatness, Dante was still a man of his time and was likely to interpret classical texts through methods and categories common to his contemporaries and to the world of late-medieval commentaries and rhetorical schools.[138]

In late-medieval commentaries on the *Bellum Civile*, Virgil is, in fact, often quoted and mentioned as an important point of reference for Lucan's narration about Erichtho and Antaeus.

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[130] Hollander, "Dante's Antaeus."
[131] Quint, "Epic Tradition."
[132] Wetherbee, "Lucan and Vergil," 62-66.
[133] On Lucan as an "anti-Virgil," cfr. for example Thierfelder, "Der Dichter Lucan;" Burck, *Vom römischen Manierismus*, 94; Narducci, *La provvidenza crudele*.
[134] Cfr. Walde, *Lucan und Dante*, 60-2; Casali, "The *Bellum Civile*."
[135] Brisset, *Les idées*, 35-223; Masters, *Poetry and Civil War*, 1-10, 87-89; Bartsch, *Ideology in Cold Blood*, 1-9; Johnson, *Momentary Monsters*, x (see pp. 2-3 above).
[136] Marsili, *Dante e Lucano*, 7-11; Paratore, "Lucano," 700-702; Id., "Dante e il mondo classico," 38-39, 42-44; Id., "L'eredità classica," 70, 82-85.
[137] Suetonius' *Vita Lucani* was included at the beginning of the *Commenta Bernensia* and other commentaries (e.g. *Clm* 4593), but does not seem to have played as crucial a role for Dante as it did for Petrarch.
[138] This point has already been made by Paratore, "Dante e il mondo classico," 70; Medeossi, "Dante e Lucano," 22ff.

Virgil is the most referenced author in the *Adnotationes super Lucanum*: here the commentary on the two episodes under consideration frequently includes the phrase "ut (ait) Vergilius," followed by Virgilian passages about magic and mythological history. For example, on Lucan. VI, 452 ("carmine Thessalidum") we read: "exaggeratio magicae potestatis, ut ait Virgilius 'carmina vel caelo possunt deducere lunam;'"[139] Lucan. VI, 460 ("vertigine fili") is explained thus: "ut Virgilius amorem incutiens hoc fieri iubet: 'necte tribus nodis ternos, Amarilli, colores,'" etc.[140] Similar citations of Virgil are present in the *Commenta Bernensia* — here, for instance, Lucan. IV, 611 ("magnanimum Alciden") is explained with a reference to Virgil's narration about Hercules: "Virgilius 'attulit et nobis aliquando optantibus aetas / auxilium adventumque dei.'"[141] The same is true for the glosses gathered by Weber [142] and for other manuscripts of Lucan, such as Clm 14505 (eleventh century) and Clm 4593 (twelfth century), where Lucan's passages about Erichtho and Antaeus are glossed with these and other quotations of Virgil.[143]

Dante's juxtaposition of Lucan and Virgil seems to develop from an analogously integrative view of classical antiquity. In her detailed analysis of the Erichtho episode, Sonia Gentili has, indeed, grounded Dante's interweaving of Virgil and Lucan in the precedents of medieval manuscripts of Virgil, Lucan, and Dracontius — where Erichtho is often compared to the Virgilian Aletto and Sybilla — and medieval legends on Virgil's *katabasis*. Gentili has also

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[139] "Exaggeration of the power of magic, as Virgil also says: 'Enchantments can even bring the moon down from the heavens'" (cfr. Virg. *Ecl.* 8, 69).

[140] "So Virgil, inducing love, exhorts to do this: 'Twine, Amaryllis, three colours in three knots'" (cfr. Virg. *Ecl.* 8, 77). On Lucan. VI, 456 ("frontis amature subducunt pignora fete") we read: "ut Virgilius 'et matris praereptus amor" (Virg., *Aen.* IV, 516); Lucan. VI, 553 ("expectat siccis"): "ut difficilius possit auferre esurientes, addidit lupos, quod ait Virgilius 'collecta fatigat edendi / ex longo rabies et siccae sanguine fauces'" (Virg. *Aen.* IX, 63-64); Lucan VI, 648 ("non Taenariis"): "et in Tenaro enim fertur ad inferos esse descensus, ut ait Virgilius 'Tenarias etiam fauces, alta ostia Ditis'" (Virg., *Georg.* IV, 467); Lucan. VI, 663 ("ignibus"): "Phlegethontis, ut Virglius 'qua<e> rapidus flammis <ambit> torrentibus amnis Tartareus Phlegethon'" (Virg., *Aen.* VI, 550-1); Lucan. VI, 699 ("matrem perosa"): "Proserpinam dicit, quae superos contempsit et matrem; bene ergo perosa, ut ait Virgilus 'nec repetita sequi curet Proserpina matrem'" (Virg., *Georg.* I, 39); Lucan. VI, 715 ("licet"): "permittitur, ut Virgilius 'casta licet patrui servet Proserpina limen'" (Virg., *Aen.* VI, 402); Lucan. VI, 730 ("secura Megera"): "hoc cum indignatione dicit, quod vocem suam Megaera audiat et sit secura, ut Virgilius 'securi pelagi atque mei'" (Virg. *Aen.* VII, 304); Lucan. VI, 743 ("ruptis titana cavernis"): "ut Virgilius 'trepident inmisso lumine manes'" (Virg., *Aen*. VIII, 246); Lucan. VI, 749 ("Stygias qui perierat undas"): "hic peierat, qui omnibus potior est et non timet Stygiam ut dii alii, ut Virgilius 'di cuius iurare timent et fallere numen'" (Virg., *Aen.* VI, 324), etc. On Lucan. VI, 584 ("Curio"): "hic est, de quo volunt dixisse Virgilium 'vendidit hic auro patriam'" (Virg., *Aen.* VI, 621); Lucan. IV, 588 ("siccae sulcator harenae"): "unde et Virgilius: 'sitientis ibimus Afros'" (Virg. *Ecl.* 1, 64); Lucan. IV, 612 ("ille Clonaei"): "Clonae regio iuxta Nemeam, ubi interimit leonem Hercules, ut ait Virgilius 'et vastum Nemeam sub rupe leonem'" (Virg., *Aen*. VIII, 295).

[141] "Virgil says: 'finally, time brought the god's arrival and help also to us who were hoping for it'" (cfr. Virg., *Aen*. VIII, 200-201). Similarly, on Lucan. IV, 592 ("cognita permultos docuit rudis incola patres") we read: "antiqui temporibus, antequam annales essent vel historiae, ita fuit ut maiores natu ante acta posteris indicarent. Unde Virgilius: 'fama est obscurior annis, / Auruncus ita ferre senes'" (Virg., *Aen.* VII, 205-6), etc.

[142] Cfr. *Pharsalia*, ed. Weber, vol. III, 466-67, 474, 488 (Virgil is frequently quoted about Lucan's episode of Erichtho).

[143] *Clm* 4593, f. 51r (on Lucan. IV, 593): "Et Virgilius 'Centumgeminus Briareus,' id est centies duplex se dum faber ipse esse Egeon" (Virg, *Aen.* VI, 287). F. 52r (on Lucan. IV, 640ff.): "Virgilius 'Ethera mulcebant cantu'" (Virg., *Aen.* VII, 34; also in *Clm* 14505, f. 46v). F. 78v (on Lucan. VI, 450, "dura in praecordia [...]"): "Exaggeratio magice potestatis. Ut Virgilius 'Carmina (...) deducere lunam'" (Virg. *Ecl.* 8, 69; also in *Clm* 14505, f.: "'Carmina lunam celo possent deducere'"); ibid. (on Lucan. VI, 460): "Ut Virgilius 'Necte tribus nodi ternos Amarilli colores'" (Virg. *Ecl.* 8, 77); f. 79v (on Lucan. VI, 531, "mors invita subit"): "Virgilius 'muroque subibant'" (Virg., *Aen*. VII, 161). *Clm* 14505, f. 72r (on Lucan. VI, 650): "quando sol est apud antipodas, ut Virgilius ait: 'Aut redit a nobis Aurora diemque reducit'" (Virg., *Georg*. I, 249).

suggested that already in Lucan's text Erichtho is not an entirely disruptive force, as she recognizes the supremacy of fate, and that the sorceress comes to play a truly providential role in Dante's *Comedy*.[144]

Furthermore, interpretations of *Inf.* IX should not overlook the fact that Virgil's puzzling story about Erichtho is, in context, intended principally to reassure Dante. This aspect was noticed already by late-medieval commentators on the *Comedy*, such as Pietro Alighieri and Benvenuto da Imola; Jacopo della Lana also adds a meta-literary explanation that connects Lucan's and Virgil's narrations on *nekyia* and the underworld.[145] The strongly contextual function of Virgil's reference to Erichtho has also been pointed out by many contemporary scholars, among whom is Scott, whose study also remarks that, in general, "Dante succeeded in marrying both Vergilian and Lucanian elements in his *Comedy*."[146]

As for the Antaeus episode, Virgil's complimentary address to the giant does have humorous implications. However, Virgil's knowledge of the ancient mythological story of Hercules and Antaeus is not at all surprising, especially considering that for Dante and the Middle Ages he was an almost omniscient *sapiens*.[147] As the medieval commentator of *Clm* 4593 notices in glossing Lucan. IV, 593, Virgil's *Aeneid* includes a mention of another famous giant, Briareus.[148] Briareus' name actually appears also in *Inf.* XXXI, ll. 97-105. Scholars have pointed out that, here, Briareus is defined as "immense" ("smisurato," l. 98) following Statius, *Theb.* II, 596 ("immensus [...] Briareus"), is linked to Antaeus as in Lucan's text (Lucan. IV, 596), and is

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[144] Gentili, "La necromanzia," 16-32.

[145] Pietro Alighieri III, *Inf.* IX, 4-6, pp. 152-53 ed. Chiamenti: "Et hoc tangit auctor non quod vera fuerint, sed ad quandam talem magnam moralitatem, scilicet quod quando videmus aliquem timere procedere in aliquo opere bono incepto propter aliquam causam supervenientem, licet nobis dicere aliqua sub colorato mendacio facientia talem formidantem a suo timore removeri" ("The author touches on this point not because these facts were true, but in view of a great moral purpose. Similarly, when, for example, we see that someone, having started to do something good, is afraid of continuing because of some intervening cause, it is legitimate for us to say words that, through their colourful mendacity, might dissipate the fear of the frightened man;" my transl.); cfr. also Pietro II, p. 166 ed. Della Vedova-Silvotti; Pietro I, pp. 118-19 ed. Nannucci. After mentioning the chronological problems entailed by the passage, Benvenuto da Imola also concludes that this is only a tale invented by Virgil to reassure Dante: "Nunc Virgilius ad tollendum omnem timorem de mente autoris fingit pulcre quod alia vice fuerit hic tractus per artem magicam a quadam famosa incantatrice. [...] Sed certe non oportet ire per ista somnia vana, quia ista est simpliciter fictio nova, quia autor fingit quod Virgilius hoc finxerit ad exhortandum ipsum, sicut facit aliquando vir sapiens ut praestet materiam bene sperandi alteri, dicit: bene sum expertus in hoc, ideo ne dubites tibi de aliquo [...]" ("In order to eradicate any fear from the author's mind, Virgil now beautifully pretends that he was already brought here by the magic art of a famous sorceress. [...] However, there is certainly no need to delve into these empty, dreamlike fantasies, because this is simply a newly-invented fiction: the author makes Virgil invent this to exhort him, as sometimes the wise man does when, in order to give someone a reason to hope, he says: 'I know a lot about this, so have no fear!'" Ed. Lacaita vol. I, pp. 307-8; my transl.). A similar explanation is also present in the *recollectae* of the lecture Benvenuto gave in 1375 in Bologna (ed. Promis-Negroni, p. 58; on the various versions of Benvenuto's commentary cfr. Pasquino, "Benvenuto"). Jacopo della Lana states: " [...] E questa è una allegorìa che Virgilio trattò di quelli luoghi nel suo volume, e che raro di loro faceano quel cammino: quasi a dire che raro poetando si trattava di tal materia [...] Soggiungendo per confortarlo come sapeva bene lo cammino di quella puzzolenta palude [...]" ("And this is an allegory meaning that Virgil dealt with those realms in his poem, and the fact that that path was seldom traveled means that that subject-matter was seldom taken on by poets [...] And, to reassure Dante, he adds that he knew well the way in that stinking swamp [...]" *Comm. Inf.* IX, 16; p. 311 ed. Volpi; my transl.). On other similar interpretations by fourteenth-century commentators, cfr. Consoli, "Virgilio," 1031.

[146] Scott, *Understanding Lucan*, 247, 250-1 with bibl.

[147] Hollander remarks that it was impossible for Virgil to have read Lucan (Hollander, "L'Anteo dantesco"), but the story of Hercules and Antaeus was part of the ancient mythological encyclopedia.

[148] F. 51r "Et Virgilius 'Centumgeminus Briareus'" (Virg, *Aen.* VI, 287).

described by Virgil with words that are reminiscent of *Aen.* X, 565-66.[149] Hence, Dante's *canto* XXXI reassembles and rewrites the mythological repertory on giants as transmitted by different ancient epic authors, whose words are often interwoven already in the medieval commentary tradition. Dante, who in the episode is pointed out by Virgil as a poet who can make Antaeus famous, stands as the heir of the ancient epic tradition as a whole.

While read against the backdrop of late-medieval literary culture, the intertextual strategy of *Inf.* IX and XXXI suggests that Lucan and Virgil were regarded by Dante as belonging to the same moral-ideological and literary culture, and describing different aspects of essentially the same world of ancient magic and mythological history. Therefore, these *canti* confirm another fact, namely that the supposed opposition between Virgil as a writer of mythological epic and Lucan as a writer of "historical truth" and "nonfiction" was probably not a feature of Dante's literary understanding.[150]

In this regard, it is true that Dante often refers to Lucan as a historical witness,[151] and as an almost scientific *auctoritas*. In the *De vulgari eloquentia* and *Convivio*, Dante draws from the *Bellum Civile* some anthropological and geographical concepts,[152] while in the *Comedy* he

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[149] Butler, "Statius, Lucan," 11-16; Hollander, "L'Anteo dantesco," 5-7.

[150] This idea characterizes, for example, Marchesi's study (especially based on the *Epistle to Cangrande*). On *Inf.* XXV, Marchesi claims that "[Ovid's and Lucan's] common interest in metamorphosis does not elide their difference," as Ovid would be the poet of fictional metamorphoses, while Lucan would be evoked as "an *auctoritas* on marvelous, yet fully natural, transformations." According to Marchesi, this diversity would have been felt by early Dantean commentators such as Benvenuto da Imola and Guido da Pisa. However, nothing in the text of the *Divine Comedy* justifies this interpretation, and the above commentators do not attribute to Dante himself the perception of any contrast between Lucan and Ovid, in terms of poetic fiction. Guido (ed. Rinaldi, vol. II, 750) introduces an explanatory distinction between Lucan's metamorphosis of Nasidius and Sabellus ("transformationes sive transmutationes naturales") and Ovid's metamorphosis of Cadmus and Arethusa ("transformationes sive transmutationes morales"). Benvenuto, instead, recalls the metamorphoses described in *Bellum Civile* VIII, and observes that, while such events are natural, they could appear to Dante as fictional ("Et sic nota quod auctor videtur velle istas transformationes Lucani fuisse fictitias, quia sunt tam mirabiles;" ed. Lacaita, vol. II, pp. 245-46).

[151] See *Mon.* II, iv, 4-6 (on Numa's miracle); *Mon*. II, viii, 7, 9, 12 (on Xerxes, Alexander the Great, and Rome); *Mon*. II, ix, 16-18 (on the Wars against the Sabines), cfr. pp. 33-38 below. See Davis, *Dante and the Idea,* 42-44 on Lucan as model for history-writing before Dante.

[152] In *DVE* I, x, 6 Dante refers to the Appennines with an allusion to Lucan. II, 394-438: "Dicimus ergo primo Latium bipartitum esse in dextrum et sinistrum. Si quis autem querat de linea dividente, breviter respondemus esse iugum Apennini, quod, ceu fictile culmen hinc inde ad diversa stillicidia grundat, aquas ad alterna hinc inde litora per imbricia longa distillat, ut Lucanus in secundo describit. Dextrum quoque latus Tirrenum mare grundatorium habet; levum vero in Adriaticum cadit" ("First of all, then, I state that Italy is divided in two, a left-hand and a right-hand side. If anyone should ask where the dividing-line is drawn, I reply briefly that it is the range of the Appennines; for just as from the topmost rain-gutter water is carried to the ground, dripping down through pipes on each side, these likewise irrigate the whole country through long conduits, on one side and the other, as far as the two opposite shores. All this is described in the second book of Lucan. The drip-tray on the right-hand side is the Tyrrhenian Sea, while the left-hand side drips into the Adriatic;" transl. Botterill, *De vulgari eloquentia*, 25). *Conv.* III, v, 11-12: "Imaginisi anche uno cerchio in su questa palla [...] Credo che questo cerchio — secondo ch'io comprendo per le sentenze delli astrologi e per quella d'Alberto della Magna [...] e anco per la testimonianza di Lucano nel nono suo libro — dividerebbe questa terra discoperta dal mare Occeano, là nel mezzo die, quasi per tutta l'estremità del primo climate, dove sono intra l'altre genti li Garamanti, che stanno sempre quasi nudi; alli quali venne Catone col popolo di Roma, la segnoria di Cesare fuggendo" ("Let us also imagine a circle on this globe [...] I believe that this circle — as I understand from the teachings of the astrologers, and from those of Albert the Great [...], and also from the testimony of Lucan in his ninth book — would divide this uncovered land from the Ocean on the southern side, almost among the entire extremity of the first climatic zone where, among other people, the Garamantes live (who are almost always naked), to whom Cato came with the people of Rome when he fled the rule of Caesar;" transl. Lansing, *Dante's Il Convivio*, 100-101). See Lucan. IX, 371-949; cfr. Lucan. IV, 332 ("nudi Garamantes").

readapts Lucan's astronomical periphrases.[153] Dante's redeployment of Lucan's scientific notions in the *Comedy* finds a parallel in the *Rime*, and especially in the *petrose*. Contini has noted the connection between *Purg.* XXX, 89 — a line about the wind that blows from "the land that loses shadows" — and the reference to the Ethiopian wind in the second stanza of "Io son venuto," as well as their common source in a passage by (Lucan. IX, 447ff.) also evoked in Dante's *Monarchy*.[154] Likewise, Singleton noticed the possible derivation of *Purg*. XXX, 89 from Lucan's description of the solstice (IX, 528-32), which, according to Durling and Martinez, could also be echoed in lines 23-24 of "Al poco giorno" ("e dal suo lume non mi può far ombra / poggio né muro mai né fronda verde").[155]

However, a distinction between history and mythology, or between science and poetry, seems alien to Dante's *Comedy*, which is a profoundly holistic project. In this context, the *Bellum Civile* is reused in a markedly multifunctional way. It has already been mentioned that Dante links Lucan's and Ovid's epics and redeploys the *Bellum Civile* to create monstrous, horrific ambience.[156] In the *Comedy,* Lucan's poem is cited as a source about late Republican Roman history as well as about Erichtho's magic and about mythological creatures like Antaeus and the *Furiae*.[157] In fact, and more fundamentally, for Dante the stories of Hercules, the giants, and Aeneas himself were not less "historical" than the Caesar-Pompey civil war.[158] As I will shortly discuss, in the second book of the *Monarchy* Dante also interlaces quotations of Virgil's "mythological" epic and of the *Bellum Civile* to support his thesis about the historically providential role of the Roman Empire.[159]

The presumed dichotomy between Lucan's Republicanism and Virgil's imperial faith is equally hard to discern in Dante's works. Like other medieval authors, Dante did not, in fact, have a full historical understanding of the transition from Roman Republic to Principate and regarded Lucan's Caesar as an exemplary and legitimate ruler; [160] for Dante, Caesar's dictatorship did not entail the annihilation of Republican institutions and values, but rather their expansion

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[153] Cfr. Medeossi, "Dante e Lucano," 221ff.

[154] Contini, *Rime*, 150; Dante, *Mon*. II, iv, 6 (cfr. Durling-Martinez, *Time and the Crystal*, 421; Barbi-Pernicone, *Rime della maturità*, 546; Foster-Boyde, *Dante's Lyric Poetry*, II, 262). The passage under consideration is "Io sono venuto," ll. 14-22: "Lèvasi della rena d'Etïopia / il vento peregrin che l'aere turba, / per la spera del sol ch'ora la scalda; / e passa 'l mare, onde conduce copia / di nebbia tale che, s'altro non la sturba, / questo emisperio chiude e tutto salda; / e poi si solve, e cade in bianca falda / di fredda neve ed i noiosa pioggia, / onde l'aere s'atrista tutto e piagne" ("The pilgrim wind that darkens the air rises from the sands of Ethiopia, now heated by the sun's sphere; and crossing the sea, it brings up such quantity of cloud that, unless dispersed by another wind, the cloud-mass encloses and blocks up all our hemisphere; and then it dissolves and falls in white flakes of chill snow and dreary rain, so that all the air grows sad and weeps." Transl. Foster-Boyde, *Dante's Lyric Poetry* , I, 159-61).

[155] Singleton, *Dante*, 748 ("*la terra che perde ombra*: The hot regions of Africa, in which the sun is vertically overhead at times, and no shadow is cast by any object. See Lucan, *Phars*. IX, 528-32, 538-39"); Durling-Martinez, *Time and the Crystal*, 375. Lines 23-24 of Dante's poem are translated thus by Foster and Boyde: "but from her light I can find no shadow under mountain or wall or green bough" (Foster-Boyde, *Dante's Lyric Poetry*, I, 163-65).

[156] Marsili observes that Lucan does not believe in mythological magic and yet introduces mythological fables (Marsili, *Dante e Lucano*, 41). Against the thesis that Lucan suppresses the fabulous, Ussani remarks that the *Bellum Civile* does include marvels (Ussani, *Dante e Lucano*, 8ff.).

[157] On Dante's and Lucan's *Furiae*, see Gentili, "Cerbero e le Arpie" and "La necromanzia," 32-33; Bon, "Lucano all'Inferno," 85-86.

[158] Cfr. Padoan, "Antaeo," 296; Id., "Enea," 678-79; Consoli, "Virgilio," 1033.

[159] See pp. 33-39 below.

[160] On Caesar's medieval fame as an exemplary leader and ruler and the "positive," pro-Caesar reuse of Lucan's text by medieval authors, see Von Moos, "Lucan au Moyen Âge," 132, 139; Suerbaum, "The Middle Ages," 321ff., D'Angelo, "La *Pharsalia*," 411-15. Cfr. McLaughlin, "Empire," 335 (on Dante).

and fulfillment. Paratore, Hollander, Rossi, and Scott have noticed that in the *Comedy* there is no clear-cut opposition between Roman Republic and Empire, but both periods are extolled for their positive values. The characters of Caesar and Cato, whom Dante represents based on Lucan, stand in "complementary opposition" to each other: Cato's *virtus* justifies, and is only possible within, the just and divinely ordered Roman Empire.[161] More specifically, Walde has recently observed that, in the context of Dante's *Comedy*, Lucan does not necessarily challenge Virgil's supremacy, nor is he necessarily seen as an "anti-imperial" writer because of his presumed Republicanism.[162] This remark, which is in line with my understanding of Dante's reception of Lucan as explained thus far, finds further confirmation in Dante's *Monarchy* and *Epistles*, where Lucan's and Virgil's voices are combined to corroborate Dante's argument about the providential nature of Roman history and of the Holy Roman Empire.

ROMAN HISTORY AS IMPERIALISM

In the second book of the *Monarchy*, Dante claims that the Romans rightfully acquired the empire of the world (*imperium mundi*). In order to corroborate his thesis, he utilizes many quotations of ancient Roman texts, among which is the *Bellum Civile*, investing their words with new meaning in order to underline the legitimate and providential nature of Roman dominion.[163] While fueling the already rich late-medieval debate on imperial and papal power, Dante takes a relatively original approach to the Roman past and to Lucan as a political-historical source.

As various scholars have noted, Dante's praise of the Roman political past strongly contrasts with Augustine's view of the preminence of the spiritual over the political and of the "city of God" over earthly Rome.[164] In particular, Augustine quotes Lucan to condemn the Romans' violence, heathenism, and thirst for blood. In *Civ.* III, 13, for example, Augustine points out how the Romans always fought with each other; in this context, he cites the opening lines of the *Bellum Civile*, in which the civil war between Caesar and Pompey is described in solemnly mournful tones (Lucan. I, 1-2). Likewise, in *Civ.* III, 27 a quotation of Lucan (II, 142-44) is used to point to another famous internal conflict: the struggle between Marius and Sulla. Lucan is among the sources of another passage about the Romans' devotion to war;[165] moreover, Augustine explicitly mentions Lucan in order to highlight the difference between Christian miracles and pagan marvels, on the grounds that some of the latter were condemned by the pagans themselves.[166] Again, in *Civ.* XV, 5 Augustine utilizes a line by Lucan about Romulus and Remus (I, 95) to prove that Rome's first wall was stained with brotherly blood.[167] Augustine thus appropriates Lucan's voice as a condemner of *Romanitas* and a critic of paganism from within.[168]

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[161] Paratore, "Lucano," 701-2 with bibl.; Hollander and Rossi, "Dante's Republican Treasury;" Stull and Hollander, "The Lucanian source," 34; Scott, "Cato," 78-84.
[162] Walde, *Lucan und Dante*, 60-2.
[163] Barolini, *Dante's Poets*, 197 and Buck, "Antike Autoren," 275-76.
[164] Gilson, *Métamorphoses*, 146-47 points out the difference between Dante's political "monarchy" and the spiritual-religious "city of God" depicted by Augustine; cfr. Davis, *Dante and the Idea,* 47ff.; Filosa, "La 'virtù" (in Augustine, real virtue is abnegation, rather the Romans' earthly, military power, while for Dante Roman virtue is holy); Cassell, *Controversy*, 66-67 (Dante uses Augustine's *City of God* against itself); cfr. Ascoli, *Dante and the Making*, 253 with bibl.
[165] *Civ.* V, 12; Lucan. VII, 568 et al.
[166] Civ. X, 16: Lucan. VI, 506.
[167] cfr. Filosa, "La 'virtù,'" 205-6.
[168] Augustine's treatise and intertextual strategy will, in turn, be redeployed by a fourteenth-century adversary of Dante's *Monarchy*. In his *De iure monarchiae* (post-1386, pre-1402), Guglielmo da Cremona advocates the

Dante overturns Augustine's stance and transforms his use of classical texts into an emphatic re-evaluation of the Roman political past which finds very few precedents in the philo-papal and philo-imperial treatises of his times. Late-medieval canonists such as Giles of Rome made, rather, reference to the pre-Roman, biblical-Jewish past in order to attest the Church's superior antiquity and authority.[169] On the other hand, even a regalist like John of Paris recalled biblical, more than Roman, examples in his *De potestate regia et papali*.[170] In contrast, Dante, according to whom the empire was founded on Roman law (*Mon*. III, x, 8) and existed before the Church (*Mon.* III, xii), does not even mention pre-Roman Jews in the *Monarchy*.[171]

A precedent of some weight for Dante's project can be identified in the writings of Huguccio of Pisa (d. 1210), a supporter of the supremacy of the Pope, but also of the relative independence of the emperor and of his power over national kings.[172] In his glosses on Gratian, Huguccio argues in favour of the sovreignty of the emperor (*unus imperator*) citing Lucan's famous phrase "potestas impatiens consortis" and the already mentioned struggle between Romulus and Remus.[173] The bloody internecine struggles of the Romans, condemned by Augustine, are cited by Huguccio to demonstrate the importance of sole leadership.

Dante's argumentative strategy finds another remarkable antecedent in the *De regimine principum* of Ptolemy of Lucca (ca. 1236-1327). Although Ptolemy was a papalist launching a very fierce attack on imperial monarchy, his treatise, which was likely known by Dante, is characterized by an overall positive view of Roman history, at least in its Republican phase. Ptolemy's strong admiration for the Roman Republic is, nevertheless, accompanied by a concomitant censure of Caesar's illegal usurpation of power, for which the dictator is said to have been rightly killed.[174]

Compared to these writers, Dante engages in a much more holistic and systematic rewriting of the ancient Roman past by readapting a large number of ancient Latin sources. In the second book of the *Monarchy*, as already in the fourth book of the *Convivio*, Dante retraces the episodes and deeds through which Rome became a triumphant world power, pointing out that, on all occasions, the Romans acted rightfully, in view of the common good, and with the support of divine providence. Dante always speaks of "Roman authority," without distinguishing between historically different political systems, but rather mingling and juxtaposing Roman Republican

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necessity and legitimacy of papal monarchy as a right transmitted from God to Christ and subsequently to Peter (on the relation between Guglielmo's treatise and Dante's *Monarchy*, see ed. Cenci, *De iure monarchiae*, 61-63). In his *Conclusio V*, the bishop of Cremona attempts to demonstrate the intrinsic superiority of Empire over Republic, which is a point similar to that made by Dante in the second book of his *Monarchy*, but aimed at authorizing papal, rather than imperial, absolutism. Within this context, Guglielmo inserts Lucan's line about Romulus and Remus, which he draws from Augustine, as an indicator of the evils and fratricides of the Roman Republic (ed. Cenci p. 138, ll. 29-30).

[169] Giles of Rome, *De ecclesiastica potestate* (see in part. I, 5-6, ed. Dyson). In his *De regimine christiano*, Giacomo da Viterbo makes ample use of scriptural and patristic quotations, and draws on Augustine's distinction between the "two kingdoms." The twelfth-century canonist Richard de Lacy refers to Lucan's witness about the pre-eminence of the Roman empire as part of the argument he strives to refute (Mochi Onory, *Fonti canonistiche*, 253).

[170] See esp. chapters IV-V, ed. Jones.

[171] Cfr. Cassell, *Controversy*, 25, 69.

[172] Cfr. Cassell, *Controversy*, 13-16 on Huguccio's relevance for Dante's *Monarchy.* On the importance of Huguccio for Dante (who probably thought of him as both encyclopedist and political polemicist), cfr. Ascoli, "Poetry and Theology;" Id., *Dante and the Making*, especially chapter II.

[173] Mochi Onory, *Fonti canonistiche*, 164-65; Lucan. I, 92-3 (in *Fam.* XX, 2, 5 Petrarch also cites this sentence in connection with the issue of the relative powers of the Pope and the emperor: see p. 70 below).

[174] See Cassell, 73-7; Blythe, *On the Government of Rulers*, 33-36; cfr. *Reg. pr.* II, 9, 6; III, 8, 5; III, 12, 5; IV, 1, 4. *Reg. pr.* IV, 28, 5 contains one quotation of Lucan about the Roman army, which is, however, taken from Isidore.

exempla and Imperial claims. He sees only continuity, not contrast, between the courage of Republican heroes such as Cincinnatus, Mutius Scaevola, the Decii, or Cato Uticensis, and the virtue of later emperors.[175]

In this rhetorical context, Virgil's *Aeneid* is quoted to praise the splendour of both Republican and Imperial Rome. Often combined with Livy, Virgil is cited to recall the courage of the Republicans Fabricius, Camillus, and Brutus, as well as Anchises' prophecy about Imperial Rome.[176] Similarly, Dante reuses the supposedly Republican Lucan — which he also combines with Livy — to underscore the "providential" character of Rome's history, from its monarchic origins to its Republican and Imperial developments. In so doing, Dante amplifies the philo-Roman stance of some passages of the *Bellum Civile* and often transforms Lucan's pessimistic and polemical account into a glorification of Rome's *imperium*, which he regards as the basis and root of later imperial constitutions. Unlike Augustine, Dante represents Rome as a compact and solid entity, and glosses over internal conflicts and civil wars.

In *Mon.* II, iv, Dante deals with the miracles which allegedly revealed God's favour towards Roman power. Among the marvels that he lists is the prodigious fall of an ancestral shield from the sky while King Numa was officiating at a sacrifice in Rome, an event that Dante recalls by referring to Livy and Lucan:

> Qua re suum contradictorium concedere sanctum est: romanum Imperium ad sui perfectionem miraculorum suffragio est adiutum; ergo a Deo volitum; et per consequens de iure fuit et est. Quod autem pro romano Imperio perficiendo miracula Deus portenderit, illustrium autorum testimoniis comprobatur. Nam sub Numa Pompilio, secundo Romanorum rege, ritu Gentilium sacrificante, ancile de celo in urbem Deo electam delapsum fuisse Livius in prima parte testatur. Cuius miraculi Lucanus in nono *Farsalie* meminit incredibilem vim haustri, quam Lybia patitur, ibi describens; ait enim:
>
> Sic illa profecto sacrifico cecidere Nume, que lecta iuventus patritia cervice movet; spoliaverat hauster, aut boreas populos ancilia nostra ferentes.[177]

This passage raises a philological problem. In fact, the story is not present in Livy and could have been known by Dante based on other sources, such as Virgil or Ovid. Vinay has suggested that Livy's name is mentioned in the passage to enhance the weight of Lucan's witness with the authority of a historian.[178] It could also be that Dante here is quoting from memory or from an intermediate source, as I will discuss later.[179]

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[175] *Mon.* II, v-vi; *Conv.* IV, iv, 10 - IV, v, 20.

[176] *Mon.* II, v, 11 (Virg. *Aen.* VI, 844-45); *Mon.* II, v, 12 (Virg. *Aen.* VI, 825); *Mon.* II, v, 13 (Liv. II, 5; Virg. *Aen.* VI, 820-1); *Mon.* II, vi, 9-10 (Virg. *Aen.* VI, 846-53 and IV, 227-30). Cfr. *Mon.* I, xi, 1, where Dante quotes Virg., *Ecl.* 4, 6 ("Iam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna") in the context of his exaltation of monarchy; cfr. Davis, *Dante and the Idea,* 106, on Dante's reception of Virgil's praise of the splendour of Augustan times.

[177] *Mon.* II, iv, 4-6; Lucan. IX, 477-80. "Thus the religious thing to do is to concede the contradictory: the Roman Empire was assisted by the support of miracles in attaining its perfection. Therefore it was willed by God, and consequently it existed and exists by right. The testimony of distinguished authors confirms the thesis that God performed miracles as portents in order to bring the Roman Empire to perfection. For Livy, in the first part of his history, attests that when Numa Pompilius, the second king of the Romans, was performing a ritual sacrifice aa Gentiles do, a shield fell down from heaven into God's chosen city. In the ninth book of the *Pharsalia*, Lucan alludes to this miracle in his description of the incredible force of the south wind that afflicts Libya: 'In this way the shields, which chosen patricians carry out on their shoulders, surely fell before Numa as he performed sacrifice: the south wind or the north had robbed the bearers of those shields which now are ours;'" transl. Kay, *Dante's Monarchia*, 117-19.

[178] Liv. I, 20 only makes a generic mention of *ancilia* and V, 54 alludes to "ancilia caelo demissa." The story is actually recounted by Ovid, *Fasti*, III, 259-398 and Virg. *Aen.* VIII, 663-65; cfr. Pizzica, ed. *Monarchia*, pp. 295-96;

As to the quotation from the *Bellum Civile*, Dante significantly alters the original meaning of Lucan's lines. Indeed, while describing the effects of the desert wind on Cato's soldiers in Book Nine of his poem, Lucan gives a very skeptical and rationalizing reading of the mythical tale about Numa, suggesting that the reason for the shield's fall could have been simply the power of the wind.[180] Therefore, Lucan challenges the very idea that the event represents a miracle. Expanding on Lucan's remark, the *Commenta Bernensia* even claim that Numa craftily arranged the prodigious event himself, by means of some mechanical trick, in order to gain the trust of the Roman people:

> Numa Pompilius ad fidem faciendam Romanis finxit se cum diis habere conloquium et sibi Iovem tertio die pollicitum esse demissurum arma in quendam locum. quae ex praeparato quadam arte mechanica advocato populo visa sunt de caelo venire.[181]

By contrast, in Dante's rewriting the fall of the shield is presented as an unmistakable sign of God's will and favour.[182] Some critics have supposed that Dante misread Lucan's text.[183] In my opinion, it is more likely that Dante intentionally contorts the *Bellum Civile* to fit his own political agenda, but does so in such a way that the fundamental divergence of Lucan's voice is still perceptible for the informed reader.[184]

We have seen that in this passage Dante mingles citations from (the presumed) Livy and from the *Bellum Civile*, and that Lucan's skeptical and supposedly anti-monarchical text is redeployed to confirm the sanctity and righteousness of ancient Roman monarchy. As a further indicator of Dante's integration of Lucan and Virgil in support of his Christian-monarchist ideal, the example subsequently adduced by Dante is the Campidoglio geese legend as told by Virgil and Livy.[185] Not only do citations from Lucan and Virgil appear almost interchangeably alongside Livy, but the presumably philo-imperial Virgil is evoked about an event which dates to the Republican stage of Roman history.

Quaglioni, ed. *Monarchia*, p. 1096: "ma qui, come nota benissimo Vinay, appunto perché alla ricerca di testimoni *omni suspicione maiores*, come quelli che si richiedono nelle grandi cause e in particolare nella prova del miracolo, 'gli importa citare prima di Lucano uno storico e non, per es., Virgilio'" (the reference is to Vinay, ed. *Monarchia*, 127: "Ma D. conosce l'episodietto dai suoi corsi di grammatica, come noi, e lo mette sotto le grandi ali di Livio d'istinto perché ricorda vagamente che Livio ne dice qualcosa e gli importa citare prima di Lucano uno storico e non, per es., Virgilio, *Aen*., VIII, 664").

[179] In a note on Servius, *In Aen.* VII, 188, Petrarch points to Lucan's account of the Numa myth and, interestingly, remarks that the story is reported by both poets and historians: "*scutum*] cuius et Lucanus meminit in 9^{o}: 'Sic illa profecto / sacrificio cecidere Nume.' Et est res apud ystoricos vulgata et apud poetas. Idem in 8^{o}: 'Et lapsa ancilia celo'" (Petrarch, *Le postille*, 868 n. 1475).

[180] Cfr. Asso, "And then it Rained Shields," 383-84.

[181] "In order to gain the Romans' trust, Numa Pompilius pretended he held conversations with the gods and that Jupiter had promised him that, after three days, he would have made weapons fall in some place. Having prepared everything through some mechanical device, Numa summoned the people and it seemed that weapons fell from the sky" (*Comm. Bern*., ed. Usener, p. 302; my transl).

[182] Cfr. Renucci, *Dante disciple*, 291-95.

[183] Volpe, ed. *Monarchia* (1946), 97 ("Ma il passo è certamente contro D.; che, o per frettolosità o per inavvertenza, non ha visto che in questi versi c'è una spiegazione illuministica del preteso miracolo dell'ancile caduto dal cielo [...]"); Asso, "And then it Rained Shields," 384. Dante's stance will be harshly criticized by Guido Vernani in his *Reprobatio* of Dante's *Monarchy*, but based on other arguments (cfr. Cassell, *Controversy*, 70-1); Vernani's comment is characterized by the same lack of distinction between Roman Republic and Empire.

[184] Other examples of Dante's possibly deliberate distortion of classical texts are his mistranslations of Virg. *Aen*. III, 56-57 in *Purg*. XXI, 40-1 and of Virg. *Aen.* I, 664-65 in *Conv.* II, 5, 14.

[185] *Mon*. II, ix, 7-8.

The continuation of Dante's treatise presents other examples of readaptation of Lucan's poem by means of a forced extrapolation, or super-imposition, of a providential, philo-Roman, and monarchist viewpoint. In Chapter VII of Book Two, Dante explains that God's intention may also be revealed through a proof. One of the possible proofs is a contest between rivals (*certamen*), a particular instance of which is the direct face-off of two opposing forces (*duellum*). The fight between Hercules and Antaeus is recalled by Dante as paradigmatic of this type of contest (*Mon*. II, vii, 9-10).[186] In *Mon.* II, ix, 11 the example of Hercules and Antaeus appears again as representative of the concept of *duellum*.[187] Dante's choice of this story could have been motivated by the multiple political associations and reverberations with which the encounter between Hercules and Antaeus is charged in the *Bellum Civile*. Indeed, Lucan presents this mythical tale as a historical precedent for the later fights between Scipio and Hannibal, (Lucan. V, 656-60), as has already been mentioned, and between the Caesarian Curio and the Pompeian Varus (Lucan. V, 661ff.).[188]

Dante subsequently moves to consider another kind of *certamen*, consisting in a competition among various candidates for the same prize, and also explains this case with examples drawn from Lucan. Dante's treatise lists the great past leaders who historically attempted to attain world supremacy. Among them was Xerxes, whose incredible deeds are evoked by a citation of Lucan:

> Post hos vero Xerxes, Darii filius et rex in Persis, cum tanta gentium multitudine mundum invasit, cum tanta potentia, ut transitum maris Asyam ab Europa dirimentis inter Sexton et Abidon ponte superaverit. Cuius operis admirabilis Lucanus in secundo *Farsalie* memor fuit; canit enim ibi sic:
>
> Talis fama canit tumidum super equora Xerxem construxisse vias.
>
> Et tandem, miserabiliter ab incepto repulsus, ad bravium pervenire non potuit. [189]

In the context of the *Bellum Civile*, Xerxes' marine engineering operations in the war against the Greeks are introduced as a precedent for Caesar's siege of Pompey in Brindisi. The difference between the enterprises of the Persian king and of the Roman dictator is, in part, already implicit in Lucan's text, as Xerxes finally lost the war against the Greeks, whereas Caesar was successful

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[186] "Disceptatione vero mediante dupliciter: aut sorte, aut certamine [...] Certamine vero dupliciter Dei iudicium aperitur: vel ex collisione virium, sicut fit per duellum pugilum, qui duelliones etiam vocantur, vel ex contentione plurium ad aliquod signum prevalere conantium, sicut fit per pugnam athletarum currentium ad bravium. Primus horum modorum apud Gentiles figuratus fuit in illo duello Herculis et Anthei, cuius Lucanus meminit in quarto *Farsalie* et Ovidius in nono *De rerum transmutatione*; secundus figuratur apud eosdem in Athalanta et Ypomene in decimo *De rerum transmutatione.*" ("There are also two ways in which a secret judgment can be revealed by means of arbitration: either by lot or by contest [...] By contest, however, God's judgment is revealed in two ways: either by a clash of forces, as occurs in a duel between fighters (who are also called 'duelers'), or else by a competition between many who are all trying to be the first to arrive at a designated mark, as occurs in the contention of athletes running to a goal. The first of these ways was typified among the pagans by that duel between Hercules and Antaeus, which is mentioned by Lucan in the fourth book of the *Pharsalia* and by Ovid in the ninth book of the *Metamorphoses*. The second way is typified among the pagans by the race between Atalanta and Hippomenes in the tenth book of the *Metamorpohoses*." Transl. Kay, *Dante's Monarchia*, 151-53).

[187] Kay, *Dante's Monarchia*, 170.

[188] *Commenta Bernensia*, ed. Usener, 657; Arnulf, *Glosule*, ed. Marti, 244.

[189] *Mon.* II, viii, 7; Lucan. II, 672-73. "After these, Xerxes, the son of Darius and king in Persia, invaded the world with so great a multitude of peoples and with such power that he succeeded in crossing the sea that separates Asia from Europe by building a bridge between Sestos and Abydos. Lucan had this wonderful work in mind when he sang these verses in the second book of the *Pharsalia*: 'Such, by the report of fame, were the roads built over the sea by the proud Xerxes.' But in the end his attempt was a miserable failure, so he was not able to attain the prize" (transl. Kay, *Dante's Monarchia*, 159).

in chasing Pompey and ultimately defeating him. Dante makes the contrast between Persian *hybris* and Roman victory fully apparent and functional to his teleological reconstruction of ancient history.

Another candidate for world dominion was Alexander the Great, who died before he could achieve universal monarchy; Dante evokes the Macedonian's death and tomb based on Livy and Lucan:

> Preter istos et post, Alexander rex Macedo maxime omnium ad palmam Monarchie propinquans, dum per legatos ad deditionem Romanos premoneret, apud Egiptum ante Romanorum responsionem, ut Livius narrat, in medio quasi cursu collapsus est.
> De cuius etiam sepultura ibidem existente Lucanus in octavo, invehens in Ptolomeum regem Egipti, testimonium reddit dicens:
>
> > Ultima Lagee stirpis perituraque proles degener, inceste sceptris cessure sororis, cum tibi sacrato Macedo servetur in antro.
>
> "O altitudo divitiarum scientie et sapientie Dei", quis hic te non obstupescere poterit? Nam conantem Alexandrum prepedire in cursu coathletam romanum tu, ne sua temeritas prodiret ulterius, de certamine rapuisti.[190]

These lines pose again a philological problem, as Livy does not say that Alexander sent ambassadors to the Romans and was killed while he was waiting for their reply. Scholars have speculated on this passage without finding a convincing solution: Martellotti suggests that Dante may be quoting the pseudo-Livy based on a gloss he found on another text (possibly Lucan or Orosius); Paratore thinks that Dante may be influenced by romance traditions on Alexander; Canfora points to the possible role of Orosius as a source on the topic.[191] In light of Dante's previous passage on Numa, which also presented a combination of the pseudo-Livy and Lucan, I think the answer might indeed be found in medieval commentaries on Lucan or medieval anthologies where Lucan is systematically associated with Livy and other historical sources. Alternatively, we could explain this as a mistaken quotation from memory, as Kay suggests, and indeed the *Monarchy* contains many imprecisions of this kind.[192]

What is most relevant for the present study is, however, Dante's representation of Alexander as a defeated hero. This image is in keeping with Lucan's poem: here, the mention of Alexander's tomb in *Bellum Civile* VIII, 692-94 (the passage here cited by Dante) finds an echo in Lucan. X, 20-46, where it is stated that the Macedonian conqueror was stopped by death.[193] Already in the *Bellum Civile*, Caesar visits Alexander's sepulchre (Lucan. X, 1-52) and is

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[190] *Mon.* II, viii, 8-9; Lucan. VIII, 692-94; *Rom.* 11, 33. "Besides these contenders and after them was Alexander, the Macedonian king, who came closest of them all to winning the palm of monarchy. Through ambassadors he had given the Romans advance warning to surrender to him, but according to Livy he died in Egypt before receiving the Romans' reply, thus collapsing as it were in the middle of the race. Lucan bears witness concerning Alexander's tomb in Egypt while attacking King Ptolemy of Egypt in the eighth book of the *Pharsalia*, where he says: 'Last scion of the line of Lagus, doomed and degenerate king, who must yield to the scepter of your incestuous sister, though you preserve the Macedonian in consecrated vault.' 'O the depth of the riches of the knowledge and of the wisdom of God!' Who would not be filled with awe by your judgment in this case? For when Alexander tried to trip up his Roman competitor in the race, you pulled him out of the contest before he went any further in his temerity" (transl. Kay, *Dante's Monarchia*, 159-61).

[191] Martellotti, "Alessandro Magno;" Cassell, *Controversy*, 313, n. 204; Paratore, *Struttura*, 62; Canfora, *Gli occhi*, 33ff.

[192] Kay, *Dante's Monarchia*, 159.

[193] The passage by Lucan is the basis of Walter of Châtillon's representation of Alexander in the *Alexandreis* (Lafferty, *Walter of Châtillon's Alexandreis,* 147-48; Tilliette, "L'*Alexandréide*," 278-79; Von Moos, "Lucan au Moyen Âge," 144).

implicitly represented as the successor of Alexander (and of the Persian kings before him), due both to the breadth of his travels and conquests and to his thirst for knowledge.[194] Some medieval commentaries on Lucan. VIII, 692-94 also mention Augustus' visit to the tomb, as witnessed by Cassius Dio and Suetonius, thus strengthening the idea of a continuity between Alexander and Roman imperial power:

> [...] inter hos specus est sedes regia in qua regum Alexandriae corpora sunt et Alexandri Magni Macedonis, quem nunc significat. hunc specus cum intrasset Augusto victo Antonio et Cleopatra visendi causa corpus Alexandri, ut propius accessit ad sarcophagum, miratus tam integram formam mentum tetigit digito, cuius hodieque paret vestigium.[195]

The sense of a *translatio imperii* from the Macedonians to the Romans, which is hinted at in the *Bellum Civile* and in medieval commentaries on it, is significantly amplified by Dante. Like Lucan, Dante focuses on Alexander's death and on the end of his extraordinary conquests. However, according to the author of the *Monarchy*, it was God who pulled Alexander out of the race to favour the Romans (*Mon*. II, viii, 10).

The final triumph of the Romans as dominators of the world is extolled by Dante through quotations of Virgil and Lucan:

> Sed quod Roma palmam tanti bravii sit adepta, multis comprobatur testimoniis. Ait enim Poeta noster in primo:
>
> > Certe hinc Romanos olim volventibus annis hinc fore ductores, revocato a sanguine Teucri, qui mare, qui terras omni ditione tenerent.
>
> Et Lucanus in primo:
>
> > Dividitur ferro regnum populique potentis que mare, que terras, que totum possidet orbem non cepit Fortuna duos.[196]

It is highly significant for the present analysis that Dante combines lines by Virgil and by Lucan to underpin his discourse on the providential superiority of the *romanum imperium*. What is more, in this passage Dante strongly resemanticizes Lucan's words. While in the *Bellum Civile* the lines reported here lament the civil war between Caesar and Pompey, in the *Monarchy* they are provided as evidence that the Roman people, considered as a strong, unified entity, prevailed over all rivals for world supremacy.

Hence, Dante interweaves and refunctionalizes materials from the *Bellum Civile* to demonstrate the divinely sanctioned superiority of the Romans: he both exploits elements already present in Lucan's poem and drastically alters the sense of the text to his own ends. In contrast with Augustine, who emphasized the internal fights among Romans to condemn their nefarious

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[194] See Lafferty *Walter of Châtillon's Alexandreis,* 32ff., 149-51; Ratkowitsch, "Troja-Jerusalem-Babylon-Rom," 102-11; Tilliette, "L'*Alexandréide*," 278-87; Von Moos, "Lucan au Moyen Âge," 139-52 with bibl. (in Lucan. X, 268-85, Caesar wants to know Nilus, like Alexander before him).

[195] "Among these caves is a royal mausoleum where are the bodies of the kings of Alexandria and of the Macedonian Alexander the Great, to whom Lucan alludes here. When Augustus entered this grotto, after he defeated Antony and Cleopatra, with the purpose of seeing Alexander's body, he approached Alexander's sarcophagus and, amazed by the fact that the king's body was still intact, touched his chin with a finger. The print can still be seen today" (*Comm. Bern*., ed. Usener, pp. 281-82, on Lucan. VIII, 694, my transl).

[196] *Mon.* II, viii, 11-12; Virg. *Aen.* I, 234-36; Lucan. I, 109-11. "But it is proved by many witnesses that Rome obtained the palm of so great a prize. For our poet says in the first book of the *Aeneid*: 'Truly, as the years roll on, hence shall spring the Romans; hence the leaders, from the blood of Teucer that lives again, who shall hold sea and land in all-embracing sway.' And Lucan says in the first book of the *Pharsalia*: '[Rome's] dominion is cleft by the sword, and the fortune of the mighty race that holds possession of the sea, the lands, ay, the whole orb, was too narrow to contain two men'" (transl. Kay, *Dante's Monarchia*, 161-63).

violence, Dante does not mention Roman civil wars and regards the conflicts between the Romans and their external enemies as part of God's divine plan.[197] From this perspective, Dante's reuse of Lucan profoundly differs from the approach of other medieval writers, such as Walter of Châtillon, who redeployed the *Bellum Civile* to denounce the evil of past and present political strife.[198] In Dante's text, Lucan's ambiguous and amoral *fortuna* becomes God's all-knowing and all-encompassing Providence.[199]

Lucan's skeptical, pessimistic voice is not entirely suppressed in the *Monarchy*, but it is ultimately bent to Dante's providential perspective. In exemplifying the notion of *duellum*, Dante recalls the wars between the Romans and the Samnites, again through citations of Livy and Lucan, and states that, in that circumstance, fortune almost changed her mind:

> Deinde cum finitimis, omni iure belli servato, cum Sabinis, cum Samnitibus, licet in multitudine decertantium, sub forma tamen duelli, de imperio decertatum fuisse Livius narrat: in quo quidem modo decertandi cum Samnitibus fere fortunam, ut dicam, incepti penituit. Et hoc Lucanus in secundo ad exemplum reducit sic:
>
> > Aut Collina tulit stratas quot porta catervas tunc cum pene caput mundi rerumque potestas mutavit translata locum, romanaque Samnis ultra Caudinas speravit vulnera furcas.[200]

Lucan's text is cited by Dante as evidence about the Samnite wars and the defeat at the Caudine Forks in 321 BC. However, Lucan's lines refer rather to the battle of the Collina Gate, fought in 82 BC by Marius (with his Samnite allies) and Sulla. In bringing this *civil* strife to mind, Lucan compares it with the famous precedent of the Caudine Forks. In keeping with his rhetorical strategy, Dante omits any reference to the Marius-Sulla civil war and rather focuses on the threat represented by external enemies of *Romanitas*.

Moreover, in Dante's text the mention of the wars against the Samnites is followed by examples of other conflicts faced by the Romans: those with the Greeks (Fabricius against Pyrrhus) and with the Carthaginians (Scipio against Hannibal).[201] The paragraph thus ends with an instance of Roman victory. Dante's teleological perspective redeems and justifies the failures encountered by the Romans in the light of their final triumphs.

Lucan's historical account is profoundly dark and pervaded by bitter irony. Already in the proem, Lucan sarcastically expresses his gratitude to the civil wars, stating that the damage they caused nevertheless led to the establishment of Nero's empire; the irony of the passage was

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[197] The conflicts between Romans and external enemies are especially considered in the section about *duellum* (*Mon*. II, ix, 9 - 21).

[198] See in part. Walter's poems 46, ll. 4 and 15 (Lucan. III, 119-20 and I, 313); 61, 1 (Lucan. I, 8).

[199] In *Mon*. II, ix, 8, Dante explicitly compares the ancient pagan concept of *fortuna* and what he asserts to be the superior, Christian idea of "Divine Providence" ("Hic Pirrus 'Heram' vocabat fortunam, quam causam melius et rectius nos 'divinam providentiam' appellamus;" "Here Pyrrhus calls fortune by the name 'Hera,' but we more properly and precisely call that cause 'divine providence,'" transl. Kay, *Dante's Monarchia*, 169).

[200] *Mon.* II, ix, 16-17; Liv. I, 24-26; Lucan. II, 135-38. "Next Livy tells how Rome contended for supremacy with its neighbors, with the Sabines, and with the Samnites. All the laws of war were observed, and although there was a multitude of contestants, still the form was that of a duel. Indeed, while contending in this way with the Samnites, fortune (so to speak) nearly stopped favoring the Romans. Lucan uses this defeat as an example in his second book: 'What heaps of slain encumbered the Colline Gate on that day when the capital of the world and the government of mankind was nearly transferred to a different seat, and the Samnites hoped to inflict on Rome a heavier blow than the Caudine Forks'" (transl. Kay, *Dante's Monarchia*, 175).

[201] Mon. II, ix, 18.

perceived by many medieval commentators.[202] Dante's treatise aims at evincing the teleology underlying ancient Roman history without any hint of sarcasm; he seeks to demonstrate the providential nature of earthly history through, and against, Lucan's text, thus justifying and legitimizing Roman power, in its monarchic, Republican, and Imperial phases. [203]

A similar reuse of Lucan in the light of a philo-imperial and providential view of history is observable in *Epistles* V-VII, which Dante wrote in the years 1310-11, in support of Henry VII's Italian expedition.[204] These letters mingle classical and biblical citations to extoll Henry's divine mission. In them, Dante capitalizes on some elements of the *Bellum Civile*, and particularly transforms Lucan's denunciation of the civil war into a justification of political absolutism.

In *Epistle* V, Dante represents the sovereign as the successor of the great emperors of ancient Rome. Henry is assimilated to both Caesar and Augustus ("et Augustus et Cesar"),[205] as he is as merciful as Caesar but also as resolute in punishing vice as was Augustus, who chased Caesar's killers as far as Thessaly.[206] As scholars have remarked, Dante's mention of Augustus' expedition to Thessaly intertwines memories of Caesar's and Augustus' battles, of Pharsalus and Philippi.[207] What is more, like the *Monarchy*, *Epistle* V also highlights the progressive revelation of God's will throughout ancient history, from the Trojans to Augustus.[208] Like the treatise, therefore, this letter posits that the Holy Roman Empire of Dante's times is a continuation of the ancient Roman kingdom, seen as a unified and continuous historical reality (although the letter focuses more on the Imperial phase of Roman history).

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[202] See Marti, "Literary Criticism," 252; *Ead*., "Lucan's Invocation;" Esposito, "Nerone in Lucano;" Sanford, "The Manuscripts," 284, 289; cfr. Lehtonen, *Fortuna*, 68-69.

[203] In this regard, Cola's commentary on Dante's *Monarchy* refers to Lucan to illustrate the splendours of the Augustan age. Commenting on Dante's statement that Christ was born under Augustus (*Mon.* III, xi, 7), Cola recalls the emperor's deeds and writes: 'Qui sic in universo orbe regna mundi in sui voluntate pacata conspexit, ut populus romanus iam Belligeri Martisque templa conclauderent et exigerent templum Pacis omniaque insuper arma convertent in vomeres et cassides in ligones, prout Lucanus in primo Pharsalie de temporibus illis loquens ait: "Inque vicem gens omnis amet, pax missa per orbem / ferrea belligeri compescat limina Iani.'" ("He saw all the kingdoms of the world pacified under his will, in such a way that the Roman people closed the temples of the belligerent Mars and built a temple to Peace, and moreover converted all weapons into ploughshares and all helmets into mattocks, as Lucan says in the first book of the *Pharsalia*, talking about those times: 'let all nations love one another; let Peace, sent forth to all lands, shackle the iron gates of warlike Janus.'" (*In Monarchiam*, ed. D'Alessandro, p. 118-20; Lucan. I, 61-62; my transl. followed by Joyce, *Pharsalia*, 5).

[204] Cfr. Davis, *Dante and the Idea,*142ff. on the relation between *Epistles* V-VII and the *Monarchy*; pp. 163-69 for an analysis of these epistles.

[205] *Ep.* V, 2 (ed. Villa).

[206] *Ep.* V, 3 ("Sed an non miserebitur cuiquam? Ymo ignoscet omnibus misericordiam implorantibus, cum sit Cesar et maiestas eius de Fonte defluat pietatis. Huius iudicium omnem severitatem abhorret, et semper citra medium plectens, ultra medium premiando se figit. Anne propterea nequam hominum applaudet audacias, et initis presumptionum pocula propinabit? Absit, quoniam Augustus est. Et si Augustus, nonne relapsorum facinora vindicabit, et usque in Thessaliam persequetur, Thessaliam, inquam, finalis deletionis?" ("But will he then have no mercy on none? Nay, for he will pardon all those who implore his mercy, since he is Caesar; and his sovereignty derives from the fountain of pity. His judgements abhor all severity, for he punishes ever on this side of the mean, while in rewarding he aims ever beyond the mean. Will he then countenance the daring of the evil-doers, and drink success to the undertaking of the presumptuous? Far be it, for he is Augustus. And being Augustus shall he not take vengeance for the evil deeds of the backsliders, and pursue them even unto Thessaly, the Thessaly, I say, of utter annihilation?" (transl. Toybnee, *The Letters of Dante*, 59).

[207] Heil, "Dantes 'Thessalien;'" Villa, ed., *Epistole*, 1543.

[208] *Ep.* V, 8.

In *Epistle* V, Dante also overturns common anti-imperial notions of political freedom, stating that *libertas* is only possible within a political system regulated by justice, and thus under the guidance of an enlightened ruler. This notion, which is also the basis of the episode of Cato in the *Purgatory*, is strongly reasserted in Dante's subsequent letter, addressed to the Florentines who opposed the emperor.[209]

In the opening of *Epistle* VI, Dante claims again that Providence has ordained that humankind must be governed by the Holy Roman Empire, so that it may find peace;[210] the Roman emperor is defined as "mundi rex" and "Dei minister."[211] The author dwells on the idea that, while Florentines think they are free, they are in fact slaves, and their *falsa libertas* is very different from the true freedom which derives from respecting the laws.[212] Florence's opposition to the emperor is equated with an unjustified resistance to the decrees of the "eternal senate," and the Florentines are rebuked through the words "O male concordes," an echo of Lucan's apostrophe to the leaders of the civil wars ("O male concordes nimiaque cupidine ceci!").[213] Dante's text therefore suggests that the traditionally Republican ideal of *libertas* finds its fulfillment under the leadership of an enlightened emperor, who can avert the danger of civil war.

There follows a gloomy forecast of the future of Florence's nefariously chaotic political and civic life; Dante claims that the *plebs'* lack of leadership will be more and more apparent in the city:

> Videbitis plebem circunquaque furentem nunc in contraria, pro et contra, deinde in idem adversus vos horrenda clamantem, quoniam simul et ieiuna et timida nescit esse.[214]

These lines call to mind Lucan's phrase "Nescit plebes ieiuna timere" ("starving, the rabble knows no dread").[215] In the *Bellum Civile*, this statement is a polemical comment on Caesar's cynically demagogic policy of wheat distribution; in Dante's text, they are incorporated into the description of the evils of anarchy and thus authorize autocracy.

In keeping with his problematization of the concept of "freedom," Dante states that, because of its servility ("pro servitute") Florence will suffer the calamities that Saguntum experienced beacuse of its committment to liberty ("pro libertate").[216] This reference to the ancient city besieged by Hannibal during the Second Punic War is a reassertion of the relationship of filiation between ancient Rome (seen in both its Republican and Imperial phases) and Henry VII's pacifying rule as imagined by Dante.

The rhetorical strategy of *Epistles* V and VI finds its completion in *Epistle* VII. This letter is directly addressed to Henry VII, once more presented by Dante as the king of the Romans, the successor of both Caesar and Augustus, and the leader best able to restore peace and renew the

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[209] Villa, ed., *Epistole*, p. 1541.
[210] *Ep.* VI, 1.
[211] *Ep.* VI, 2.
[212] *Ep.* VI, 3-5.
[213] *Ep.* VI, 3; Lucan. I, 87 ("Men in evil accord, blind with excessive avarice!" Transl. Joyce, *Pharsalia*, 7); cfr. Villa, ed., *Epistole*, 1548.
[214] *Ep.* VI, 4 ("The populace which now, divided against itself, rages indiscriminately, some for you, some against you, you shall then see united in their imprecations against you, for the starving mob knows nothing of fear;" transl. Toynbee, *The Letters of Dante*, 79).
[215] Lucan. III, 58; (transl. Joyce, *Pharsalia*, 57); cfr. Pastore Stocchi, ed., *Epistole*, 48. Wilson, "Prophecy," identifies another allusion to Lucan (VII, 186-87) in Dante's Epist. VI, 4 (*praesaga mens*).
[216] *Ep.* VI, 4.

Golden Age once celebrated by Virgil.[217] Rebuking the emperor for procrastinating in northern Italy, Dante calls attention to Tuscany. He blames the evils of the Tuscan tyranny (*Tuscana tyrannis*), and urges Henry to intervene by quoting Curio's advice to Caesar and Mercury's exhortation to Aeneas:

> Pudeat itaque in angustissima mundi area irretiri tam diu quem mundus omnis expectat; et ab Augusti circumspectione non defluat quod Tuscana tyrannis in dilationis fiducia confortatur, et cotidie malignantium cohortando superbiam vires novas accumulat, temeritatem temeritati adiciens. Intonet iterum vox illa Curionis in Cesarem: "Dum trepidant nullo firmate robore partes, tolle moras; semper nocuit differre paratis: par labor atque metus pretio maiore petuntur." Intonet illa vox increpitantis Anubis iterum in Eneam: "Si te nulla movet tantarum gloria rerum, nec super ipse tua moliris laude laborem, Ascanium surgentem et spes heredis Iuli respice, cui regnum Ytalie Romanaque tellus debentur." [218]

Significantly, Lucan is once more combined with Virgil to substantiate Dante's philo-imperial claims.[219] Moroever, as many scholars have noticed, Curio's words are here refunctionalized, free from the negative connotation they have in *Inferno* XXVIII. Whereas in the *Inferno* Curio is placed among the sowers of discord for having incited Caesar to cross the Rubicon, in *Epistle* VII Dante himself appropriates Curio's words to support his philo-imperial agenda.[220]

Towards the conclusion of the epistle, Florence is depicted as a viper turning against her mother, Rome ("vipera versa in viscera genetricis").[221] While referring to a common legend about vipers, transmitted for example by Isidore (*Etym.* XII, 4, 10), the text also recalls the opening of the *Bellum Civile*, where the victorious Roman people is said to turn against its own bowels ("in sua victrici conversum viscera dextra").[222] In this as in the previous epistle, the damage of the Roman civil war, as represented by Lucan, is associated with the harm of anti-imperial opposition and anarchy in fourteenth-century Italy. Political chaos is equated with

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[217] *Ep.* VII, 1 (cfr. *Mon*. I, xi, 1, which includes a quotation of Virg., *Ecl.* 4, 6).

[218] *Ep*. VII, 4; Lucan. I, 280-2 and Virg. *Aen.* IV, 272-76 ("Let him, then, for whom the whole world is looking, be ashamed to be entangled so long in such a narrow corner of the world; and let it not escape the consideration of Augustus that the tyrant of Tuscany is encouraged by the assurance that he is delaying, and daily by appealing to the pride of the evil-doers gathers fresh strength, heaping daring upon daring. Let the voice of Curio to Caesar be heard once again: 'While the factions are in confusion and without support, away with delay! delay was ever the bane of the ready —equal toil and fear are more dearly bought.' Once again let the voice of Mercury chiding Aeneas be heard: 'If the glory of such mighty deeds leave thee unmoved, and thou wilt not exert thyself for thine own fame's sake, yet consider the young Ascanius, Iulus thine hope and heir, to whom are due the kingdom of Italy and the land of the Romans;'" transl. Toynbee, *The Letters of Dante*, 102-3).
[See also *Epist.* VII, 8: "Eia itaque, rumpe moras;" cfr. *Aen*. IV, 569]

[219] Cfr. Paratore, "L'eredità classica," 70.

[220] *Inf.* XVIII, 91-102; cfr. *Phars.* I, 272-81 and IV, 805-6 (see for example Paratore, *Lucano e Dante*, 8-9). Line I, 281 is one of the lines of the *Bellum Civile* most frequently quoted by medieval authors, who often reuse it as an exhortation to political and military leaders (cfr. Sanford, "Quotations," 5; De Angelis, "… e l'ultimo Lucano," 147, n. 7). Interestingly, in the *Liber ad honorem Augusti* I, vi, 144-46, the wicked counselor Matthew instigates Tancredi to action through the phrase "Rumpe moras" in anaphora. Here the expression maintains the negative connotation it has in Lucan's text and in Dante's *Inferno*. On Petrarch's and Boccaccio's reuse of this line, see p. 69 and n. 467 and 629 below.

[221] Ep. VII, 7 ("She is the viper that turns against the vitals of her own mother;" transl. Toynbee, *The Letters of Dante*, 104).

[222] Lucan. I, 3. Another interesting precedent for this passage by Dante can be found in Ambrosius, *Epist.* VIII, 57, 14. Talking about civil strife, Ambrosius seemingly alludes to Lucan: "[...] iure quidem pro delicti pretio bellatum adversum propugnatores flagitiorum, sed misere *in sua* populum *conversum viscera* et bello civili utrimque afflictum" (italics mine).

slavery, whereas Henry VII, seen as the successor of Caesar, is praised as the ruler who can restore justice and, thus, freedom.

The dating of the *Monarchy* is highly uncertain: scholarly hypotheses in this account go from 1308-10, to 1312-13, to the years around 1318.[223] In any case, the political views and intertextual argumentative strategy of the treatise find significant affinities in *Epistles* V-VII (1310-11), as we have seen. Dante's activity in the years of Henry VII's expedition may have included some drafting (or revising) of the *Monarchy* alongside the epistles, and may also account for the differences in Dante's representations of the historical Caesar between the *Inferno* (ca. 1304-8) and the later *cantiche* (ca. 1310-13 and 1316-21). Indeed, *Inferno* IV reactivates the dark side of Lucan's portrayal of Caesar ("Cesare armato con li occhi grifagni"),[224] whereas in *Purgatorio* XVIII and *Paradiso* VI the pro-Caesar subtext of Lucan's poem is evoked to praise Caesar's incredible rapidity and efficiency.[225] Dante's systematic rereading of ancient Roman history from a Christian monarchical perspective in the years 1310-13 may have contributed to determine his differently selective approach to Lucan's contrasting description of Caesar throughout the *Comedy*.

ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY IN TRANSLATION

Far from being accused of anti-providentialism or nihilism, Lucan is repeatedly recalled by Dante as a moral *auctoritas*, and especially as the wise philosopher who praises poverty and condemns earthly riches. This is particularly evident in book IV of the *Convivio* (ca. 1307): here,

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[223] The dating 1307-8 is supported by Nardi; Pizzica similarly suggests 1308-10 as the most likely option (Nardi, ed., *Monarchia*, 264; Pizzica, ed., *Monarchia*, 99-130). Vinay's argument for 1312-13 appears convincing to Malato; Quaglioni also argues against a later dating (Vinay, ed., *Monarchia*, XXIX-XXXVIII; Malato, *Dante*, 179-86; Quaglioni, ed., *Monarchia*, 828-37). The dating 1318, or 1316-21, is defended by Cassell and Kay, which latter relies on Shaw's discovery of a new manuscript of the text (Cassell, *The Monarchia Controversy*, 2, 203-4; Kay, ed., *Dante's Monarchia*, XX-XXI). However, Shaw's own reconstruction is much more nuanced; in the chronology of Dante's life and works which accompanies her edition and translation of the treatise, Shaw writes that in ca. 1304 - ca. 1308, Dante "sets out a first version of some of the arguments he will use in the *Monarchy*;" while in "1314 at the very earliest and possibly much later, Dante writes the *Monarchy*" (Shaw, ed., *Monarchy*, XL-XLI). Ascoli convincingly argues that Dante wrote the *Monarchy* after *Convivio* and *De vulgari eloquentia* (Ascoli, *Dante and the Making*, 229-40).

[224] *Inf.* IV, 123 ("Caesar, in his armor, falcon-eyed;" transl. Mandelbaum, *The Divine Comedy*, I, 117). On the derivation of this line from Lucan's description of Caesar (Lucan. I, 204-12; VII, 557-71, 785-96), see in part. Paratore, "Dante e Lucano," 8; Montefusco, "La presenza," 103-6; Scott, "Cato," 81; Fischli, *Studien*, 37.

[225] See *Purg.* XVIII, 100-102: "Maria corse con fretta a la montagna; / e Cesare, per soggiogare Ilerda, / punse Marsilia e poi corse in Ispagna" ("In her journey, Mary made haste to reach the mountain, and, in order to conquer Lérida, first Caesar thrust against Marseilles, and then to Spain he rushed," transl. Mandelbaum, *The Divine Comedy*, II, 160). *Par.* VI, 61-72: "Quel che fé poi ch'elli uscì di Ravenna / e saltò Rubicon, fu di tal volo, / che nol seguiteria lingua né penna. / Inver' la Spagna rivolse lo stuolo, / poi ver' Durazzo, e Farsalia percosse / sì ch'al Nil caldo si sentì del duolo. / Antandro e Simeonta, onde si mosse, / rivide e là dov'Ettore si cuba; / e mal per Tolomeo poscia si scosse. / Da indi scese folgorando a Iuba; / onde si volse nel vostro occidente, / ove sentia la pompeana tuba" ("And what it did, once it had left Ravenna and leaped the Rubicon, was such a flight as neither tongue nor writing can describe. That standard led to the legions on to Spain, then toward Durazzo, and it struck Pharsalia so hard that the warm Nile could feel that hurt. It saw again its source, Antandros and Simois, and the place where Hector lies; then it roused itself — the worse for Ptolemy. From Egypt, lightning-like, it fell on Juba; and then it hurried to the west of you, where it could hear the trumpet of Pompey;" transl. Mandelbaum, *The Divine Comedy*, III, 50). On Lucan's presence in these lines (Lucan. III, 453-55; IX, 950-99; X, 275), see for example Paratore, *Lucano e Dante*, 11-12; Id., "Lucano," 700; Marsili, *Dante e Lucano*, 35-36; Pastore Stocchi, "Cesare," 223-24; La Penna, "Il caldo Nilo." The expression "folgorando" (*Par.* VI, 70), usually explained by commentators as possibly drawn from Florus ("more fulminis," *Epit.* II, 13; cfr. Pastore Stocchi, "Cesare," 224; Chiavacci Leonardi, *Paradiso*, 170), also recalls Lucan's description of Caesar as a thunderbolt in *Bellum Civile* I, 143-57.

I argue, Dante defines his role as the intellectual counterpart of the emperor's political power by building on the example of such ancient authors as Seneca, Boethius, and Lucan himself. As I will discuss, in this last book of his vernacular treatise Dante not only translates, but also allegorizes passages of the *Bellum Civile*, treating Lucan's poem as a deeply authoritative text endowed with multi-layered moral significations.

The exposition of *Le dolci rime* in *Convivio* IV contains a first nucleus of Dante's praise of monarchy and defense of the legitimacy of the Roman kingdom.[226] However, Dante also aims at correcting the definition of nobility supposedly given by Frederick II, "the last of the Roman emperors" ("ultimo imperatore delli Romani").[227] Reporting that Frederick defined nobility as the combination of "ancestral wealth" and "fine manners" ("antica ricchezza" e "belli costumi"), Dante approves the latter element and rejects the former as a requisite for nobility.[228]

Chapter vi of *Conv.* IV claims that imperial and philosophical authority should go together. Since in the treatise Dante presents himself as a *philosopher* (literally, a lover of wisdom),[229] we can infer that in this passage he implicitly compares his own intellectual and moral dignity, and that of his fellow philosophers, with Frederick's political authority.[230] An important precedent (or *figura*) for this emperor-philosopher relationship is located by Dante in late-Imperial Rome. Claiming that the definition of concepts such as *giovinezza* or *gentilezza* is not the function of an emperor, Dante refers to Nero's supposed attempt to define youth, and concludes that such a task did not pertain to him, but to the philosopher:

> Altre molte sono, che paiono avere alcuna parentela coll'arte imperiale — e qui fu ingannato ed è chi crede che la sentenza imperiale sia in questa parte autentica — : sì come [diffinire di] giovinezza e gentilezza, sovra le quali nullo imperiale giudicio è da consentire in quanto elli è imperadore [...] Onde non è da credere né da consentire a Nerone imperadore, che disse che giovinezza era bellezza e fortezza del corpo, ma a colui che dicesse che giovinezza è colmo della naturale vita, che sarebbe filosofo. E però è manifesto che diffinire di gentilezza non è dell'arte imperiale; e se non è dell'arte [dello Imperadore], trattando di quella a lui non siamo subietti; e se non [siamo a lui] subietti, reverire lui in ciò non siamo tenuti: e questo è quello eziandio [che cercando] s'andava.[231]

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[226] *Conv.* IV, iv, 1-9 on the importance of monarchy and IV, 4, 10 - IV, 5, 20 on ancient Roman history.
[227] *Conv.* IV, iii, 5-6 (transl. Lansing, *Dante's Il Convivio*, 154).
[228] Cfr. *Conv.* IV, x, 1-2 (transl. Lansing, *Dante's Il Convivio*, 176). Frederick's saying is not otherwise attested.
[229] Cfr. *Conv.* II-III (in part. III, xi, 5 for the definition of "philosopher").
[230] In the second chapter of his book, Albert Ascoli shows that, in the fourth book of the *Convivio*, Dante asserts his poetic *auctoritas* by openly acknowledging while, at the same time, displacing *both* Frederick's political authority and Aristotle's philosphical authority, and yet Dante's dismissal of Aristotle, Aquinas, and philosophical *autori* is accompanied by a turn to literally philosophical poetry, which he redefines as quasi-prophetic (Ascoli, *Dante and the Making*, esp. 97-121; cfr. p. 288 as Dante's self-representation as "the philosopher who stands as necessary complement to the Emperor" in the *Monarchy*).
[231] *Conv.* IV, ix, 15-16. "There are many others [*scil.* laws] which seem to be associated with the art of imperial rule, and anyone believing the imperial judgment in such matters to be authoritative was, and still is, deceived. For example, regarding the definitions of maturity and of nobility, the imperial judgment cannot compel assent simply by virtue of the fact that he is Emperor [...] Consequently we need not submit or assent to the Emperor Nero, who said that maturity is beauty and physical strength, but to him who said that maturity is the pinnacle of the natural life, and that would be the Philosopher. It is therefore evident that defining nobility does not fall within the scope of the art of imperial rule; and if it does not fall within the scope of that art, we are not, in treating nobility, subject to the Emperor; and if we are not subject to him, we are not bound to reverence him in this matter; and this is precisely the conclusion that we have been in search of;" transl. Lansing, *Dante's Il Convivio*, 175-76).

The source of Dante's anecdote about Nero is unknown, which puts difficulties in the way of any reconstruction of the passage's meanings and implicit references.[232] Nevertheless, we can deduce that Nero stands here for the political leader who must be assisted and accompanied by the counsel of wise *filosofi* in delivering judgment on abstract questions. It is well known that this function was, historically, carried out by Seneca, who is identified as a philosopher in Dante's *Comedy*,[233] recalled as Nero's advisor in the *De vulgari eloquentia*,[234] and referred to as a moral *auctoritas* in the *Convivio*.[235] However, another author of the Neronian age plays an at least equally important role as philosophical guide in *Convivio* IV: namely, Seneca's nephew, Lucan.

Lucan is mentioned twice in the book and appears as a very important point of reference for Dante's "philosophical" attempt to discredit the value of wealth in determining nobility. In *Conv.* IV, xi, 3, Dante aims to show that riches are base and lacking in nobility, and cites Lucan as the first *auctoritas* in this regard:

> E che elle siano imperfette, brievemente pruova lo testo quando dice:
>
> ché, quantunque collette, non posson quïetar, ma dan più cura:
>
> in che non solamente la loro imperfezione è manifesta, ma la loro condizione essere imperfettissima, e per[ò] essere quelle vilissime. E ciò testimonia Lucano quando dice, a quelle parlando: "Sanza contenzione periro le leggi; e voi, ricchezze, vilissima parte delle cose, moveste battaglia."[236]

Lucan's famous apostrophe to riches ("pereunt discrimine nullo / amissae leges; sed, pars vilissima rerum, / certamen movistis, opes")[237] is translated by Dante into Italian vernacular and becomes part of his argumentative strategy. The voices of the ancient and the medieval philosopher overlap as the latter strives to rectify the imperial definition of nobility.

In Dante's treatise, Lucan's authority intersects with that of Boethius, invoked as the *sapiens* par excellence. *Conv.* IV, xiii, 11-13 Dante claims that the possession of riches causes

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[232] On the sentence "colui che dicesse che giovinezza è colmo della naturale vita, che sarebbe filosofo," Fioravanti quotes Boncompagno da Signa, *Rhetorica Novissima*, p. 257a: "omnes qui naturaliter definiunt [...] possunt et debent philosophi appellari, quia nihil est quod magis ad philosophiam pertineat quam habere scientiam definiendi" ("All those who give natural definitions to things can and must be called 'philosophers,' for there is nothing more appropriate to philosophy than the mastery of definitions." Fioravanti, *Convivio*, 627, my transl.).

[233] Seneca is identified with the epithet "morale" in *Inf.* IV, 141.

[234] *DVE* I, 17, 2 ("vel quia excellenter magistrati excellenter magistrant").

[235] See *Conv.* I, viii, 16 (cfr. Sen. *Benef.* III, 4); *Conv.* II, xiii, 22 (Sen. *Nat. quae*. I, 1, 3). In *Conv.* IV, xii, 8 Seneca is quoted, among others, on the subject of riches: "E perché più testimonianza a ciò redure per pruova si conviene, lascisi stare quanto contra esse Salomone e suo padre grida; quanto contra esse Seneca, massimamente a Lucillo scrivendo; quanto Orazio, quanto Giovenale e, brievemente, quanto ogni scrittore, ogni poeta; e quanto la verace Scrittura divina chiama contra queste false meretrici, piene di tutti difetti [...]" ("Since further evidence is required to establish proof on this point, let us summon up all that Solomon and his father cry out against them, all that Seneca, especially in his letters to Lucilius, all that Horace, all that Juvenal, and, in brief, all that every writer, every poet, and all that truthful Holy Scripture cries out against these false harlots who are steeped in every defect;" transl. Lansing, *Dante's Il Convivio*, 183).

[236] "That they are imperfect is briefly proved by the text when it says *for however great they are, They bring no peace, but rather grief*. Here not only is their imperfection made evident but their state shown to be the most imperfect, and therefore completely base. Lucan attests to this when he addresses them by saying, 'Without a fight the laws have perished and you riches, the basest part of things, have led the battle;'" transl. Lansing, *Dante's Il Convivio*, 179.

[237] Lucan. III, 119-21.

evil: in this passage, Dante combines words by Boethius, "lo Savio," with Lucan's narration about Amyclas:[238]

> Cagione è di male, ché fa, pur vegliando, lo possessore timido e odioso. [...] Ben lo sanno li miseri mercatanti che per lo mondo vanno, che le foglie che 'l vento fa menare, li fa[n] tremare quando seco ricchezze portano [...] E però dice lo Savio: "Se vòto camminatore entrasse nel cammino, dinanzi alli ladroni canterebbe". E ciò vuol dire Lucano nel quinto libro, quando commenda la povertà di sicuranza, dicendo: "Oh sicura facultà della povera vita! oh stretti abitaculi e masserizie! oh non ancora intese ricchezze delli Dèi! A quali tempî o a quali muri poteo questo avenire, cioè non temere con alcuno tumulto, bussando la mano di Cesare?". E quello dice Lucano quando ritrae come Cesare di notte alla casetta del pescatore Amiclas venne, per passare lo mare Adriano. E quanto odio è quello che ciascuno al posseditore della ricchezza porta [...] E però Boezio, nel secondo della sua Consolazione dice: "Per certo l'avarizia fa li uomini odiosi."[239]

Embedded in a context of Boethian citations[240] is Dante's translation of Lucan. V, 527-31.[241] Lucan's remark about Amyclas, often cited by medieval Latin authors,[242] is quoted and translated by Dante to demonstrate the appeal and advantages of poverty, in contrast with the imperial promotion of wealth as a requirement for nobility.

Overall, *Convivio* IV makes a claim for the reliability of philosophers' moral judgments, while denying this kind of authority to representatives of the political power. Alongside Seneca and Boethius, Lucan is invoked as an important precursor to Dante in the field of philosophy, whereas Nero appears as a possible *figura* of Frederick or, we may say, of the kind of leader Frederick should not become. In fact, if the *Convivio* refers explicitly to Nero's illicit intrusion into the realm of philosophy, for the reader of Dante's text the shadow of Nero could also evoke the dangers and horrors of an absolute power deprived of the enlightenment of philosophy.

Dante's reuse of Lucan in the *Convivio* is in keeping with the previous medieval Latin tradition as represented by moral and satirical authors like Alain of Lille, John of Hauvilla, and Peter the Chanter, who often cite Lucan's text in their critiques of institutional corruption and their eulogies of poverty.[243] We should notice that a similar strategy is observable also in Dante's

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[238] Boethius, who is included among the wise in the heaven of the Sun in *Par.* X, 124-129, represents one of the most important sources of the fourth book of the *Convivio*: in *Conv*. IV, xii, 4-7 and IV, xiii, 12-14 are quotations of *Cons*. III, pr. 3, 2-11; II, m. II, 1-8; *Cons*. II, pr. V, 34; II, pr. V, 4 and 5; moreover, in his discussion on riches, Dante reelaborates and readapts various Boethian concepts (Tateo, "Boezio" 654-56).

[239] Boeth. *Cons*. II, pr. V, 34; Lucan. V, 527-31 and 507-27; Boeth. *Cons*. II, pr. V, 4. "It is the cause of evil because it makes the possessor fearful and hateful by being merely preoccupied with them. [...] The contemptible merchants who travel about the world know this full well, for the leaves swept by the wind make them tremble when they are carrying riches with them [...] Therefore the Sage says, 'If a traveler entered upon his journey empty-handed, he would sing in the face of the thieves.' This is what Lucan means in the fifth book when he praises poverty for the security it offers with the words, 'O secure ease of the poor man's life! O constricted dwellings and furnishings! oh not yet understood riches of the Gods! In what temples, within what walls could this ever happen without their shaking with fear when the hand of Caesar knocks?' This is said by Lucan when he tells how Caesar came by night to the cottage of the fisherman Amyclas in order to cross the Adriatic Sea. How great is the hate that everyone bears the possessor of riches [...] Therefore Boethius says, in the second book of his *Consolation*, 'Truly avarice makes men hateful;'" transl. Lansing, *Dante's Il Convivio*, 188).

[240] The preceding chapter (*Conv.* IV, xii, 4-7) also has quotations of Boethius, *Cons*. III, pr. 3, 2-11 and II, m. II, 1-8.

[241] Martellotti has noticed how Dante's version is more emphatic than the original and especially stresses the concept of "riches" (Martellotti, "Dante e i classici,"134-35 with bibl.).

[242] Sanford, "Quotations," 11-12.

[243] Cfr. Sanford, "Quotations," 13-15; D'Angelo, "La *Pharsalia*," 432-6; Schmidt, ed., *Architrenius*, 59-61; Ratkowitsch, *Descriptio picturae*, 269-71; Waddell, "The *Exordium Cistercii*;" Cfr. p. 5 above.

Comedy. If (as Wetherbee suggests) Dante takes on Lucan's *persona* in accusing the Church in *Inf.* XIX,[244] Amyclas is mentioned openly in *Par.* XI, 64-72.[245] In these lines of the *Paradiso*, Amyclas is presented as a predecessor of St. Francis because of his love of poverty. By commending the ancient fisherman and the saint of Assisi, Dante promotes the ideal of a Church which is humble and yet also able to face the powerful, as Amyclas did with Caesar ("colui ch'a tutto 'l mondo fé paura") and Francis did with his father and the *saladino* (*Par.* XI, 62, 100-2). Overall, Lucan's Stoic dismissal of riches provides a framework for Dante's advocacy of inborn over hereditary nobility and of Church pauperism.

We have seen that translation plays an important part in Dante's readaptation of Lucan's text in the *Convivio*. At a macro-textual level, we can note that Lucan's poem becomes part of the patrimony of philosophical wisdom made accessible by Dante's vernacular treatise. What is more, not only does Dante translate passages of the *Bellum Civile* in his *Convivio*, he also explains them allegorically. In *Conv.* III, iii, 5-7, the story of Hercules and Antaeus is reinterpreted philosophically in order to illuminate the special connection between the human body and the place of its generation, which is the subject of this particular Dantean passage.[246] Furthermore, the author of the *Convivio* provides a translation and detailed allegorization of Lucan's narration about Cato and Marcia. In chapter xxviii of the fourth book, Dante wishes to prove that, in old age, the noble soul returns to God, its harbor, and blesses the journey it has made. Citations of Aristotle, Cicero, and Cato are followed by a long account of Cato's remarriage with Marcia as told in the *Bellum Civile*.[247]

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[244] Wetherbee, "Ancient Flame," 71-72; cfr. *Mon*. II, x and *Mon*. III, x, 14.

[245] "Questa, privata del primo marito, / millecent' anni e più dispetta e scura / fino a costui si stette sanza invito; / né valse udir che la trovò sicura / con Amiclate, al suon de la sua voce, / colui ch'a tutto 'l mondo fé paura; / né valse esser costante né feroce, / sì che, dove Maria rimase giuso, / ella con Cristo pianse in su la croce" ("She was bereft of her first husband; scorned, obscure, for some eleven hundred years, until that sun came, she had no suitor. Nor did it help her when men heard that he who made the earth tremble found her unafraid — serene, with Amyclas — when he addressed her; nor did her constancy and courage help when she, even when Mary stayed below, suffered with Christ upon the cross." Transl. Mandelbaum, *The Divine Comedy*, III, 94).

[246] Per la natura seconda, del corpo misto, ama lo luogo della sua generazione, e ancora lo tempo; e però ciascuno naturalmente è di più virtuoso corpo nello luogo dove è generato e nel tempo della sua generazione che in altro. Onde si legge nelle storie d'Ercule e nell'Ovidio Maggiore e in Lucano e in altri poeti che, combattendo [Ercule] collo gigante che si chiamava Anteo, tutte [le] volte che lo gigante era stanco [ed] elli ponea lo suo corpo sovra la terra disteso o per sua volontà o per forza d'Ercule, forza e vigore interamente della terra in lui risurgea, nella quale e della quale era esso generato. Di che acorgendosi Ercule, alla fine prese lui; e stringendo quello e levatolo dalla terra, tanto lo tenne sanza lasciarlo alla terra ricongiugnere, che lo vinse per soperchio e uccise. E questa battaglia fu in Africa, secondo le testimonianze delle scritture" ("By virtue of the second nature of the compound body, he loves the place, and also the season, in which he was generated. Everyone therefore is naturally of stronger body in the place where he was generated and in the season of his generation rather than in any other. Thus we read in the stories of Hercules — both in Ovid the Greater and in Lucan and in other poets — that when he was fighting with the giant Antaeus, whenever the giant grew weary and stretched his body along the ground, whether by his own choice or as a result of Hercules' might, strength and vigour completely surged forth in him anew from the earth in which and from which he had been generated. Hercules, perceiving this, finally seized him and, gripping him fast and lifting him off the ground, held him so long aloft without letting him touch the earth again that by overwhelming force he defeated and slew him. This battle took place in Africa, according to the testimony of these writings;" transl. Lansing, *Dante's Il Convivio*, 94). Medieval exegetes give various allegorical interpretations for the story of Hercules and Antaeus. According to Fulgentius (*Myth.* II, 4) and the third Vatican mythographer (13, 2), Antaeus symbolizes lust (*libido*), ultimately subdued by virtue. In his commentary on *Inf.* XXI, 118, Guido da Pisa similarly explains that the fight between Hercules and Antaeus signifies the struggle between spirit and flesh (*Expositiones*, ed. Rinaldi, pp. 907-8).

[247] *Conv.* IV, xxviii, 13-19; Lucan. II, 326-91.

Dante first provides an allegorizing summary of the events from Marcia's adolescence and first marriage with Cato to her union with Hortensius and her later return to Cato after Hortensius' death (Lucan. II, 326-37). Dante explains that Cato signifies God and Marcia stands for the noble soul, who goes back to the Lord at the beginning of old age:

> [...] E che queste due cose convegnano a questa etade, ne figura quello grande poeta Lucano nel secondo della sua Farsalia, quando dice che Marzia tornò a Catone e richiese lui e pregollo che la dovesse riprendere [nella sua etade] quarta: per la quale Marzia s'intende la nobile anima. E potemo così ritrarre la figura a veritade: Marzia fu vergine, e in quello stato si significa l'adolescenza; [poi si maritò] a Catone, e in quello stato si significa la gioventute; fece allora figli, per li quali si significano le vertudi che di sopra si dicono alli giovani convenire; e partissi da Catone e maritossi ad Ortensio, per che [si] significa che si partì la gioventute e venne la senettute; fece figli di questo anche, per che [si] significano le vertudi che di sopra si dicono convenire alla senettute. Morì Ortensio; per che [si] significa lo termine della senettute; e vedova fatta — per lo qual vedovaggio [si] significa lo senio — tornò Marzia dal principio del suo vedovaggio a Catone, per che [si] significa, la nobile anima dal principio del senio tornare a Dio. E quale uomo terreno più degno fu di significare Dio che Catone? Certo nullo.[248]

Dante's allegorization of the story builds on Lucan's poem and medieval exegesis on it, where Cato is considered "almost divine,"[249] and yet stretches this tradition still farther, regarding Cato as a figure of God himself.

The passage continues with a translation of Marcia's speech to Cato (Lucan. II, 338-45), which is glossed allegorically by Dante:

> E che dice Marzia a Catone? "Mentre che in me fu lo sangue", cioè la gioventute, "mentre che in me fu la maternale vertute", cioè la senettute, che bene è madre dell'altre vertudi, sì come di sopra è mostrato, "io" dice Marzia "feci e compiei li tuoi comandamenti", cioè a dire che l'anima stette ferma alle civili operazioni. Dice: "E tolsi due mariti", cioè "a due etadi fruttifera sono stata". "Ora" dice Marzia "che 'l mio ventre è lasso, e che io sono per li parti vòta, a te mi ritorno, non essendo più da dare ad altro sposo", cioè a dire che la nobile anima, conoscendosi non avere più ventre da frutto, cioè li suoi membri sentendosi a debile stato venuti, torna a Dio, colui che non ha mestiere delle membra corporali. E dice Marzia: "Dammi li patti delli antichi letti, dammi lo nome solo del maritaggio"; che è a dire che la nobile anima dice a Dio: "Dammi, Signor mio, omai lo riposo di te; dammi almeno che io in questa tanta vita sia

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[248] *Conv.* IV, xxviii, 13-15. "[...] The great poet Lucan, in the second book of his *Pharsalia*, shows us by way of an allegory that these two things are appropriate to this age of life. There he says that Marcia returned to Cato and begged and implored him to take her back in her old age. Here Marcia signifies the noble soul. And we may translate the figure of allegory as follows. Marcia was a virgin, and in that state she signifies adolescence; she later married Cato, and in that state she signifies maturity; then she bore children, and they signify the virtues which are said above to be fitting for those who are young; she then left Cato and married Hortensius, signifying the departure from maturity and the onset of old age; she also bore this man's children, who signify the virtues which are said above to be fitting in old age. Hortensius died, by whch is signified the end of old age; and having become a widow—which widowhood signifies senility — Marcia returned at the beginning of her widowhood to Cato, signifying that the noble soul returns to God at the beginnig of senility. And what man on earth was more worthy to signify God than Cato? Surely none" (transl. Lansing, *Dante's Il Convivio*, 234).

[249] Lucan IX, 254-83, 554-86; De Angelis, "... e l'ultimo Lucano" on Cato in medieval commentaries on Lucan. Also in *Conv.* IV, v, 16; *Conv*. IV, vi, 10; and *Purg*. I, Cato's almost-divine aura is described in terms reminiscent of Lucan (see for example "O sacratissimo petto di Catone," *Conv.* IV, v, 16; "Santo petto," Purg. I 80; "sacro de pectore," Lucan. IX, 255; "sancto [...] Catoni," Lucan. IX, 554). On Lucan's importance for these Dantean descriptions of Cato's quasi-divinity, see for example Fischli, *Studien*, 37-40; Paratore, "Lucano e Dante," 18; Scott, "Cato," 70-77; Boggione, "Ancora sul Catone dantesco," 321-23; Mazzotta, *Dante Poet of the Desert*, 61.

> chiamata tua". E dice Marzia: "Due ragioni mi movono a dire questo: l'una si è che dopo me si dica ch'io sia morta moglie di Catone; l'altra si è che dopo me si dica che tu non mi scacciasti, ma di buono animo mi maritasti". Per queste due cagioni si muove la nobile anima; e vuole partire d'esta vita sposa di Dio, e vuole mostrare che graziosa fosse a Dio la sua operazione. Oh sventurati e mal nati, che innanzi volete partirvi d'esta vita sotto lo titolo d'Ortensio che di Catone! Nel nome di cui è bello terminare ciò che delli segni della nobilitade ragionare si convenia, però che in lui essa nobilitade tutti li dimostra per tutte etadi. [250]

Lucan's poem is read by Dante as an historical account which also carries profound religious-philosophical meaning in a moral and anagogical sense.[251] Strikingly, Dante applies to the *Bellum Civile* the reading and interpretive practices that he otherwise reserves for the most authoritative of texts, such as the *Aeneid* or the Bible itself. Indeed, Virgil's narration about Aeneas, which, as has been noted, had a historical value for Dante, is subject to a sustained moral allegorization in the same fourth book of the *Convivio*. In a passage which is reminiscent of Fulgentius' *Expositio* and yet clearly departs from it, Dante interprets books IV-VI of the *Aeneid* as signifying the virtues of termperance, affection, courtesy, and loyalty in the age of *gioventù*.[252] Dante's combination of the *Bellum Civile* and the *Aeneid* within the allegorizing discourse of his philosophical treatise is a further indicator of his integrative view of Virgil's and Lucan's poems and of his appreciation for the allegedly "constructive" aspects of Lucan's philosophical thought. Rather than emphasizing the anti-providential implications of the *Bellum*

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[250] *Conv.* IV, xxviii, 16-19: "What does Marcia says to Cato? 'While there was blood in me,' that is, in maturity, 'while I had the power to bear children,' namely in old age, which is truly the mother of the other virtues, as has been shown above, 'I,' says Marcia, 'carried out and accomplished all of your commands'— this is to say that the soul remained committed to civic duties. She says: 'I took two husbands,' that is, 'I was fertile in two ages. Now that my womb is worn-out and I have lost the capacity to bear children,' says Marcia, 'I return to you, being unable to serve another spouse'; that is to say that the noble soul, perceiving that it no longer has a womb for bearing fruit (that is, when the soul's members feel that they have grown weak), turns to God, who has no need of bodily members. And Marcia says: 'Give me the rights of our ancient marital chamber; give me only the name of marriage.' This is to say that the noble soul says to God: 'My Lord, now give me your peace; grant me at least that in the little of life that remains to me I may be called yours.' And Marcia says: 'Two reasons move me to say this: one is that after my death it may be said that I died as the wife of Cato; the other, that after my death it may be said that you did not spurn me, but through your good will you took my hand in marriage.' The noble soul is moved by these two reasons, and it desires to depart from this life as the spouse of God, and desires to show that its activity has been pleasing to God. O you unhappy and misbegotten beings who wish to depart from this life under the name of Hortensius rather than that of Cato! It is good to bring to a close what I have had to say about the signs of nobility with the name of this man, because in him nobility displays them all in every age of life" (transl. Lansing, *Dante's Il Convivio*, 234-35).

[251] Fioravanti suggests that Dante reads Lucan's text as an "allegory of theologians" ("Ci troviamo, in questo caso, nonostante il testo da interpretare sia quello di un poeta, davanti ad un tipico esempio di allegoria dei teologi, dove le peripezie di personaggi reali sono 'figura' di realtà più alte;" Fioravanti, ed., *Convivio*, 793). However, Dante's treatment of the concept in *Conv.* II, 1 seems to imply that the "anagogical" sense could also be part of the "allegory of poets." Nevertheless, the degree of attention that Dante devotes to the word-by-word allegorical reading of Lucan's passage is striking.

[252] *Conv.* IV, xxvi, 6-15; cfr. Fioravanti, ed., *Convivio*, 757; Ronconi, "Virgilio," 1046. In *Conv*. IV, xxvii, 17-21 Dante turns to Ovid's tale of Cephalus and Aeacus (*Met.* VII, 490-664) to illustrate the virtues of prudence, justice, largesse, and cheerfulness in *senettute*. However, he defines the story a *favola* and the reference sounds more like an *exemplum* than a true and proper allegorization (cfr. Fioravanti, ed., *Convivio*, 785: "il ricorso ad Ovidio ha caratteristiche diverse di quello a Virgilio. Il racconto non assume infatti un valore figurale o simbolico: i detti e i fatti di Eaco sono semplicemente un 'essemplo' dell'esercizio delle virtù proprie della vecchiaia'"). Likewise, in *Conv*. IV, xxv, 6-11 Dante refers to Statius, *Theb*. I, 395-97, 529-39, 671-81 to provide examples of praiseworthy shame in the age of *adolescenza*.

Civile, the Christian Dante confers upon Lucan the role of an authority on philosophical and religious matters.[253]

FROM DANTE TO PETRARCH

The above analysis has shown that Dante's approach to ancient Latin epic is deeply syncretistic. The Florentine author emphasizes the affinities, rather than the differences, between the *Bellum Civile* and the *Aeneid*. He reuses Lucan's poem in combination with Virgil's to recall facts and figures of ancient mythological history and to underscore the providential character of the Roman *imperium*, in both its Republican and Imperial achievements; moreover, he refers to Lucan as a trustworthy guide on ethics. In quoting Lucan and the classical *auctores*, Dante moves between a medieval florilegial approach of citing exemplary passages, sometimes in combination with each other or out of context, and reading individual texts as integral wholes.

As the next chapter will demonstrate at length, Petrarch's reuse of Lucan presents some continuities with Dante's strategy. Like Dante, Petrarch redeploys elements of the *Bellum Civile* as a source of poetic *pathos*, refers or alludes to Lucan's narration in negotiating political absolutism, and still quotes the Cordovan poet as a moral-philosophical *auctoritas*. Petrarch's view of Lucan and his text is, however, also characterized by fundamental differences from Dante and the previous medieval Latin tradition.

As a result of his reading of Suetonius and his cult of great personalities, Petrarch's approach to ancient epic poetry is strongly biographical and based on the concept of personal antagonism between the great canonical *auctores*, and particularly between Virgil and Lucan, as already between Homer and Virgil. Petrarch's interest in biography leads him to raise some ethical reservations centred upon Lucan's arrogant challenge to Virgil's primacy and his suicide, of which he disapproves deeply; moreover, Petrarch's acceptance of Lucan's Stoicism and of the dark marvels described in his poetry is much more limited than Dante's. Nevertheless, Petrarch's qualms about Lucan's turbulent personality and drastic views do not, I shall argue, prevent him from turning to the Cordovan poet as a major literary model, despite a long tradition of scholarly assertions to the contrary.

Moeover, Petrarch's understanding of the story told by Lucan differs profoundly from Dante's in that the later author fully grasps the historical significance of the Roman civil war. In contrast to Dante's unified vision of *Romanitas*, Petrarch is acutely sensitive to the fractures and conflicts internal to Roman history. As the following chapter will show, Petrarch retraces the steps of Caesar's controversial rise to absolute power to both sponsor and problematize the autocracy of his own age.

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[253] This also appears from the possibly spurious *Epistle to Cangrande*, where the *Bellum Civile* is recalled alongside scriptural texts to confirm the thesis that God is everywhere: "[...] Et Sapientia dicit quod 'Spiritus Domini replevit orbem terrarum.' Et Ecclesiasticus in quadragesimo secundo: 'Gloria Domini plenum est opus eius.' Quod etiam scriptura paganorum contestatur; unde Lucanus in nono: 'Iuppiter est quodcunque vides, quocunque moveris.' Bene ergo dictum est cum dicit quod divinus radius sive divina gloria, 'per universum penetrat et resplendet': penetrat, quantum ad essentiam; resplendet, quantum ad esse" (*Epist.* XIII, 22; *Sap.* 17; *Eccl.* XLII, 16; Lucan. IX, 580). ("And *Wisdom* says: 'The Spirit of the Lord hath filled the whole world.' And *Ecclesiasticus*, in the forty-second chapter: 'His work is full of the glory of the Lord.' To which also the writings of the pagans bear witness; for Lucan says in his ninth book: 'Jupiter is whatever thou seest, wherever thou goest;'" transl. Toynbee, *The Letters of Dante*, 206). On the passage see Marchesi, "Lucan at Last," 484-85; cfr. Fraenkel, "Ancient Pathos," 36; Fischli, *Studien*, 33. Servius and, subsequently, Petrarch quote this line of the *Bellum Civile* in commenting on a similar phrase by Virgil (Petrarch, *Le postille*, 467 n. 15).

PETRARCH'S LUCAN

According to a long-standing scholarly assumption, Petrarch should have been repelled by Lucan due to the latter's presumed anti-Caesarism, suicidal death, extravagant style, and controversial personality. Nolhac, for example, speaks of Lucan's "repugnance" for Petrarch and argues that the *Bellum Civile* did not have any relevance for Petrarch's elaboration of his epic on the Second Punic War (*Africa*) and his later celebratory biography of Julius Caesar (*De gestis Cesaris*); similar judgements can be found in Fischli's and later studies.[254] From the second half of the twentieth century onwards, some scholars have challenged this *communis opinio*. Bruère has demonstrated that Lucan is a fundamental point of reference for Petrarch's *Africa*, while Martellotti's insights about Lucan's presence in the *De gestis* have been organically developed by Crevatin.[255] Some light has been thrown also on Petrarchan-Lucanian intertextuality in the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*, *De remediis*, and some of the *Familiares*.[256]

Nevertheless, while Petrarch's corpus abounds with hundreds of Lucanian citations — as recent critical editions by Dotti, Carraud, Crevatin, and others have allowed us to establish[257] — most of these have received no critical attention and their identification has thus not led to an overall reassessment of Petrarch's relation to Lucan. In particular, scholars have continued to project on to Petrarch a conception of the *Bellum Civile* as an unproblematically and monolithically anti-Caesar work. Thus, for example, Petrarch's references to the *Bellum Civile* in the *De gestis* are read by Crevatin as necessarily polemical or antagonistic towards the Lucanian source (or hypotext).[258] In his study of Petrarch's politics, Ferraù similarly claims that the philo-Caesarean argument of the *De gestis* is developed using Lucanian materials and yet against Lucan's rigid Republicanism ("stoicismo rigidamente filorepubblicano della *Farsaglia*").[259]

In this chapter, I intend to (re)evaluate the representation, significance, and function of Lucan in Petrarch's works. I will show how, in Petrarch's equivocal descriptions, the figure of Lucan is characterized by powerful lights and undeniable shadows: by both inclusion and exclusion from *Romanitas*, by talent and hubris, by ardor and temerity. Nonetheless, not only does Petrarch frequently reference the Cordovan poet in his works, he also cites him as an important exponent of the epic canon, placing him alongside, though firmly subordinate to, Virgil. Moreover, Petrarch does not regard Lucan as a single-minded anti-Caesarean; he grasps,

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[254] Nolhac, *Pétrarque et l'humanisme*, 194-95; Fischli, *Studien zum Fortleben*, 41-42; Mazza, "La biblioteca," 24 ("Lucano non è fra i classici più vicini al Boccaccio maturo, come non era certo vicino al Petrarca").

[255] Bruère,"Lucan and Petrarch's *Africa*" (cfr. Leigh, "Petrarch's Lucan); " Martellotti, "Lucano come fonte" (cfr. Velli, *Petrarca e Boccaccio*, 95-96, n. 35; Fera, *Antichi editori*, 25, n. 2); Crevatin, "Il pathos," 168-70; Ead., "La presenza."

[256] Some general hints can be found in Nolhac, *Pétrarque et l'humanisme*, 194, n. 4; Ullman, "Petrarch's Favorite Books," 29, 33; Velli, *Petrarca e Boccaccio*, 95-96, n. 35. More specific observations are included in: Fraenkel, "Lucan as the Transmitter," 41-44; Crevatin, "La presenza," 242-46; Ead., "L'empio dono," 166-67, 175-77; cfr. Leigh, "Petrarch's Lucan," 249 .

[257] Unless otherwise specified, the Lucanian allusions and quotations I discuss below are drawn from: Dotti, ed., *Familiarium rerum libri*; *Rerum senilium libri*; *Secretum*; Carraud, ed., *Les remèdes aux deux fortunes*; *Le repos religieux*; Crevatin, ed., *De gestis Cesaris* and *In difesa dell'Italia*; Blausi, ed., *Invectiva contra medicum*; *Invectiva contra quendam magni status hominem*; Fenzi, ed., *De sui ipsius et multorum ignorantia*; Martellotti, ed., *De viris illustribus*; *De vita solitaria*; *Collatio inter Scipionem, Alexandrum, Hanibalem et Pyrrum*; Santagata, ed., *Canzoniere*; Canali-Pellegrini, eds., *Bucolicum carmen*; Petoletti, ed., *Rerum memorandarum libri*; Lenoir, ed., *Sans titre.*

[258] Crevatin, "La presenza," 245-52.

[259] Ferraù, *Petrarca*, 198.

rather, the intrinsic tensions between overtly Republican discourse and its implicit deconstruction in the *Bellum Civile.* By exploiting what contemporary critics have identified as the "fragmented" character of Lucan's voice and his destabilization of ideology in the poem, Petrarch reuses the *Bellum Civile* as a repertory of multiple possibilities, appropriating Lucan's contradictions to give voice to his ever-present hopes and anxieties about "Caesarist" autocracy. Lucan's poem, and the story of Pompey in particular, is rearticulated by Petrarch as a powerful source of *pathos* and adduced as a model of dramatic verisimilitude in poetic-historical writing. Finally, Petrarch points to Lucan as an authority on ethics, although he dilutes the rigor of the poet's Stoicism, discloses the limits of his pagan thought, and characteristically translates many Lucanian concepts into metaphysical, Christian terms.

Overall, Petrarch's reuse of Lucan is governed by a set of diverse intellectual and rewriting practices, which entail both continuities and differences with the previous medieval Latin tradition inherited and reshaped by Dante. In contrast with the attitudes of his predecessors, Petrarch adopts a strongly biographical approach to Lucan as an author, and his reading of the *Bellum Civile* is anchored in a consistently historical understanding of the ancient Roman civil war and of Caesar's actions. On the other hand, Petrarch still relies on Lucan as an everlasting moral *auctoritas* and a source of never-fading wisdom, even though his acceptance of Lucan's ethics is more cautious and selective than Dante's.

THE FIGURE OF LUCAN

That Petrarch was deeply familar with the *Bellum Civile* is proven by the high number of Lucanian quotations in the humanist's works and manuscripts, as well as by the presence of a manuscript of Lucan in Petrarch's inventory of his own books.[260] Petrarch's treatment of Lucan in his literary corpus evinces both his reaction to Lucan's epic and his reelaboration of the variegated rhetorical, exegetical, and biographical tradition on Lucan developing from Quintilian to Suetonius, Vacca, Arnulf of Orléans, and Dante.[261]

Similarly to Dante and even more explicitly, Petrarch takes a decisive position on the long-standing debate on "Lucanus poeta an historicus."[262] Although he indirectly acknowledges the fundamental historical value of the *Bellum Civile*, for Petrarch Lucan is definitely a "poet," rather than a historian, as revealed by the recurrent use of the epithet *poeta* to identify him in the *Epistles* and *Invectives*.[263] The partly enigmatic portrait that the *Bucolicum carmen* offers of the Cordovan author ("Est Corduba testis, / civis et alta canens ad solem vertice nudo / nil patrii

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[260] On Lucan in Petrarch's annotated manuscripts, see p. 58-59 below; cfr. Nolhac, *De Patruum et Medii Aevii*, 30, 40; Leigh, "Petrarch's Lucan," 243, n. 2 and 245 n. 10. Ms London, British Library, Harley 3754, which belonged to Petrarch, includes Lucan's works at ff. 61v-101r (the attribution of the manuscript to Petrarch's library is due to De La Mare, "A Paleographer's Odyssey," 99, 107, n. 20; however, the paternity of the *marginalia* of the codex is still debated: see Fiorilla, *Marginalia*, 29, n. 14 with bibl.; Petoletti, "Le postille a Servio," 120). On Petrarch's library as reconstructed based on Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS. Lat. 2201, cfr. Delisle, *Notice*; Sabbadini, "Il primo nucleo," 376; Ullman, "Petrarch's Favorite Books," 29.

[261] On Petrarch's familiarity with medieval *scholia* on Lucan, including Arnulf of Orléans and Vacca, see Sabbadini, "Il primo nucleo," 386; Crevatin, "Il pathos," 161, n. 13; Ead., ed., *De gestis*, 250; Dotti, ed., *Seniles*, vol. II, 1457, n. 19; Petoletti, "Le postille a Servio," 120.

[262] On this debate, see pp. 4-7 above.

[263] See for example *Fam*. II, 2, 3; II, 3, 22 ("dictum [...] poeticum") ; II, 7, 7; XIV, 1, 34 (*Hispanus vates*); *Sen.* VII, 1, 83 and XIV, 1, 61; *Contra med*. III, 95 and 159; *Contra quendam* 96 (*vates*). On Petrarch's conception of Lucan as a poet, see also Nolhac, *Pétrarque et l'humanisme*, 195-96; Monti, "Petrarca auctoritas," 265-66; Rossi, *Benvenuto*, 94; Crevatin, "Il pathos," 167-68; Ead., "La presenza," 244.

sermonis habens, nil frontis hibere")[264] underscores "epic" nobility of subject (*alta*) and passionate civic-political engagement (*civis*) as the specific qualities of Lucan's poetry in Petrarch's view.[265]

These Petrarchan lines also call attention to Lucan's inherent bond to his homeland and his simultaneous cultural-intellectual detachment from it. Such a twofold move characterizes various other passages by Petrarch, who repeatedly recalls Lucan's Spanish origin and yet also points out that, although born in Spain, the ancient poet wanted to be considered a Roman.[266] *Contra eum qui maledixit Italie* 25, for example, states:

> Itaque se Lucanus multis in locis romanorum vult videri; nec, ut reor, ullam patrui graviorem habet iniuriam, quam quod is in operis sui principio — si vera est fama — verbum illud apposuit: 'Corduba me genuit.' Norat enim quanto nobilius Rome civis esse, quam Cordube.[267]

According to Petrarch — who here is presumably recalling Vacca's *vita*[268] — Lucan's assertions of adherence to Rome in the *Bellum Civile* would represent a disavowal of his Spanish provenance as recorded in the *Epitaphion Lucani*. Also in *Sen.* VII, 1, Petrarch attempts to convince Urban V of the necessity to move the papal seat from France to Rome and reinforces his argument by quoting a line by Lucan, defined as "a Spanish, rather than Italian, poet."[269] The glory and words of the "Spanish" Lucan are here refunctionalized to support Petrarch's philo-Roman agenda. In the humanist's view, Lucan thus occupies a liminal position, both stranger and familiar, outside and inside *Romanitas.*

As revealed by an important passage of the *Collatio laureationis*, Petrarch associates Lucan with Virgil, Ovid, and Statius, in accordance with the medieval model of the four *magni auctores* and with Dante's own practice in the *De vulgari eloquentia*;[270] however, Petrarch also

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[264] (" [...] as Córdoba knows and her townsman. Head bared to the sun, he was singing of lofty things without any trace of his fatherland's accent nor aught of Spain in his semblance" (*Buc. carm.* X, 332-34; transl. Bergin, *Petrarch's Bucolicum Carmen*, 175).

[265] "Vertice nudo" is glossed by Pietro da Parma with "quia non laureato;" the belief that Lucan was refused the poetic crown first appears in Boccaccio's *Esposizioni* and Benvenuto's commentary on the *Bellum Civile*. "Ad solem" is an even more mysterious expression, which Crevatin puts in relation with the medieval etymological interpretation of Lucan's name as "lucide canens," and reads as a possible allusion to the lack of *integumentum* in the *Bellum Civile*. Crevatin suggests that, for Petrarch, Lucan is not a "poeta-vate" (Crevatin, "La presenza," 244 with bibl.). However, *pace* Crevatin, Petrarch does use the term *vates* to designate Lucan (*Fam.* XIV, 1, 34; *Contra quendam* 96).

[266] On Lucan's Spanish origin, see also: *Tr. Fam.* IIa, 73-74 ("poi vidi con Lucan d'ultima Spagna / Columella venir"); *Fam.* XIV, 1, 34; XVIII, 11, 2; *Sen*. IV, 1, 29; *Sen*. VII, 1, 83; *Rem.* I, 78, 8.

[267] "Hence, in many passages Lucan wishes to appear Roman. I suspect that he considered it the gravest offense possible when, if the report is true, his uncle prefaced his epic poem with the phrase 'Cordoba gave me birth.' For he knew how much nobler a citizen of Rome is than a citizen of Cordoba" (transl. Marsh, *Invectives*, 449).

[268] Vacca, *Vita* 12-14: "Sed in patria sua non valuit educari, fatorum credo decretis, ut id ingenium, quod orbem fama sui impleturum cresceret, et in domina mundi aleretur urbe" ("But he could not be educated in his home country, possibly due to a decree of fate, so that his genius, which was going to blossom and make the world resound with its fame, could be also nourished in the sovereign city of the world;" my transl.). In the third *vita* of Lucan, transmitted by the mss. Voss. Lat. f. 63 and Laur. 35. 8, we similarly read "Lucanus iste Hispanus genere, Cordubensis fuit regione, dignitare vero et eruditione Romanus" ("This Lucan was Spanish as to his stock, Cordovan as to his region of origin, but Roman as to his dignity and erudition;" Braidotti, *Le vite antiche*, 41; my transl.).

[269] *Sen.* VII, 1, 83.

[270] Petr. *Coll. laur.* 10, 4-8: "De prima fidentissime loquitur Ovidius in fine Metamorphoseos [...] De eodem Statius in fine Thebaydos [...] De secunda loquitur Virgilius in nono [...] De utraque simul loquitur in nono Lucanus" ("Concerning the first of these two kinds of immortality Ovid speaks with assurnce at the end of the *Metamorphoses* [...] So also Statius at the end of the *Thebaid* [...] Of the second kind of immortality Virgil speaks thus in his ninth

discloses the tensions intrinsic to this epic-poetic canon. He portrays Lucan as talented but overambitious, for he dared to compete with the greatest, and truly Roman poet: Virgil. *Sen*. V, 2 is a letter addressed to Boccaccio, concerned with the "anxious desire for the first place, intolerance of the second place, and the immensely arrogant ignorance of the moderns" (*De appetitu anxio primi loci atque impatentia secundi deque superbissima modernorum ignorantia*), in which Petrarch praises his addressee's proclivity to deem himself inferior in fields where he is, in fact, superior to others. Underestimation of one's own skills and merits is, according to Petrarch, more commendable than their overevaluation; this latter mistake, the opposite of Boccaccio's, would have been proper for Lucan:

> Quod his ergo, quibus re superior es, opinione tua sis inferior, laudo, et errorem hunc michi magis optaverim quam eius qui, cum vere sit inferior, sibi altior videatur. Hic me locus admonet Lucani cordubensis qui, ardentis vir ingenii atque animi — que ut ad ascensum sic ad precipitium via est —, cum se adhuc iuvenem et provectum suorum iam prosperum studiorum cerneret, et etatem suam et rerum a se ceptarum reputans initia successusque operum elatus seque ipsum cum Virgilio comparare ausus, libri, quem de civili bello, morte perventus, inexpletum liquit, partem recitans in prefatione quadam dixit: "Et quantum restat michi ad Culicem?" Huic insolenti percontationi an tunc a quoquam amicorum quid ve responsum fuerit incertum habeo; certe ego, ex quo illam legi primum, gloriabundo illi sepe tacitus et indignans hoc respondi: "Bone homo, ad Culicem quidem nichil, sed immensum ad Eneyda." Quidni ergo pluris faciam humilitatem tuam, me tibi tuo iudicio preferentis, quam illius iactantiam vel preponentis se Virgilio vel equantis?[271]

Petrarch's definition of Lucan as "a man of ardent soul and inspiration" ("ardentis vir ingenii atque animi"), recalls Quintilian's famous judgement "Lucanus ardens et concitatus,"[272] although the humanist utilizes the term *ardens* in a broader sense, rather than in a strictly stylistical acceptation, to connote Lucan's poetic personality as a whole. In Petrarch's eyes, such a fervid disposition as Lucan's can potentially lead to either spiritual elevation or perdition ("que ut ad ascensum sic ad precipitium via est"). Petrarch's indignant reproof of the Cordovan poet's arrogance (*iactantia*) suggests that the latter is guilty of making poor use of his gifts and channeling his passionate nature in the wrong direction. Nevertheless, Petrarch subsequently

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book [...] And of both kinds together Lucan speaks in his ninth book," transl. Wilkins, *Studies*, 307-8); cfr. pp. 59-60 below. Dante, *DVE* II, vi, 7; see p. 21 above.

[271] "I commend you, therefore, for thinking yourself inferior to those to whom you are really superior, and I would rather choose this error than the one whereby someone thinks himself superior when he is really inferior. This topic reminds me of a passage in Lucan of Corduba [Cordova], a man of lively talent and intelligence, which is the pathway to great heights as well as the precipice. When he felt himself already quite advanced in his studies, though still young considering his age and his initiatives, and elated over the success of his works, he dared compare himself with Virgil. Reciting part of the book about the civil war [*Pharsalia*], which he left unfinished when he was cut short by death, he said: 'What will it take for me to match the *Gnat* [*Culex*]?' I am uncertain whether one of his friends then answered this insolent question, or what the answer was, but ever since reading it I often answered that arrogant fellow silently and indignantly as follows: 'My good man, nothing prevents you from matching the *Gnat* but a great deal indeed from equaling the *Aeneid*.' Why, then, should I not appreciate your humility which prefers me to you in your opinion more than the boasting of that writer who put himself above Virgil or equal to him?" (Ed. Braidotti, *Le vite antiche*, 29-30; transl. Bernardo, *Letters of Old Age*, I, 159; *Sen*. V, 2, 10-1).

[272] Quint. *Inst.* X, 1, 90 (Petrarch came to own a copy of Quintilian in 1350: see Boskoff, "Quintilian," 75 with bibl.). Quintilian's judgement is echoed by various medieval writers mentioning Lucan's impetuous fervour: cfr. for example Alan of Lille, *Anticlaud*. II, 361 ("Lucani fulmen"); Otloh of St. Emmeram, *Lib. vis*. 3, ed. Schmidt p. 45, 5 ("ventus urens et vehemens").

adds that aspiring to the first place could be seen as revelatory of a great soul ("summa enim optare potest magni animi videri").[273]

By retelling, and commenting on, Suetonius' anecdote of Lucan's challenge to Virgil's supremacy,[274] Petrarch sponsors a strongly biographical conception of literature and the epic canon, based on the notion of personal rivalry between "great" poetic figures. The idea of Lucan's competition with Virgil was not particularly emphasized in the previous medieval tradition (Dante included), but, significantly, it appears in post-Petrarchan humanist writers, such as Boccaccio and Poliziano.[275]

Other Petrarchan passages similarly trace a more or less explicit epic canon, where Lucan invariably follows Virgil among the greatest ancient poets. In *Contra quendam magni status hominem* 96, Petrarch observes that Virgil admitted fortune's omnipotence, whereas "another poet, inferior but speaking with greater depth and truth" ("veriusque illud et gravius alter, licet inferior, vates ait") maintained that fortune surrenders to virtue. This statement, followed by a direct quotation of Lucan. IV, 569-70, constitutes both a reassertion of Lucan's poetic inferiority to Virgil and, at the same time, an acknowledgement of the deep philosophical "verity" of his poetry.[276] *Fam.* V, 5, which deals with the faculty of poetic description, presents a "formalization" of the epic triad Homer-Virgil-Lucan:

> Nichil sane vel pingi eloquio vel animo fingi potest, quod non hesterna dies impleverit, imo procul excesserit; singulare quoddam et omnibus seculis inauditum malum. Itaque Homerus graiam, eoliam Maro, Lucanus epyrensem, alii alias tempestates canant [...][277]

This classification of the major ancient epic poets into a hierarchically organized group of three, which is indicative of Lucan's importance in Petrarch's eyes, is especially interesting in light of the continuation of *Seniles* V, 2 (*De appetitu anxio primi loci*). After his reference to Lucan's *iactantia*, Petrarch insinuates that Boccaccio's assumed *humilitas* could actually be *superba* in nature and not easily discernible from arrogance, because those who are unable to achieve the first place often claim for themselves the last place or no place at all, disregarding the fact that there is a precise scale in merits and glory.[278] Equating the two vices that he had previously distinguished (i.e. over- and under-evaluation of one's capacities), Petrarch argues that Boccaccio's possible intolerance of the second or third place would make him even more haughty than those who yearn for the first place. In the hierarchy suggested by Petrarch, Dante

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[273] *Sen.* V, 2, 15.

[274] Suetonius, *Life of Lucan*, 2-5: " Dein *** civile bellum, quod cum Pompeio a Caesare gestum est, recitavit *** ut praefatione quadam aetatem et initia cum Vergilio comparans ausus sit dicere: 'et quantum mihi restat ad Culicem'" (Transl. Rolfe, *Lives of the Caesars*, II, 477: "then gave a public reading of his poem on the 'Civil War' waged between Pompey and Caesar. In a kind of introduction to the latter, comparing his time of life and his first essays with those of Vergil, he had the audacity to ask: ' How far, pray, do I fall short of the Culex'?").

[275] Bocc. *Esp*. IV, 128-29 (see p. 97 below); Politianus, *Nutricia*, 499-519; *Epigr.* XXXVII, 15; cfr. Nolhac, *Pétrarque et l'humanisme*, 195, n. 2; Leuker, *Angelo Poliziano: Dichter, Redner,* 222-25.

[276] See pp. 78ff. below.

[277] "But nothing can be described by eloquence or can be imagined which yesterday was not equaled and even surpassed close to here. It was a disaster unique and unheard of in history. Therefore let Homer sing of his Greek storm, and Maro of his Aeolian, and Lucan of his Epirian, and others of other storms" (*Fam.* V, 5, 2; transl. Bernardo, *Letters on Familiar Matters*, I, 243). Cfr. Crevatin, "La presenza," 244. Petrarch's description of a storm in *Afr.* VIII, 500-504 appears reminiscent of both Lucan and Virgil (Baglio, ed., *Le postille*, 278 with bibl.)

[278] *Sen.* V, 2, 12-13.

("the master of our vernacular literature")[279] and Petrarch himself hold the first two places, while Boccaccio is assigned the third place.[280]

The triad of the "modern" Italian poets (Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio) replicates the above-mentioned succession of Homer, Virgil, and Lucan. While we might argue that Petrarch's questioning of Dante's hegemony finds a parallel in his frequent displacement of Homer in favour of Virgil,[281] what is especially significant for the present analysis is the overlapping between the poetic persons of Boccaccio and Lucan. The author of the *Bellum Civile* becomes a figure of Boccaccio, or of the kind of poet that Boccaccio both could, and should not, be. Paradoxically enough, in order to avoid Lucan's *iactantia* and not to be found guilty of unparalleled *superbia*, Boccaccio has to accept Lucan's place, that is the third position in the "modern" poetic canon established by Petrarch.

As scholars have occasionally noticed, Petrarch's estimate of Lucan and his status in the ancient canon is influenced by moral disapproval of the poet's suicide. *Fam*. XXIV, 11, addressed to Virgil, opens with a congratulatory salutation to the Mantuan poet, praised as the most splendid master of eloquence and Rome's true glory. Petrarch asks which part of *Avernus* Virgil inhabits, the palace of Hades or the Elysian fields (ll. 4-8).[282] If Virgil is in the Elysian fields, Petrarch continues, he will be in the company of Orpheus and Horace, but surely not alongside Lucan and Lucretius, who killed themselves and have thus been placed in a different region of the underworld (ll. 9-17):

> Et simul unanimis tecum spatiatur Homerus
> Solivagique canunt Phebum per prata poete,
> Orpheus ac reliqui, nisi quos violenta relegat
> Mors propria conscita manu sevique ministri
> Obsequio, qualis Lucanum in fata volentem
> impulit — arterias medico dedit ille cruento
> Supplicii graviore metu mortisque pudende —;
> Sic sua Lucretium mors abstulit ac ferus ardor
> Longe aliis, ut fama, locis habitare coegit.[283]

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[279] Transl. Bernardo, *Letters of Old Age*, I, 160

[280] *Sen.* V, 2, 15: "Quod autem secundum tertium ve patis nequis, vide ne superbie vere sit. Ut ego etenim te antistem (cui utinam par essem!), ut te precedat ille nostri eloquii dux vulgaris, id ne adeo moleste fers, ab uno vel altero, concive presertim tuo, seu omnino a paucissimis te preteiri? Vide ne superbius id sit quam ambire excellentiam primi loci [...]" ("Take care lest it really be pride that you cannot endure second or third place, or that I should surpass you when I wish to be your equal, or that the master of our vernacular literature should be preferred to you. Do you bear it so ill to be thus outdone by one or two men, especially fellow citizens, or at most very few? Take care lest this be more conceited than coveting first place." Transl. Bernardo, *Letters of Old Age*, I, 160).

[281] When dealing with the matter of Virgil's possible rivalry with, and superiority over, Homer, Petrarch is either reticent or overtly in favor of the Roman poet (*Fam.* VI, 4, 12; XXII, 10, 6; XXIV, 4, 8-10; cfr. also *Fam.* I, 2, 23; XIII, 6, 4; XIII, 7, 12, 17; XXI, 15, 5, where Homer and Virgil are praised in conjunction; Fera, "Petrarca lettore," 150 on Petrarch's notes on the Virgil-Homer comparison in the margins of his codex Ambrosianus). An extended account of Petrarch's opinion of Dante is contained in his well-known letter to Boccaccio (*Fam.* XXI, 15).

[282] "Quis te terrarum tractus, quotus arcet Averni / Circulus? An raucam citharam tibi fuscus Apollo / Percutit et nigre contexunt verba sorores? / An pius elysiam permulces carmine silvam / Tartareumque Elicona colis, pulcerrime vatum?" ("What earthly tract, which circle of Avernus keeps you from us? Does swarthy Apollo pluck his harsh lute for you, do the black sisters inspire your verses? Or do you dutifully charm the Elysian groves with your song and inhabit the Tartarean Helicon, O most splendid of bards?" Transl. Bernardo, *Letter on Familiar Matters*, III, 340).

[283] "And does Homer, who was of one mind with you, roam with you? And do Orpheus and the other poets wander alone through the meadows, singing the praises of Phoebus, all but those whom a self-inflicted and violent death and

Petrarch subsequently inquires whether there is a celestial paradise where the souls of the blessed are welcomed after Christ descended into Hell (ll. 21-27).[284]

This opening part of Petrarch's poetic letter evokes Suetonius' and the ancient biographers' account of Lucan's suicide within a refined web of intertextual allusions.[285] The classical-Virgilian description of *Avernus* is juxtaposed with the Platonic, Ciceronian, neo-Ciceronian, and here explicitly Christian idea of a celestial paradise for noble souls.[286] More specifically, Petrarch's lines on Virgil's and Lucan's afterlife lend themselves to be read in connection with Statius' *Genethliacon Lucani* (*Silvae* II, 7).[287]

In his eulogy of Lucan, Statius introduces a speech by Calliope, where Lucan is extolled as *alter Orpheus*. Lucan's exaltation of his *Bellum Civile* over Virgil's *Culex* is reasserted by Calliope's tribute to the Cordovan poet's incredible precocity (ll. 73-74) and Lucan's inspiration is recognized as superior to the sublime ardour (*furor arduus*) of the learned Lucretius (ll. 75-76); the *Bellum Civile* is said to be worthy of the veneration of the *Aeneid* itself (ll. 79-80). The concluding section of the *Genethliacon* contains an apostrophe to Lucan. According to Statius, Lucan might be either in the heavenly paradise, where the greatest souls reside (as he suggests with a possible allusion to Lucan's account of Pompey's afterlife), or amidst the woods and beaches of Elysium (ll. 107-23).[288]

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servile homage to a cruel lord have banished to another region? Such was Lucan, who was driven willingly to his death, offering his artery to the doctor out of fear of a more painful and bloody punishment and a shameful death; such was Lucretius, whose death and savage fury, they say, compelled him to dwell in places apart" (Transl. Bernardo, *Letters on Familiar Matters*, III, 340).

[284] "An potius celi regio tranquilla beatos / Excipit, ingeniisque arrident astra serenis / Post Stygios raptus spoliataque Tartara, summi / Regis ad adventum [...]?" ("Or rather does a peaceful region of the heavens contain the blessed spirits, and do the stars smile upon the peaceful shades of the illustrious, following the conquest of the Stygian abodes, and the plundering of the Tartarean egions by the coming of the Highest King [...]?"Transl. Bernardo, *Letters on Familiar Matters*, III, 340).

[285] Suetonius, *Life of Lucan*, 23-26: "Impetrato autem mortis arbitrio libero [...] epulatusque largiter brachia ad secandas venas praebuit medico" ("But when he was allowed free choice of the manner of his death, he [...] offered his arms to a physician, to cut his veins;" transl. Rolfe, *Lives of the Caesars*, II, 479); cfr. Eusebius, *Chronicle*, ed. Helm, p. 183: "M. Annaeus Lucanus Cordubensis poeta in Pisoniana coniuratione deprehensus bracchium ad secandas venas medico praebuit" ("M. A. Lucanus, the Cordovan poet, after his participation in Piso's conspiracy was discovered, offered his arm to a physician, to cut his veins;" my transl.). See also *Vacca*, 43-44: "Nam sua sponte coactus vita excedere venas sibi praecidit" ("Indeed, having being forced to die, he cut his veins of his own will;" my transl.); *Vita* III, 9-11: "morti adiudicatus est, data sibi optione mortis ut, qua vellet, morte periret. Qui [...] incisis omnibus venis corporis periit" ("When he was condemned to death, he was given the option of choosing how to die. He [...] killed himself by cutting all the veins in his body;" Braidotti, *Le vite antiche*, 41; my transl.).

[286] On the Greek and Latin tradition on the heavenly paradise, cfr. Van Dam, *Silvae Book II*, 496-97.

[287] Scholars tend to agree that Statius' *Silvae* were unknown in the Middle Ages until their rediscovery by Poggio Bracciolini in 1417. However, the *Genethliacon Lucani* was separately transmitted in Florence, Laur. 29, 32 (ninth century); moreover, Billanovich and Brugnoli have argued that the Paduan protohumanists and Petrarch were familiar with the *Silvae* (Reeve, "Statius," 397; Caruso, "Una nota," 303; Billanovich, "*Veterum vestigia vatum*;" Brugnoli, "Le *Silvae*.").

[288] "At tu, seu rapidum poli per axem / Famae curribus arduis levatus, / qua surgunt animae potentiores, / terras despicis et sepulchra rides; / seu pacis merito nemus reclusi / felix Elysii tenes in oris, / quo Pharsalica turba congregatur, / et te nobile carmen insonantem / Pompei comitantur et Catones / (Tu magna sacer et superbus umbra / Nescis Tartaron et procul nocentum / Audis verbera pallidumque visa / Matris lampade respicis Neronem); / Adsis lucidus et vocante Polla [...]" (" But you, whether soaring in Fame's lofty chariot through the rapid vault of heavcn, where rise mighty souls, you look down on earth and laugh at tombs, or dwell happily in Elysium's retreat, the grove of peace you have deserved, where assembles the Pharsalian throng and the Pompeys and Catos keep you company as you sound your noble lay (you, great soul, hallowed and proud, are not familiar with Tartarus and hear from a distance the whipping of the guilty, regarding Nero as he pales at sight of his mother's torch): come here in your

Petrarch — who, we have seen, is a strenuous defender of Virgil's preeminence over Lucan — seems to overturn and "correct" Statius' eulogy. He points out that Lucan may not be in the Elysian fields, since that is not the place for suicide victims; in fact, the reader of Virgil's *Aeneid* would have known that the souls of those who killed themselves are located in a sort of *Antinferno*, immediately after the entrance to Hades and surrounded by the Styx.[289]

Petrarch's letter can also, and especially, be read as a polemical response to Dante's grouping of Lucan together with Virgil, Horace, and other classical poets in the same region of the underworld (*Inf.* IV, 85-93).[290] In Petrarch's opinion, Lucan's suicide is ethically disqualifying and a distinction must be traced between him and the other *spiriti magni*. Voluntary death connects the Cordovan poet, rather, with Lucretius, with whom Lucan also shares an "ardent" temperament and inordinate *ingenium*:[291] Lucan and Lucretius are represented by Petrarch as both poetically and morally inferior to Virgil, "the most splendid of bards."[292]

Following Suetonius, Petrarch states that Lucan killed himself because of his fear of a more severe punishment and a shameful death ("supplicii graviore metu mortisque pudende").[293] Such a reconstruction denies any heroism in the poet's death. Indeed, Petrarch's attitude to Stoic suicide is also much more condemnatory than Dante's in the case of Cato Uticensis, whose self-inflicted death Petrarch fiercely denounces, in contrast with Dante's moral absolution and glorification of the character praised by Lucan.[294]

However, the above passages clearly show that, despite all his reservations, Petrarch counts Lucan among the major ancient poets; his appreciation of the dramatic technique and philosophical substance of Lucan's poetry is further revealed by other *loci*, analyzed below.[295] Petrarch's *postille* on his manuscripts of Virgil and Servius also contain frequent mentions of Lucan as associated with Virgil. Integrating Servius' references to the Cordovan poet, Petrarch quotes Lucan to confirm and complement Virgil's notions about ancient geography, mythology, and history, to explain some grammatical usages, clarify the meaning of some words, or provide parallels for Virgil's phrasing; in some instances, Petrarch identifies closer similarities between Virgil's and Lucan's lines and even defends Lucan against Servius' critiques.[296] What is more,

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splendor, Polla calls [...]" Readaptation of Shackleton Bailey, transl., *Statius; Silvae*, 147, which is based on a text including seventeenth- to nineteenth-century emendations of Statius' poem).
fr. Lucan. X, 1-4; Van Dam, *Silvae Book II*, 496-97.

[289] Verg., *Aen.* VI, 434-39 (cfr. Dotti, ed., *Familiares*, vol. V, 3577, n. 7, and the Vatican Mythographer III, 6, 20, where Virgil's description of the afterlife is put into relation with Lucan's).

[290] See p. 20 above.

[291] If in *Sen*. V, 2, 10 Lucan is defined "*ardentis* vir *ingenii* atque animi," in *Fam.* XXIV, 11, 7 Petrarch speaks of Lucretius' "ferus *ardor*" and in *Sen.* V, 5, 18 he states: "vel Lucretius qui, pari seu literarum copia seu furoris ob impatentiam vite, proprio se mucrone confodit manuque illa, qua tot egregia carmina scripserat, *ingeniosam* magis quam felicem animam extrusit" ("or [...] Lucretius, his [Empedocles'] equal whether in learning or madness, who stabbed himself with his own blade because of his impatience with life, and with the same hand that had written so many outstanding verses he thrust out his gifted rather than happy soul;" transl. Bernardo, *Letters of Old Age*, I, 184; italics mine). In *Sen.* XI, 17, 6 Lucan's and Lucretius' voluntary deaths are contrasted with Virgil's.

[292] *Fam.* XXIV, 11, 8; transl. Bernardo, *Letters on Familiar Matters*, III, 340.

[293] *Fam.* XXIV, 11, 15.

[294] See below, n. 440, p. 81.

[295] Cfr. pp. 76-80.

[296] Petrarch's *postille* have been edited and studied by Baglio, Nebuloni Testa, and Petoletti. For Petrarch's association of Lucan with Virgil in the fields of ancient geography, history, mythology and the description of the afterworld, see Petrarch, *Le postille*, 270; 469-70 n. 27 (*ad Serv. in Buc*. I, 22); 549 n. 392 (*ad Serv. in Georg*. I, 57); 554-55 n. 411 (*ad Serv. in Georg*. I, 243); 566-67; 591-92; 598 n. 555 (*ad Serv. in Georg*. IV, 127); 604-5 n. 572 (*ad Serv. in Georg*. IV, 278); 696 n. 833 (*ad Serv. in Aen.* III, 92); 706 n. 869 (*ad Serv. in Aen.* III, 169); 784; 801 n.

Petrarch's manuscript notes suggest that some passages by Lucan, as well as by Virgil, evince the poets' alleged monotheism.[297]

Moreover, Petrarch does not seem to regard Lucan as unproblematically anti-Caesar, as scholars have long assumed (following Nolhac, who cites this as the main reason for the humanist's supposed abhorrence of the Cordovan author). Rather, it turns out that Petrarch reads Lucan's poem as simultaneously sympathetic towards, and critical of, both Caesar and Pompey, and as aimed at eternalizing the name of both commanders. More than a strenuous Republican, Petrarch considers Lucan an admirer of that *virtus ignea* which he identifies as characteristic of heroes.[298]

Petrarch's *Fam*. II, 7 includes various examples of unexpected death, among which is the death Caesar risked due to a violent storm during his crossing of the Adriatic towards Brindisi: an episode told in the fifth book of the *Bellum Civile*. Lucan, mentioned by Petrarch with the usual epithet of "poet," is said to show a profound understanding of Caesar's pain in such a situation, as his decision to report the great man's complaints may attest:

> Hinc est quod idem ille Iulius Caesar fragili carina in ancipiti tempestate deprehensus, cum mortem timere cepisset, hoc unum videtur lamentari, quod
>
> ingentes abruperit actus festinata dies fatis
>
> Noverat poeta quid maxime tali viro aut molestum fuisset in eo statu aut esse debuisset, idque potissimum querelis inseruit.[299]

Therefore, in Petrarch's eyes, far from expressing a vehemently anti-Caesar viewpoint, Lucan's text develops as an empathetic reconstruction of Caesar's state of mind and is informed by appreciation for the hero's high aspirations.

A confirmation on this point comes from the already-mentioned *Collatio laureationis*, which deals with the topic of poetic fame. Petrarch remarks that the immortality conferred by poetry is of two kinds, as it can concern either poets themselves or the subjects they deemed worthy of their celebration, and illustrates his thesis with famous programmatic passages by the four *magni auctores* (Virgil, Ovid, Statius, and Lucan). Lucan's simultaneous homage to Caesar

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1252 (*ad Serv. in Aen.* VI, 127); 830 n. 1366 (*ad Serv. in Aen.* VI, 532); 853-54 n. 1425 (*ad Serv. in Aen.* VI, 830); 868 n. 1475 (*ad Serv. in Aen.* VII, 188); 869 n. 1438 (*ad Serv. in Aen.* VII, 206); 880 n. 1537 (*ad Serv. in Aen.* VII, 711); 900 n. 1613 (*ad Serv. in Aen.* VIII, 328); 959 n. 1818 (*ad Serv. in Aen.* XII, 139). References to Lucan in the field of grammar and word choice are: Petrarch, *Le postille*, 690-1 n. 805 (*ad Serv. in Aen.* III, 64); 732-33 n. 966 (*ad Serv. in Aen.* IV, 72); 779 n. 1163 (*ad Serv. in Aen.* V, 801); 790-1 n. 1206 (*ad Serv. in Aen.* VI, 104); 793 n. 1217 (*ad Serv. in Aen.* VI, 104); 809 n. 1294 (*ad Serv. in Aen.* VI, 216); 850-1 n. 1419 (*ad Serv. in Aen.* VI, 763); 883-84 n. 1549-50 (*ad Serv. in Aen.* VII, 717); 892 n. 1585 (*ad Serv. in Aen.* VIII, 77); 923 n. 1681 (*ad Serv. in Aen.* IX, 329); 937 n. 1722 (*ad Serv. in Aen.* X, 467); 952 n. 1784 (*ad Serv. in Aen.* XI, 522). Petrarch points out closer stylistic association between Virgil's and Lucan's lines in *Le postille*, 438 n. 559 (*ad Aen*. XI, 313); 443 n. 573 (*ad Aen*. XII, 144); 618 n. 613 (*ad Serv. in Aen.* I, 23); 675 n. 772 (*ad Serv. in Aen.* II, 417). In *Postille* 712 n. 891 (*ad Serv. in Aen.* III, 326), Petrarch defends Lucan against Servius.

[297] See Petrarch, *Le postille*, 264 n. 208 (*ad Georg*. IV, 221); 467 n. 15 (*ad Serv. in Buc.* I, 7); 498-99 n. 162 (*ad Serv. in Buc.* III, 60); cfr. Baglio, "Le postille a Virgilio," 82-83.

[298] The phrase, drawn from Lucan. IX, 7, is variously redeployed by Petrarch with reference to Scipio, Niccolò Acciaiuoli, and Charles IV, about which latter he writes: "profecto enim necessaria regnantibus virtus heroyca, quam Virgilius 'ardentem', Lucanus 'igneam' vocat" (*Fam.* X, 4, 33; XII, 15, 2; XVI, 5, 8; cfr. pp. 69-70 below).

[299] "This is why Julius Caesar himself, overtaken by a dangerous storm in a fragile ship, when he had begun to fear death, seemed to complain about this alone, that 'the hastening day of destiny cuts short great undertaking.' The poet knew what had been especially troublesome to such a man or what ought to have been, when he introduced that remark as the strongest of his complaints" (*Fam.* II, 7, 7; Lucan. V, 659-60; transl. Bernardo, *Letters on Familiar Matters*, I, 93).

and his own poem in book IX is cited by Petrarch as an attempt to achieve both types of *nominis immortalitas*:

> De utraque simul loquitur in nono Lucanus:
>
> Venturi me teque legent; Pharsalia nostra
> vivet, et a nullo tenebris dampnabitur evo.[300]

By quoting these famous lines of the *Bellum Civile*, Petrarch proves that he reads Lucan's epic as at least partly devoted to the glorification of Caesar's deeds, in keeping with the late-medieval trend developing from Gunther of Pairis to Albertino Mussato.[301] "Venturi me teque legent": if Lucan's name is inextricably linked to Caesar's, Petrarch's reception of the *Bellum Civile* appears informed by this awareness, which is also demonstrated by his discussion of Lucan's poetic celebration of Caesar in the *De otio*.[302] As I will elucidate below, Petrarch draws from Lucan's polysemous and enigmatic text representations of Caesar that are as much positive as negative.[303]

Petrarch equally emphasizes Lucan's affection and esteem for Pompey. For instance, in dealing with the glory that poetry grants to human achievements, the Tuscan writer observes that poets praise people they never actually met, "as the author who addressed himself to Pompey was not unaware."[304] This reference to Lucan is accompanied by a direct quotation of the sympathetic apostrophe by which the ancient poet promises immortal fame to Pompey before recounting the battle of Pharsalus (Lucan. VII, 210-13). Nevertheless, my analysis will prove that Petrarch redeploys Lucan's text to praise Pompey's *virtus* highly but also to display its relative limits as already hinted at in the *Bellum Civile*.[305]

Petrarch's sophisticated reading of the complications of Lucan's ideological stance is further illuminated by reference to the exegesis of a puzzling Petrarchan passage by a fourteenth-century commentator, described as "admodum familiaris Petrarche"[306]. *Contra medicum* 3, 159 argues that poets are not envious and provides a list of ancient poets with their identifying qualities:

> Nusquam fere vel minus invidie, vel innocentie magis, vel amicitie tantundem. [...] Quanta Virgilii integritas! Quenam Statii urbanitas, que facetie Nasonis, que fides Ennii, que Pacuvii

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[300] "And of both kinds together Lucan speaks in his ninth book: 'Posterity will read me and thee. Our Pharsalia will live, no generation will banish us to the shadows!'" (Petr. *Coll. laur.* 10, 8; Lucan. IX, 985-86; transl. Wilkins, *Studies*, 308; Joyce, *Pharsalia*, 264). The widespread assumption that the title of Lucan's poem was *Pharsalia* rests on a misunderstanding of these lines (cfr. Tarrant, "Lucan," 215, n. 1).

[301] See pp. 5-6, 12 above; cfr. Bond, "Lucan" on Salutati's reuse of the *Bellum Civile* as a philo-monarchist text.

[302] *De ot.* II, 5, 10-11; see pp. 84-85 below. Lucan's promise to Caesar in *Bellum Civile* IX, 985-86 also informs Petrarch's *Sen.* IV, 1, a letter addressed to Luchino dal Verme and recalling the fortitude of the ancient *viri illustres*, among whom Caesar especially stands out. Alongside the Romans, Petrarch also mentions the ancient Trojan heroes who "owe much to their poets," as he writes with a reference to Lucan's description of Caesar's visit to the tombs of the Trojan heroes celebrated by Homer (*Sen*. I, 4, 29; Lucan. IX, 963). Juxtaposing Lucan's words on poetic immortality with his contextual praise of the figure of Caesar, Petrarch's text evokes the above-quoted continuation of the *Bellum Civile*, where the poet promises that, thanks to his poem, the Roman dictator will attain the same fame as his Trojan precursors. Moreover, in *Tr. Pud.* 73 the adjective used by Petrarch to connote Caesar is *ardente*, which is interesting in relation to the description of Lucan as *ardens* in *Sen*. V, 2, 10.

[303] See below, p. 62-69.

[304] *Fam.* IX, 11, 6.

[305] See below, p. 71-75.

[306] Monti, "Petrarca *auctoritas*," 239.

> gravitas, quis Vari candor, que Flacci discretio, que Persii pietas, que modestia Lucani, que libertas atque constantia Iuvenalis![307]

Lucan's characterizing virtue is identified as modesty (*modestia*): a rather striking choice in light of Petrarch's comments, discussed above, on Lucan's *iactantia*. The passage has, indeed, baffled some contemporary scholars: Leuker explains it as a mistake, where Petrarch names Lucan but actually meant Statius.[308] It is also possible that Petrarch is here alluding to Lucan's acknowledgment of his poetic debt to predecessors other than Virgil, and particularly his tribute to Homer.[309] Further, the difference in rhetorical context could also have played a role in determining this apparent inconsistency in Petrarch's characterization of Lucan.

> In his *Preambulum* on Lucan, however, Pietro da Parma says of the Cordovan poet: Utri parti magis faverit dicendum quod utrique dat epiteta, id est adiectiva convenientia, utrique commendando et vel detrahendo nec quemque defraudat laude vel victuperio eis congruentibus, quidam tamen dicunt quod magis Cesari, quidam Pompeio. Sed dicit dominus Franciscus in quadam sua epistula: "modestia Lucani" per quod intelligo quod eque commendaverit utrumque cum oportuit et similiter vituperavit. Nam modestia dicitur quasi "modum tenens" vel "in modo stans", unde hec modestia, que est proprietas et qualitas servandi modum in rebus dicendis.[310]

According to Pietro, with the word *modestia* Petrarch is pointing to Lucan's capacity to maintain a "middle way" stance (*modus*) between Caesar and Pompey and to find a balance between praise and blame of the two opposing leaders. Whether or not this is what Petrarch meant, Pietro's explanation of this controversial term is revealing of how Petrarch's idea of Lucan was received in his intellectual environment.[311]

Like other medieval and early-humanist authors, Petrarch is aware of, and sensitive to, the ideological complexities of the *Bellum Civile* and the intersection of an anti- and pro-Caesar narrative within the poem, which recent scholarship has interpreted as a representation of the

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[307] "There is practically no other group that exhibits less envy, more innocence, or as much friendship. [...] Consider the magnitude of Virgil's integrity, Statius's urbanity, Ovid's wit, Ennius's honesty, Pacuvius's gravity, Varius's candor, Horace's discretion, Persius's piety, Lucan's modesty, and Juvenal's candor and constancy!" (transl. Marsh, *Invectives*, 109).

[308] Leuker, *Angelo Poliziano: Dichter, Redner,* 223, n. 221. Leuker does not consider the fact that Statius has already been mentioned in the passage.

[309] Lucan's tribute to Homer is recalled in Petrarch's letter to Virgil (*Fam.* XXIV, 12, 20; cfr. Lucan. IX, 984).

[310] "As for the matter of which one of the two sides Lucan supports, it must be said that he uses epithets, i.e. suitable adjectives, with reference to both, approving and criticizing each alike, nor does he deprive either side of the appropriate praise or blame, although some people hold that he privileges Caesar and some Pompey. However, master Franciscus mentions 'Lucan's modesty' in one of his epistles and based on this I infer that Lucan equally and appropriately praised and blamed both Caesar and Pompey. Indeed, 'modesty' means, so to speak, 'keeping a middle way' or 'standing in the middle,' so that here 'modesty' is meant as the property and quality of maintaining a middle way or stance in speaking" (Pietro da Parma, *Preambulum*, 211-20, ed. Monti, p. 267, my transl.).

[311] Petrarch's own works display various instances of "modest," that is joint and carefully balanced, praise of both Caesar and his rival. For instance, in *Fam.* II, 8, 4 and XIII, 4, 15 Pompey and Caesar are mentioned in conjunction as models of great characters facing difficulties and achieving glory through labour (with allusions to Lucan. IX, 436, 464-65 and IX, 368ff.); Caesar's and Pompey's triumphs are recalled together also in *Fam*. VII, 2, 12-14. In *Sen.* IV, 1, to Luchino dal Verme, Petrarch exalts Caesar as the most skilled in military art and as rapid, strong, munificent, affable, eloquent; Pompey is concomitantly mentioned as a model of temperance, justice, moderation, and eloquence.

ambiguities of heroism and the impossibility of a coherent ideology.[312] The discourse that Petrarch himself develops by building on Lucanian materials appears similarly ambivalent towards both Caesar and Pompey, the "great figures" around whom his quotations of Lucan tend to cluster.

THE AMBIGUITIES OF CAESARISM

If Dante's attitude towards Caesar, "primo prencipe sommo," is overall highly positive, the exact nature of Petrarch's position is still subject to debate. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, scholars have noticed that Petrarch exalts Caesar as the prototype of the skillful commander and grounds his cult of the Roman dictator on a sound historical basis, for he understands the problematic historical implications of the civil war recounted by Lucan.[313]

Both Martellotti and Baron, however, have observed that no such cult of Caesar is apparent in Petrarch's earlier works, which are, rather, characterized by admiration for Scipio and the Roman Republic. According to these scholars, Petrarch moves from an openly anti-Caesar position — especially noticeable in the *Africa* (ca. 1338-44), where Lucan's influence is very strong — to a reevaluation of the figure of Caesar that starts only later, in the early 1350s, and is fully revealed by the *De gestis Cesaris* (ca. 1368-71). This supposed evolution in Petrarch's stance is attributed by Martellotti to the humanist's reading of Suetonius, Cicero, and Caesar's own *Commentarii*, while Baron explains it with reference to Petrarch's support of the absolute *Signorie* of the Visconti and Carrara after his disillusionment with Cola di Rienzo's republican project. Moreover, Petrarch's enthusiasm for Caesar is alleged to be due not to the latter's symbolic role as founder of the Roman Empire, but rather to his complex and fascinating human personality (for Martellotti) and to his introduction of political autocracy (for Baron), so that it would not represent a homage to the previous medieval, "Caesarist" tradition, but rather an anticipation of humanism.[314] This "evolutionist" explanation has become conventional and still informs recent studies of Petrarch's works in relation to Lucan, including Crevatin's reading of the *De gestis* as an anti-Lucanian work.[315]

Yet, in his study of Lucan in Petrarch's *Africa*, Leigh has thrown some doubt on Martellotti and Baron's interpretation, remarking that Lucan's Caesar is already the model for Petrarch's Scipio in the *Africa*. More than a paradigm of Republican virtue, Petrarch's Scipio would be "a precedent for the historical Caesar and all the Caesars to come."[316] Fera's recent

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[312] On the inner tensions of Lucan's poem, see Brisset, *Les idées*, 35-223; Masters, *Poetry and Civil War*, 1-10, 87-89; Bartsch, *Ideology in Cold Blood*, 1-9; Johnson, *Momentary Monsters*, 35-134 (cfr. pp. 2-3, 26 above and p. 73 below). The implications of these contradictions for the (medieval) receptions of the *Bellum Civile* have been evaluated by Martindale, *Redeeming the Text*, 71-72; Id., *Latin Poetry*, 226-36; Adams, "The Influence of Lucan" (on Lucan in Suger of Saint-Denis); Bond, "Lucan" (on Salutati's reuse of the *Bellum Civile*).

[313] See for example Gundolf, *Caesar*, 107-17. According to this reading, Petrarch anticipates fifteenth-century humanistic debates. Renaissance scholars such as Bruni, Bracciolini, and Guarino were indeed the first to regard the struggle between Caesar and his rivals as decisive for the transition from Roman Republic to principate (cfr. pp. 115, 125-26 below).

[314] Martellotti, "Petrarca e Cesare;" Baron, *The Crisis*; 55-57, 121-23; McLaughlin, "Empire," 338-39 with bibl.; Leigh, "Petrarch's Lucan," 250. A similar evolution would be also demonstrated by the *Trionfi*, where the figure of Caesar would gradually acquire more prominence in comparison with Scipio, and by the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*, where a turn could be perceived from the open hostility to Caesar of *Rvf* 44 and 102 to the sympathetic standpoint of *Rvf* 155 (Cavagna, "La figure," 73-77; Crevatin, "*Stat magni nominis umbra*," 246ff.; see p. 63 below).

[315] Crevatin, "La presenza."

[316] Leigh, "Petrarch's Lucan;" cfr. Dotti, "Introduzione," 375-78.

study of Petrarch's Scipio comes to similar conclusions.[317] On the other hand, Kallendorf, Witt, and Ascoli have also challenged Baron's argument from another front, arguing that Petrarch's depiction of Caesar remains ambiguous throughout his life.[318]

In my opinion, Petrarch's conception of the historical Caesar is an intellectual problem that, although profoundly interconnected with the issue of Petrarch's political stance in the conflicts of his own time, must be partly distinguished from it. Precisely because Petrarch achieves a fully historical understanding of the Roman civil war, he is conscious of the temporal divide separating him from Caesar's times. While he recovers the past as a model for the present, he does so in full awareness of the artificiality of his rhetorical gesture. Therefore, I will deal with these two matters in close and yet distinct succession, while always keeping Petrarch's reception of Lucan as my primary filter and focus.

The historical Caesar: Lucan and Petrarch

A study of the redeployments of Lucan's descriptions of Caesar in the Petrarchan corpus suggests that Petrarch's growing admiration for the Roman dictator coexists with the persistence of a strong ambivalence towards him at all stages of his writing activity. Revitalizing the ambiguities that he already finds in Lucan's text, Petrarch constantly praises Caesar's energetic *virtus*, but his historical judgment on Caesar's illegal usurpation of power is generally negative, moving from reproach (in the *Africa*) to cautious suspension of judgment (in the *De gestis* and Petrarch's later works).

It is true that the "mature" Petrarch appears to deliberately contradict Lucan on some specific points. This is especially evident in relation to the issue of Caesar's tears at the sight of Pompey's head. As is well-known, in his earlier works (*RVF* 44, 1-4 and 102, 1-4; *Fam.* VI, 3, 4) Petrarch adheres to Lucan's denunciation of Caesar's hypocrisy, whereas in his later texts (*RVF* 155, 1-4; *Rem.* I, 104, 10; *De gestis*, 21, 3) he opts for a different interpretation of Caesar's weeping, now regarded as "pious" and arising from the hero's sincere and noble compassion for his valorous enemy.[319] It is also true that, in Petrarch's later works, the *Bellum Civile* is more often accompanied or replaced by other sources, generally more favourable to Caesar, such as Suetonius, Florus, and the *Commentaries* by Caesar himself. Nevertheless, Lucan is constantly present in Petrarch's writings, both earlier and later, where the *Bellum Civile* is reused to produce contrasting representations of Caesar.

Within the *Africa,* Caesar is explicitly mentioned in the context of Scipio Africanus' dream, where Scipio's father foretells the future evolutions of Roman history. The portrayal of Caesar is here markedly negative, as the Roman commander is blamed for his lack of restraint, for fighting against his homeland, establishing absolutism, and plundering the treasury:

> O felix si forte *modum* sciat addere ferro!
> Nesciet heu! noletque miser; sed turbine mentis
> Victrices per cuncta manus in publica vertet
> Viscera, civili fedans externa cruore
> Prelia et emeritos indigno Marte triumphos;
> Me tamen infami tam multa decora furore

[317] Fera's points out that, in Petrarch's view, the figures of Scipio and Caesar are never mutually exclusive (Fera, "Petrarca e Scipione," 139-54).
[318] Kallendorf, "The Historical Petrarch," 132ff.; Witt, "The Rebirth," 110-1; Ascoli, "Petrarch's Private Politics," 154-55 with bibl.
[319] Cfr. Crevatin, "La presenza," 245-47 with bibl.

> Commaculare pudet. Quam turpiter omnia calcat
> Ambitus, *ut totum imperium* sibi vindicet *unus*,
> Primus et exemplum reliquis, spolietque superbus
> Erarium miserosque novo legat ordine patres! [320]

The hypotext of this passage is Lucanian. Already in the *Bellum Civile* Caesar is opposed to Cato for his lack of *modus*, is accused of turning his victorious right hand against the bowels (*viscera*) of Rome, striving for absolute and limitless power, despoiling the *aerarium*, and overturning Republican institutions.[321] I believe that another interesting parallel is given by Walter of Châtillon's emphatic apostrophe to Alexander (which already displays Lucanian materials and concepts):

> Quo tendit tua, Magne, fames? quis finis habendi,
> Querendi quis erit *modus* aut que meta laborum?
> Nil agis, o demens. licet *omnia* clauseris *uno*
> Regna *sub imperio totumque* subegeris orbem,
> Semper egenus eris. animus nullius egentem
> Non res efficiunt, sed sufficientia. [...][322]

The numerous and divergent studies on the function of Walter's drawing upon Lucan in the *Alexandreis* have already been summarized.[323] In my view, Petrarch's reuse of Lucan for his representation(s) of Caesar should be complicated in a similar way.

Indeed, as a comparison with the passage from the *Alexandreis* helps to reveal, even in the presumedly anti-Caesarean *Africa* the tone of Petrarch's discourse is more sorrowful than condemnatory, combining regret for Caesar's lack of *modus* with obvious admiration for his remarkable skills. According to the Petrarch of the *Africa*, Caesar — who is introduced as the "bravest of all Rome's sons, whose name henceforth shall be forever sung throughout the earth"[324]— is culpable for staining the splendour of his great triumphs ("multa decora [...] commaculare") with infamous fury ("infami [...] furore"). In the relatively early canzone *Italia*

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[320] "Ah happy conqueror could he but learn to set due limits on his flashing blade. For this the wretched man lacks wit and will; he lays in madness his victorious hands upon the state, and laurels won abroad with blood of fellow Romans he defiles, in strife unseemly sullying deserved triumphs. Ah, shame to mar such high renown with folly infamous! How brazenly the lust for office sweeps all else aside so that the power may lie with one alone! He for the first, and giving sad example, will loot the Treasury with rapacious hands and select miserable Senators with a new order!" (*Africa* II, 228-37; transl. Bergin and Wilson, *Petrarch's Africa*, 30-1, modified).

[321] Lucan. I, 334; I, 3; III, 103ff., 114ff.; cfr. Bruère, "Lucan and Petrarch's *Africa*," 87; Martellotti, "Petrarca e Cesare," 83.

[322] "Great One, where will your hunger lead? What end will come of grasping? Pray, what bounds are set unto your search? Where stands your labours' goal? Madman, your works are naught. Though you enclose all kingdoms in one empire and subdue the entire world, a pauper you remain forever — for the soul is made a pauper not by a dearth of wealth, but of contentment" (Gualt., *Alex.* X, 191-96, Italics mine, transl. Townsend, *The Alexandreis*, 203). The *clausula* "subegeris orbem" at l. 194 is Lucanian (Lucan. 1, 284-85; cfr. Colker, ed., *Alexandreis*, 261). For Alexander's lack of *modus* (in contrast with Lucan's Cato), cfr. Lafferty, *Walter of Châtillon's Alexandreis,* 148. On Petrarch's knowledge of the *Alexandreis*, see Carrara, *Da Rolando*; Fenzi, "Di alcuni palazzi," Velli, "Petrarca e la grande poesia;" Id., Petrarca, Boccaccio e la grande poesia," with bibl.; Townsend, *The Alexandreis*, xi-xii. Martellotti, ed., *De viris illustribus* XV, 320-1*,* pp. 69-70 points out an allusion to *Alexandreis* X, 165-82).

[323] See p. 6 above.

[324] *Africa*, II, 219-20 ("Fortissimus ille nepotum / Unus erit magno semper cantandus in orbe"); transl. Bergin and Wilson, *Petrarch's Africa*, 30.

mia (1345), Petrarch "praises Iulius as slaughterer of the Barbarians;"[325] but a similar encomium is already present in the *Africa*,[326] and finds an echo in other Petrarchan texts dating from the same period.[327]

Moreover, as Bruère and Leigh have observed, Petrarch's delineation of Scipio's heroism in the *Africa* is reminiscent of Lucan's Caesar. Like the character of the *Bellum Civile*, Petrarch's hero "reckons he has not achieved anything while something remains to be done" — as is said twice in the *Africa* with a Lucanian echo.[328] Petrarch's description of Scipio as fierce (*indomitus*), and endowed with restless *virtus* and spiritual strength (*constantia mentis*) finds a parallel in Lucan's characterization of Caesar.[329] Petrarch recuperates the implicitly positive connotation that Caesar's energy acquires in Lucan's text and transfers this trait to a morally impeccable hero, because, unlike Caesar, Scipio has a sense of limits and proper respect for deity.[330]

In his various works, Petrarch repeatedly praises Caesar's *virtus* by reworking elements already present in the *Bellum Civile*. In *Fam.* XII, 15 (written around 1352) he encourages Niccolò Acciaiuoli to imitate Caesar and to be as eloquent as he is valiant.[331] The phrase by which Petrarch refers to Caesar's oratorical skills ("indocilis privata loqui") is drawn from Lucan's narration of Caesar's encounter with Amyclas,[332] an episode utilized by Petrarch as a proof of Caesar's eloquence also in *Fam.* III, 22, 2.[333] In the *De gestis Cesaris*, Petrarch again

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[325] Mc Laughlin, "Empire," 339; Petr. *RVF* 128, 49-51: "Cesare taccio, che per ogni piaggia / fece l'erbe sanguigne / di lor vene, ove 'l nostro ferro mise" ("Of Caesar I do not speak, who in every meadow made the grass scarlet with their veins where he put our steel;" transl. Durling, *Petrarch's Lyric Poems*, 258).

[326] *Africa* II, 219-27: " [...] Fortissimus ille nepotum / Unus erit magno semper cantandus in orbe, / Gallica qui vario complebit rura pavore / Et fluvios atri violabit sanguinis unda. / Inde procul celo et terra pelagoque repostos / Auricomos rapido calcabit Marte Britannos, / Stringet; et indomito luctantem gurgite Rhenum / Pontibus, hostilesque tenens cum milite fines / Tristia ceruleis Germanis bella movebit" ("One will come, bravest of all Rome's sons, whose name henceforth shall be forever sung throughout the earth. He will bring terror to the land of Gaul and foul its rivers with dark streams of blood and overcome the tribesmen, golden-haired, of Britain's isle, a land remote and veiled under strange skies, beyond a distant sea. The hostile Rhine, unvanquished hitherto, with bridges he will span, o'er which his hosts will march into the foeman's land and bring the waste of war to blue-eyed German stock;" transl. Bergin and Wilson, *Petrarch's Africa*, 30). On Publius Cornelius Scipio's partly negative description of Caesar in this passage of the *Africa*, Fera observes: "Il punto di vista anticesariano è calibrato in funzione della *persona loquens*" (Fera, "Petrarca e Scipione," 142).

[327] Leigh notices that Petrarch's portrait of Caesar is not entirely negative even in *Variae* 48, to Cola di Rienzo (Leigh, "Petrarch's Lucan," 249, n. 20). Also in the *Rerum memorandarum libri* (1343-45), Caesar is presented in highly positive terms (*Rer. mem.* II, 18; cfr. n. 424 below).

[328] Petrarch, *Africa* III, 38; IV, 123-26; Lucan. II, 657.

[329] Petr. *Africa* I, 133-35: Lucan. I, 144-46; *Africa* IV, 142: Lucan. X, 490; cfr. Bruère,"Lucan and Petrarch's *Africa*," 84, 90. Bruère identifies many other parallels (cfr. for example *Africa* VIII, 395: Lucan. VI, 32) and other examples are provided by Leigh, "Petrarch's Lucan," 252-57. Not only is the figure of Scipio modeled upon Lucan's dark hero, but Petrarch's descriptions of Scipio's enemies (i.e. Hannibal and the Carthaginians) present many points of contact with Lucan's passages on Pompey and his supporters (Bruère,"Lucan and Petrarch's *Africa*," 93-98; cfr. Leigh, "Petrarch's Lucan," 253). Pompey and Hannibal are implicitly assimilated by Petrarch also in *RVF* 103 and *Fam.* III, 3, two texts simultaneously sent to Stefano da Colonna il Giovane in 1333 (cfr. Crevatin, "L'empio dono," 179).

[330] Bruère,"Lucan and Petrarch's *Africa*," 88-89.

[331] *Fam.* XII, 15, 4: "[...] utriusque Cesaree laudis ornamenta mereberis, ut sicut animi robore praestantissimum te novimus, sic non modo militariter facundum sed etiam artificiosius eloquentem, insuper et privata loqui indocilem agnoscamus" ("[...] you will deserve the double honor enjoyed by Caesar. Just as we know you to be most distinguished in strength of spirit, so may we recognize you to be not only militarily inspired but artfully eloquent, incapable of dealing with insignificant matters." Transl. Bernardo, *Letters on Familiar Matters*, II, 164).

[332] Lucan. V. 539. In Petrarch's letter, Lucan's words are corroborated by the evidence of Suetonius, *Caes.* 55-56.

[333] Cfr. Lucan V, 519ff.

quotes Lucan's line on Caesar's promptness already cited in the *Africa*, this time with the purpose of directly commending the unstoppable energy of the Roman commander:

> Quomodo autem triumpharet, aut qua ratione quiesceret de quo scriptum sit: 'Nil actum credens, cum quid superesset agendum,' cum adhuc et laborum et bellorum materia superesset?[334]

Petrarch's praise of the Roman hero is built not only with Lucanian materials, but also in line with the secretly sympathetic view of the Roman dictator emerging from the *Bellum Civile* and with what Petrarch could deem to be the view of "the poet of Caesar and Pompey."[335]

At times Petrarch might seem to stretch Lucan's text to prove his own point, as for instance in the case of Petrarch's references to Caesar's suppression of the Placentia mutiny. The events narrated by Lucan in the fifth book of the *Bellum Civile* are evoked in *Rer. mem.* II, 18, 6 as an example of the powerful effects of Caesar's eloquence; the same narrative sequence is recalled in *Rem.* I, 97, 12, where Reason eulogizes Caesar's "constantia ac virtute" in repressing the mutiny.[336] Also the "speculum principis" of *Fam.* XII, 2 includes a mention of Caesar's magnanimity towards the treacherous Labienus, drawn from Lucan's account of Caesar's direct speech at Placentia.[337] Petrarch's enthusiasm for Caesar's boldness and oratorical ability is seemingly at odds with Lucan's scathing apostrophe to Caesar as a cruel and bloodthirsty commander.[338] Nevertheless, Petrarch's discourse resonates with the Lucanian subtext, as his citational strategy demonstrates. In the *De remediis* we read:

> Ad Placentiam fuit motus ille terribilis, quando adversus Iuliam Cesarem suus exercitus insurrexit, de quo dictum est:
>
> Quem non ille ducem potuit terrere tumultus?
>
> Cesar autem illa incredibili sua constantia ac virtute motum omnem compressit et punitis auctoribus quietavit exercitum atque ad obsequium reduxit.[339]

The line here quoted by Petrarch is excerpted from a passage of the *Bellum Civile* recounting how the fearless Caesar resolutely faces his soldiers' uprising at its peak, whereas any other commander would have been filled with terror.[340] Lucan's narration is *already* structured in such a way that it betrays the poet's admiration for Caesar's courage and his disappointment for the soldiers' pusillanimity.[341] Therefore, Petrarch's presentation of the Roman dictator is ultimately rooted in a philo-Caesarian interpretation of Lucan's text itself.

On the other hand, Petrarch also follows Lucan in underlining the iniquity of Caesar's political conduct, not only in his earlier, but also in his later works. Caesar's offensive against Rome's *viscera* is mentioned also in *Fam.* VII, 2, which is likely to be a fictive letter, added late

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[334] "How could he exult or rest, while occasions were still available for labours and battles, he of whom it is written that 'he deemed nothing was achieved, while something remained to be done'?" (*De gestis* 25, 1; Lucan. II, 657; my transl.). In *De gestis* 19, 1 Caesar is defined as "nunquam otiosus."

[335] See pp. 59-62 above.

[336] Cfr. Lucan. V, 237-73.

[337] *Fam.* XII, 2, 20; cfr. Lucan. V, 345-47. The letter dates from 1352.

[338] Lucan. V, 295-315.

[339] "When Julius Caesar's army mutinied at Placentia, there occurred a terrible commotion, of which has been said: 'Such an uproar might have terrified any general.' But Caesar, with unbelievable courage and forthrightness, suppressed the insurrection, calmed it down by punishing the instigators, and restored order in the ranks" (*Rem.* I, 97, 12; Transl. Rawski, *Petrarch's Remedies*, I, 266).

[340] Lucan. V, 300-304.

[341] Cfr. also Lucan. V, 364-70; see Fantham, "Caesar and the Mutiny" on the rhetorical techniques by means of which "Lucan has deepened the significance of his drama of the mutiny."

to the collection.[342] Still in *Seniles* XII, 2 (written in 1370), a quotation from the *Bellum Civile* is used to recall how Caesar was seemingly ashamed of employing legitimate means.[343] In the *De gestis Cesaris*, Petrarch passionately lauds and defends Caesar's actions, but also reutilizes Lucan's text to outline a still ambivalent portrait of the Roman dictator. In chapter 20 of the *De gestis*, which deals with the causes of the civil war, Petrarch embraces a tendentially pro-Caesar position, which is, however, characterized by a cautious suspension of judgment. The narrator states that he does not mean either to justify Caesar's excessive audacity and highhandedness, or to listen to the accusations of his enemies, who were moved by the same cupidity and, further, by envy and rancor.[344] Petrarch capitalizes again on Lucan's implicit criticism of the weakness of Republican institutions. He mentions the terror provoked by Caesar's approach to Rome after his crossing of the Rubicon and deprecates the hypocrisy of the anti-Caesareans, as ready to abandon their most beautiful and magnificent city as they had been prompt to enviously defame their enemy.[345] The hypotext of this passage is Lucan's narration of the hurried flight of the Senators at the news of Caesar's coming (Lucan I, 466ff.) and particularly Lucan's mournful apostrophe to Rome:

> Tu tantum audito bellorum nomine, Roma,
> Desereris; nox una tuis non credita muris.[346]

Already in Lucan's text the Senators are defined as *ignavi* and the cowardice of the Pompeians is implicitly opposed to Caesar's relentless tenacity.[347]

Yet Petrarch's chapter opens with the violent image of Caesar turning against Rome's "bowels" ("in viscera patrie [...] converse"), described with the same Lucanian expression

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[342] *Fam.* VII, 2, 14 (the formulation is very similar to *Africa* II, 219-37); cfr. Dotti, ed., *Familiares*, vol. II, 905; see p. 87 below.

[343] *Sen.* 12, 2, 60; Lucan. II, 446 (Petrarch's friendly irony does not diminish the force of the citation). For other examples of Caesar's ambiguous characterization in Petrarch's later works (not necessarily based on Lucan), cfr. Witt, "Il *De tyranno*," 445; Kallendorf, "The Historical Petrarch," 132ff.; Ascoli, "Private Politics," 155, n. 65.

[344] *De gestis* 20, 1-9.

[345] *De gestis* 20, 15: "Quibus Rome cognitis, tantus pavor omnium mentes invasit, ut urbe fere omnes excederent ipsique consules atque ipse Pompeius [...] Mirum valde, unde in tam parvis animis tam magna superbia, ut eius viri meritos honores ac gloriam tam pertinaciter detrectarent, cuius nec conspectum certe nec viciniam pati possent, et patriam (et talem patriam!) et solum natale universali animorum consternatione desererent. Sed urgebat hinc invidia, inde autem terrebat fama viri, que eo usque creverat, ut clementissimus omnium, pre omnibus atque ab omnibus timeretur" ("When these facts were known in Rome, all minds were overhelmed by such a great fear that almost everyone left the city, including the consuls and Pompey himself [...] It is incredible how such great arrogance could arise from such base souls, so that they so pertinaciously belittle the merits, honors, and glory of that great man whose presence and sight they could not stand, and they abandoned their homeland (and what a homeland!) and birthplace amid universal consternation. However, on the one hand they were moved by envy and, on the other, they were frightened by the great man's fame, which had grown to such a point that he, the most clement of all, was feared above anybody else and by everybody." My transl.).

[346] "But you, Rome, at the merest mention of war, *you*, are deserted! Your walls are not trusted a single night!" (Lucan. I, 519-20; transl. Joyce, *Pharsalia*, 21); cfr. Crevatin, ed, *De gestis*, 213.

[347] Lucan. I, 511-14: " Urbem populis uictisque frequentem / Gentibus et generis, coeat si turba, capacem / Humani facilem venturo Caesare praedam / Ignavae liquere manus" ("The City, thronged with her own and conquered peoples, spacious enough for the whole human race gathered together — cowardly hands left her, easy prey for inexorable Caesar;" transl. Joyce, *Pharsalia*, 20-21). In *Contra eum q. m. Ital.* 11, Petrarch states that Caesar entered Rome unarmed; the source of this passage is again Lucan, whose account of the subject in *Bellum Civile* III, 71-72 is followed by a bitter remark on the Senators' fear and willingness to serve Caesar, a private citizen (III, 100-110). In *Fam*. XX, 1, 23 (dating from 1355), Petrarch reads Metellus' opposition to Caesar as a sign of the tremendous power of gold, thus following Lucan. III, 114-21.

already utilized in the *Africa*.[348] Moreover, the chapter appears ideologically problematic, as Petrarch seems to regard the contest between Caesar and Pompey not as a collision between Republican institutions and absolutism, but rather as a simple conflict of factions.[349]

This coexistence in Petrarch's thinking of admiration for Caesar's energy and fundamental *epoké* on the morality of his actions is perceptible also in the late *De vita solitaria* (1346-66). After dealing with the crusade of Peter the Hermit, Petrarch inserts a digression on the Muslim seizure of Egypt and the Holy Land. His contention is that, if Caesar were to be resurrected and become aware of Christ's message, he who once conquered Egypt would not allow the "Egyptian thief" and the "the multitude so effeminate of Pelusian Canopus" to maintain their domains.[350] "Et Pelusiaci tam mollis turba Canopi" is Lucan's disdainful definition of Achillas and the Egyptian murderers of Pompey, whose devious act outraged Roman greatness since, according to the poet, Pompey would have better died by Caesar's hand.[351] The *Bellum Civile* is here reused by Petrarch in a passage which, exploiting the pro-Caesar subtext of Lucan's poem, exalts Caesar as the resolute leader who would be able to resolve the present political predicament.[352]

In the continuation of his treatise, Petrarch nevertheless specifies that he does not intend to judge the legitimacy of Caesar's actions, but merely admires the commander's tenacity and fortitude, which he wishes were more common in his own times:

> Non quero quam id iuste egerit, sed animi vim et acrimoniam illam miror ac necessariam temporibus nostris dico. [353]

By openly praising Caesar's readiness and yet insinuating that he could have acted unfairly, Petrarch's rewriting maintains and amplifies the contradictions of the Lucanian hypotext.

The above survey has shown how Lucan's text is reutilized by Petrarch throughout his career to convey a subtly ambiguous image of Caesar. Overall, Petrarch's writings exalt Caesar's extraordinary energy and valor, revitalizing the sub-text of the *Bellum Civile*, but at the same time leave room for reservations about the possible unfairness of Caesar's conduct, so vigorously

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[348] Lucan. I, 3; cfr. ed. Crevatin *ad loc*.

[349] Cfr. Fenzi, "Grandi e infelici," 484ff. The existence of a "contraddizione insanabile" in the *De gestis* is admitted even by Crevatin, who observes that, in Petrarch's work, "manca una dichiarazione totalitaria a favore di Cesare" (Crevatin, "L'empio dono," 178; Ead., "Il pathos," 170).

[350] *DVS* II, 9, 14: "Dic enim, [...] dic pater, libet equidem percuntari: si hodie Iulius Cesar ab inferis remearet, animum illum potentiamque suam referens, et Rome, hoc est in patria sua vivens, ut hauddubie faceret, Cristi nomen agnosceret, diutius ne passurum credimus, quod egiptius latro 'et Pelusiaci tam mollis turba Canopi,' ut ait ille, non dicam Ierosolimam et Iudeam et Syriam, sed ipsam Egiptum atque Alexandriam possideret, dum meminisset olim se, non tyranno impio sed legitimo quidem regi regnum simul et coniugem et vitam abstulisse, terrasque illas ut Cleopatre dono daret suo periculo domuisse?" ("Say, father, for it pleases me to put the question, if Julius Caesar should come back today from the lower regions, bringing with him his former spirit and power and if, living in Rome, that is his own country, he should acknowledge the name of Christ, as he doubtless would, do you think that he would any longer suffer the Egyptian thief, 'the multitude so effeminate of Pelusian Canopus,' as the poet calls it, to possess not alone Jerusalem and Judea and Syria but even Egypt and Alexandria, when he remembered that he had once wrested kingdom, spouse, and life from a legitimate king, and that at his own peril he had conquered those lands in order to make a present of them to Cleopatra?" Transl. Zeitlin, *The Life of Solitude*, 246). The exhortation to a new crusade is frequent in Petrarch's writings: cfr. for ex. *RVF* 27; 28; *Fam.* XIV, 5, 14 and XV, 7, 15; *Tr. Famae* II, 142-44 (about which Vinicio Pacca, ed., *Trionfi*, pp. 426 recalls Lucan. I, 8-20, where Romans are exhorted to suspend civil wars and turn against their Eastern enemies).

[351] Lucan. VIII, 542-50; cfr. also Lucan. VIII, 627-29 (echoed by Petrarch in *Rem.* II, 121, 14).

[352] This passage suggests a continuity between ancient Roman culture and later Western Christianity as opposed to the "Eastern threat."

[353] "I do not inquire into the justice of the performance, but I admire his force and energy of spirit and declare it necessary to our own time" (*DVS* II, 9, 14; transl. Zeitlin, *The Life of Solitude*, 246).

denounced by Lucan. The ambiguities which persist throughout Petrarch's lifelong reflection on the Roman dictator, and Petrarch's own enormous influence upon subsequent literature and thought, make the Petrarchan corpus a particularly important case of the reception and reactivation of Lucan's polysemous text.

Lucan and Petrarch's politics

Turning now to focus on Petrarch's readaptations of Lucan in connection with the politics of his own age, it is hard to identify a clear-cut distinction between a youthful republicanism and his later rejection of it in favour of monarchic or autocratic ideology. First, in his youth Petrarch never overtly supports Republicanism.[354] The *Africa*, which is often adduced as a proof of Petrarch's Republican faith, does not offer enough elements to draw such a conclusion.[355] Moreover, and related to this, both in his "youthful" and "mature" writings Petrarch utilizes recurring phrases and clusters of images which express similar political concerns. What can be noticed is that, rather than constituting a novelty or signifying a change, Petrarch's employment of Caesar as a political role-model becomes more explicit and intense in his later career.

It is well known that Petrarch repeatedly recalled the example of Lucan's Caesar in order to urge the political leaders of his times to action. In *Fam.* X, 1, written in February 1351, Petrarch uses Curio's exhortation from Lucan I,281 to prompt Charles IV to hasten his arrival in Italy.[356] After expressly comparing the emperor to Julius Caesar,[357] Petrarch imagines Charles' encounter with the personified Rome, in a narrative sequence patterned after Lucan's depiction of Caesar's vision on the banks of the Rubicon.[358] Unlike Lucan's Caesar, Charles is represented by Petrarch as an emissary sent by Heaven to assist the glorious city.[359] However, the same city personification also recurs in Petrarch's earlier letters to Pope Benedict XII,[360] and a similarly "positive" reuse of Lucan's account of Caesar's march towards Rome already underlies the narration of Scipio's victories in Petrarch's *Africa*.[361] In this regard, some corroboration comes from *Fam.* XV, 5, dating from 1352. Talking about Charles IV, Petrarch states: "profecto enim necessaria regnantibus virtus heroyca, quam Virgilius 'ardentem', Lucanus 'igneam' vocat."[362] The same formulation appears in Petrarch's earlier reflections on the "Republican" Scipio, about

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[354] Mc Laughlin, "Empire," 334; Ferraù, *Petrarca, la politica, la storia*, 60, 70-1; Leigh, "Petrarch's Lucan," 252.
[355] On this point cfr. also Ferraù, *Petrarca, la politica, la storia*, 156.
[356] *Fam.* X, 1, 6 ("pelle moras"); Lucan. I, 281 (on this line, cfr. n. 220 above).
[357] *Fam.* X, 1, 11-12: "Propera igitur [...] Scio tibi actus placere cesareos, nec immerito: Cesar es" ("Make haste therefore [...] I realize that you find pleasure in actions worthy of Caesars, nor can I blame you since you are Caesar;" transl. Bernardo, *Letters on Familiar Matters*, II, 51).
[358] *Fam.* X, 1, 14: "Finge nunc animo almam te Romane urbis effigiem videre; cogita matronam evo gravem, sparsa canitie, amictu lacero, pallore miserabili, sed infracto animo et excelso, pristine non immemorem maiestatis, ita tecum loqui [...]" ("Imagine now in your mind this cherished image of Rome; behold an old lady advanced in years but with few gray hairs, with her garments torn to shreds and a mournful pallor, yet unbroken and elevated in spirit, fully aware of her earlier majesty, who speaks to you in the following manner [...]" Transl. Bernardo, *Letters on Familiar Matters*, II, 51). Cfr. Lucan. I, 185-90.
[359] *Fam*. X, 1, 20.
[360] *Epyst. metr.* I, 2, 5-23 and I, 5, 1-17 (cfr. also *Ep. metr*. II, 5 to Pope Clement VI).
[361] Bruère,"Lucan and Petrarch's *Africa*," 97.
[362] "Rulers should certainly possess that heroic virtue which Virgil calls 'glowing' and Lucan calls 'fiery'" (*Fam*. XV, 5, 8: cfr. Virg. *Aen*. VI, 130; Lucan. IX, 7; transl. Bernardo, *Letters on Familiar Matters*, II, 263). Petrarch's connection of Virg. *Aen*. VI, 130 and Lucan. IX, 7 finds a precedent in Bernard Silvestris' commentary on the *Aeneid* (ed. Jones - Jones, *The Commentary*, 57, 3-10).

whom he states: "iuvenis sidereus dicitur [...] propter heroycam virtutem qua maxime viguit, que 'ardens' a Virgilio, a Lucano 'ignea' virtus dicitur."[363]

What is more, Petrarch's comparison between Charles IV and Lucan's Caesar bears some problematic implications. In *Fam*. XX, 2, dating from July 1355, Petrarch expresses his disappointment about the agreement concluded between the Pope and the emperor, the latter of whom had left Rome immediately after his coronation. For Petrarch the present situation is all the more worrying given that "every authority is impatient with partnerships" ("et scio quod 'omnis potestas' est 'consortis impatiens'").[364] This Lucanian quotation emphasizes the negative potential of Charles' political choices which, in Petrarch's view, might bring Italy to a state of ruin comparable to that provoked by the ancient civil war between Caesar and Pompey.[365]

From the period of Petrarch's enthusiasm for Cola to the later date of his pleas to Charles IV, Petrarch's political ideal always revolves around the hegemony of *Romanitas* and the empowerment of a strong leader, able to confer political centrality on Italy.[366] The dream of Rome's renewed supremacy underlies Petrarch's cult of Scipio, his appeals to the emperor, as well as his several requests that Popes Benedict XII, Clement VI, and Urban V move the papal seat back to Italy (1334-68), and the above-mentioned deprecation of the Muslim presence in the Holy Land: a set of causes that Petrarch supports by reusing the "pro-Caesar" subtext of the *Bellum Civile*.[367] In his very last years, Petrarch transfers this "Caesarist" model onto more local affairs: Caesar is pointed to as an exemplary ruler in Petrarch's *Sen.* XIV, 1, a *speculum principis* written in 1373 and addressed to Francesco da Carrara, lord of Padua.[368]

Continuity can also be traced in Petrarch's redeployment of the "Republican" Lucan in his advocacy of *Romanitas*.[369] In *RVF* 53, presumably composed in 1337-38 and dedicated to Bosone da Gubbio, Petrarch addresses the new senator with an expression ("tu marito, tu padre") which closely resembles Lucan's words on Cato.[370] Petrarch similarly honors Cola as "the new Brutus" in *Var*. 48, where he also recalls Lentulus' sentence that Rome was traditionally subject to a Roman citizen but had no kings.[371] The same citation appears in the later *Fam*. XI, 16

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[363] "This young man is called a celestial youth [...] because of his heroic virtue, in which he magnificently excelled and which Virgil called 'glittering' and Lucan 'fiery'" (*Fam*. X, 4, 33; my transl.). The letter dates from 1349.
[364] *Fam*. XX, 2, 5; Lucan. I, 92-93; transl. Bernardo, *Letters on Familiar Matters*, III, 129.
[365] The primacy of imperial power over the Pope's temporal claims is re-stated also in Petrarch's *De remediis*, again by means of a Lucanian quotation. Speaking of Caesar's yearning for the *pontificatum*, Reason states that while the Roman dictator "believed it to be a personal insult that the power over all the world could have been anyone else's but Caesar's, or any part of the country should have belonged to two" [cfr. Lucan. IX, 1077-78], the task of the Pope is to serve and to carry the yoke of his Master, without disgraceful lies and crafts (*Rem*. I, 107, 18; transl. Rawski, *Petrarch's Remedies*, 292).
[366] See Ferraù, *Petrarca, la politica, la storia*, 43, 52, 56-57, 59, 66, 188; cfr. Dotti, *Petrarca civile*, 127-57, 179-214, 222-35.
[367] *Epyst. metr*. I, 2; I, 5; and II, 5 (see n. 560 above); *Sen.* IX, 1, 42 (cfr. Lucan. II 509-25 and VII 599-604); *DVS* II, 9 (see pp. 65, 68-70 above).
[368] Petrarch cites the *Bellum Civile* to remind his lord that poor and hungry masses do not know fear and can ruin their masters (*Sen*. XIV, 1, 58 and 61; Lucan. III, 58 and III, 152).
[369] In this account, Ferraù notices that some Republican elements remain in Petrarch's *De gestis* (Ferraù, *Petrarca, la politica, la storia*, 156).
[370] *RVF* 53, 82 (see Santagata, ed., *Canzoniere*, 273-74; Mazzotta, *The Worlds of Petrarch*, 136). A similar expression is also present in Petrarch's poetic letter to Pope Benedict XII (*Epyst. metr.* I, 5, 101-103: "[...] iam Roma futuri / Anxia te sponsum repetit, te cuncta parentem / Italia expectat;" "Look: Rome, worried about her future, calls you back as her groom; the whole of Italy is wating for you as her father;" cfr. Fraenkel, "Lucan as the Transmitter," 41-44).
[371] *Variae* 48, 103-6 (Lucan. VIII, 354-56).

(1351), where Petrarch complains about the appointment of a foreigner as senator in Rome. [372]

Also in commenting on the killing of the Roman senator Bertoldo Orsini in the turmoil of 1353, when the plebs revolted against a shortage of wheat, Petrarch quotes Lucan's invective against the powerful, which in the *Bellum Civile* accompanies the account of Curio's death.[373] Petrarch's fourth letter of exhortation to Charles IV, written in 1361, similarly contains a quotation of Cato's words on the inevitability of death.[374] In the late *De remediis* (1354-66), Reason cites Nigidius Figulus' words on the pointlessness of waiting for a peace that will bring a tyrant, and concludes that belligerent freedom (*bellicosa libertas*) is better than peaceful servitude (*pacifica servitus*).[375] Therefore, while reemploying the *Bellum Civile* to continuously vindicate the importance of strong, centralized political leadership, Petrarch also quotes Lucan to express his concerns about the possible degenerations of autocracy.

Petrarch's intertextual strategy shows the strong political charge he attributes to Lucan's "civic" poetry, which he reuses to articulate the dramatic contradictions of history.[376] His rewriting of the *Bellum Civile* participates in the late-medieval and humanist trend of approaching Lucan's poem as a narration about Caesar's triumphs and, hence, as a powerful means to negotiate opinions about the benefits and risks of absolutism. At the same time, Petrarch is also sensitive to another narrative inside the poem: the story of Pompey's tragic downfall, which other late-medieval writers, including Boccaccio, regard as the main subject of the *Bellum Civile*.[377]

POMPEY AND THE POETICS OF *PATHOS*

As Fraenkel has pointed out in his influential study, Petrarch adopts some renowned Lucanian *pathos formulae* in his vernacular poetry.[378] While Fraenkel's analysis could be expanded to include some other instances of Lucanian echoes in Petrarch's amorous, civic, and moral

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[372] *Fam*. XI, 16, 10:

[373] *Fam.* XVI, 8, 4; Lucan. IV, 805-6. In the continuation of the letter, Petrarch states that Roman senators have not profited from Caesar's maxim that political change comes from need and a hungry plebs has no fear (Lucan. III, 55-56 and 58); moreover, he evokes the figures of the ancient Roman *matronae*, among whom is Marcia (XVI, 8, 4 and 9).

[374] *Fam.* XXIII, 2, 12; Lucan. VI, 806-7 and IX, 582-84.

[375] *Rem*. I, 105, 18: "Solet pax urbibus mutationem rerum afferre pestiferam: optima quidem ipsa, sed pessimis circumvallata comitibus, iniquis legibus, fluxis moribus, occultis odiis, aperta tyrannide. Recordare quid civili olim bello presagus ille dixit, nec fefellit: 'Superos quid prodest poscere finem? / Cum domino pax ista venit' [Lucan. I, 669-70]. Melior est autem bellicosa libertas viris fortibus quam pacifica servitus" ("Peace has a habit of causing dreadful changes in the cities. Peace in itself is the best, but it is surrounded by the worst kind of companions, unjust laws, debauched manners, secret hatreds, and open tyranny. Remember what he who predicted the Civil War said; he was not in error: 'It is useless to pray Heaven that it may end: when peace comes, a tyrant will come with it.' Therefore, liberty, though being under arms, is preferred by brave men to peaceful servitude." Transl Rawski, *Petrarch's Remedies*, 283).

[376] Petrarch looks back to Lucan also to rearticulate other, "minor" conflicts of his time. He alludes to the Roman civil war in describing situations of contemporary political strife and civic unrest, such as tensions in Naples (*Fam.* V, 3, 20: Lucan. XIII, 17, 1; Fam. V, 6, 1: Lucan. IX, 934-37 and IX, 723; *Fam*. XV, 8, 12: Lucan. VIII, 452-53; *Fam*. XXIII, 17, 1: Lucan. X, 95-96); revolts against the Visconti (*Fam*. XVIII, 11, 2: Lucan. III, 145-46); squabbles in Avignon (*Fam.* XXI, 9, 21: Lucan. IX, 921; cfr. also Petrarch's vituperation of Avignon-Babylon in *Sine nomine* 10, 2: Lucan. X, 276-82; *Sine nomine* 15, 2: Lucan. VII, 571); murders in Tuscany, battles and conspiracies between Genoa and Venice (*Fam.* VIII, 10, 11: Lucan. VI, 145; *Fam*. XVII, 3, 24: Lucan. V, 250-1; *Fam*. XIX, 9, 15: Lucan. VII, 259-60).

[377] On Boccaccio's reading, see pp. 100ff. below.

[378] Fraenkel, "Lucan as the Transmitter," 41-44.

poems,[379] Lucan's expressions and images are readapted as a powerful source of *pathos* also in Petrarch's Latin works.[380] Petrarch's most poignant borrowings from the *Bellum Civile* relate to the figure of Pompey, whose profound and ill-fated love for Cornelia is evoked in some highly intimate Petrarchan passages. Lucan's story of Pompey and Cornelia informs Petrarch's narration of the similarly ill-starred relationship between Sophonisba and Masinissa in book V of the *Africa*[381] and is rearticulated to express Petrarch's concept of *amicitia* in the *Familiares*.[382]

Building on Lucan's text, Petrarch singles out Pompey as the emblem of fortune's instability. The short description of the character as "'l grande Pompeo, che mal vide Thesaglia" in the *Triumph of Fame*[383] emphasises greatness and misfortune as Pompey's most characteristic traits and is also an implicit acknowledgment of Petrarch's first source of inspiration on the subject, that is the *Bellum Civile*, the dramatic and vivid account of the calamitous events of Thessaly. Similarly, in introducing the report of Pompey's death in the *De gestis*, the narrator interprets the story as a demonstration of the inherent precariousness of human affairs:

> Sed Pompeii fugam prosequor. Pulsus ergo Pompeius per Thesalicas silvas uno equo, per Egeum pelagus una navi fugiebat, romani imperii pudor ingens, quod ille nutu rexerat. Sed sic est. Res hominum non stant, et quo maior est altitudo, eo gravior ruina.[384]

In recalling some proverbial medieval expressions,[385] Petrarch's phrase "quo maior est altitudo, eo gravior ruina" also resonates with ancient and medieval, Senecan, Boethian, and Trevetian, ideas of "tragic" and "tragic matter" as concerning the ruin of great men and prosperous kingdoms.[386]

The specific naming of Pompey as an *exemplum* of the grave twists of fate finds some precedents in Cicero, Valerius Maximus, and Seneca.[387] The importance of Lucan in Petrarch's reception and reelaboration of this tradition, which is brought to fulfillment by Boccaccio,[388] is underscored by the continuation of the passage from the *De gestis*. After recounting Pompey's murder in close adherence to the Lucanian intertext,[389] Petrarch exclaims:

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[379] See for example Petrarch's allusions to Lucan's passages on Northern Europe and the East within the political discourse of *RVF* 28, ll. 46-48, 51, and 58 (Lucan. IV, 106-7, I, 458-60, VIII, 543), and Petrarch's echoing of Lucan's battle scenes and descriptions of winter in the erotic context of *RVF* 129, 56 (Lucan. VI, 32); 66, 1-4 (Lucan. IV, 76-77 in conjunction with Dante, *Amor tu vedi ben*, 25-29 and *Purg*. V, 10-11). Lucan might be present to Petrarch's mind in his invocation to the "Vergine bella" (*RVF* 366,106; Lucan IX, 246-47). Also in his *Triumphus Mortis* (I, 157-62), Petrarch alludes to Lucan. I, 21-26 to increase the *pathos* (cfr. Velli, *Petrarca e Boccaccio*, 96, n. 35).

[380] A notable example of this is given by Petrarch's allusions to Lucan in his description of Sophonisba's afterlife in the *Africa* (cfr. Bruère, "Lucan and Petrarch's *Africa*," 91-92). See also Crevatin, "Il pathos," 167ff. on Lucan as a model of *pathos* in Petrarch's historiography.

[381] Bruère, "Lucan and Petrarch's *Africa*," 91.

[382] See *Fam*. III, 21, 1 (to "Laelius"); *Fam.* VII, 12, 23 (to Giovanni dell'Incisa); *Fam*. IX, 9, 2 (to "Socrates"); XII, 7, 1 (to Barbato da Sulmona); XII, 9, 6 (to Nelli); cfr. also *Variae* 32, 302-7.

[383] "And the great Pompey, to whom the view of Thessaly was ill-fated" (*Triumphus Fame* Ia, 30; my transl.).

[384] "But let's follow the fleeing Pompey. After galloping on a single horse through the Thessalian forests, he secretly sets sail on a ship on the Aegean sea: what a shame for the Roman dominion he once ruled with a mere nod of the head! However, this is how things go. Human matters never remain still and, the higher one rises, the more heavily one falls" (*De gestis* 21, 34-35, my transl.).

[385] Walther, *Proverbia*, n. 900; cfr. also n. 904 and 25645.

[386] Cfr. Ps-Sen., *Octavia*, 377-87; Boeth. *cons.* II, 2, 12; Trevet, *Expositio super librum Boecii* I, 1, f. 4; Mussato, *Vita Senece*, 134-42; cfr. Kelly, *Ideas and Forms*, 127-28, 130-1, 137-38.

[387] Crevatin, "L'empio dono," 173-78.

[388] Cfr. in part. Lucan. VIII, 701-8; see pp. 100-109 below.

[389] *De gestis* 21, 35-36; cfr. Crevatin, "L'empio dono," 169-71.

> O fortuna hominum, et rerum exitus prosperarum! Sub filii atque uxoris et amicorum oculis crudeliter interfectus est gladio Achille, sevissimi hominis, atque Septimii, viri immanissimi, olim sui tunc regis militis, sui autem desertoris. Pudor inexpiabilis, romanum civem ad romanum principem trucidandum sic Egiptii et obsceni regis imperio paruisse! O quanto erat honestior casus, nisi romana manus intervenisset! Sed hanc malorum seriem fortuna texuerat, necubi civilis deesset insania: si ad Indos pergeret Romano, ut reor, gladio pereundum erat.[390]

Petrarch's mention of Settimius' cruelty, his deprecation of Roman complicity in Pompey's murder, and his apostrophe to fortune closely remind us of Lucan's passage on the pitiful end of *Magnus* (Lucan. VIII, 595-608).[391] Petrarch's treatment of Lucan's Pompey as a "fallen" hero suggests that the Florentine author could have been familiar with Trevet's definition of the *Bellum Civile* as a "tragic" poem dealing with the fall of illustrious men, and with Boccaccio's reading of Lucan's poem as the narration of Pompey's transition from prosperity to adversity, and thus as a "tragedy" in a figurative sense.[392]

That Petrarch's "tragic" portrait of Pompey derives ultimately from Lucan is not a matter of scholarly debate; but scholars have failed to adequately emphasize the point that, in Petrarch as *already* in Lucan, Pompey's heroism is described as intrinsically limited and defective. Contesting Crevatin's assumption that Petrarch's "unheroic" representation of Pompey contrasts with Lucan's "glorious" portrait of the Roman commander,[393] I contend that, in depicting Pompey, Petrarch once again grasps the inner tensions of the *Bellum Civile*, where the narrator ostensibly supports Caesar's rival and yet does so in such an unconvincing and self-contradictory way that he undermines the credibility of his overt discourse.[394]

While commenting on the outcome of the battle of Pharsalus in his *De gestis*, Petrarch states that Pompey's glory was ruined and defiled by the excessive length of his life:

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[390] "Oh, how terrible is human fortune and the end of prosperity! Pompey is killed in front of his son, wife, and friends by the sword of Achillas, a very cruel man, and that of the very brutal Septimius, who was once his centurion, but then deserted from his army. What an irredeemable shame that a Roman citizen should thus have obeyed the order of the Egyptians and their vile king, and murdered a Roman general! Oh, how much better it were, if no Roman hand had been involved! But Fortune had so interwoven this series of misfortunes that the folly of civil wars would not be incomplete in any respect: had Pompey gone to India, I believe he would have died in the same way, by a Roman sword" (*De gestis* 21, 37; my transl.).

[391] "[...] Transire parantem / Romanus Pharia miles de puppe salutat / Septimius, qui (pro superum pudor!) arma satelles / Regia gestabat posito deformia pilo, / Immanis, violentus, atrox nullaque ferarum / Mitior in caedes. Quis non, Fortuna, putasset / Parcere te populis, quod bello haec dextra vacaret, / Thessaliaque procul tam noxia tela fugasses? / Disponis gladios, ne quo non fiat in orbe, / Heu! facinus civile tibi. Victoribus ipsis / Dedecus et numquam superum caritura pudore / Fabula: Romanus regi sic paruit ensis [...]" ("As he boarded, a Roman soldier hailed him from the Pharian cutter. Septimius, who — to the Gods' shame! — as a palace minion, carried outlandish weapons, his javelin tossed aside, a hulking, violent, ruthless man — any wild beast treats its prey more tenderly. Fortune! who would have doubted you were sparing mankind by keeping this ruffian out of the war, chasing this heinous spearman far from Thessaly? You distribute your swords worldwide, lest you be cheated (alas!) of civil murder! Here's the disgrace — even for the victors, a tale that will never lack reproach of Gods on high: a Roman sword obeyed a king in this! [...]" Transl. Joyce, *Pharsalia*, 216). Cfr. Crevatin, "L'empio dono," 171, 173.

[392] Trevet, *Expositio Senece*; Franceschini, *Il commento*, 6,30-7,4; cfr. Kelly, *Ideas and Forms*, 131. On Boccaccio's reading of the *Bellum Civile* as recounting the ruin of the once successful Pompey due to the vagaries of Fortune, and on his familiarity with Trevet's writings, see pp. 100-102 below.

[393] Crevatini, "L'empio dono," 167.

[394] For a contemporary scholarly treatment of the topic, see in particular Brisset, *Les idées*, 35-50, 137, 162-71; Bartsch, *Ideology in Cold Blood*, 1-9, 73-100; Johnson, *Momentary Monsters*, 35-134; cfr. Masters, *Poetry and Civil War*, 1-10.

> Hic Thesalice pugne finis fuit. Fuisset utinam et Pompeii, ne in suum dedecus paucos vite dies ageret longamque gloriam brevi spatio dehonestaret atque pollueret. Sed sic eunt res humane: nil tam altum quod non possit deprimi, nil tam clarum quod non valeat obscurari.[395]

A similar allegation can be found in Petrarch's *Collatio inter Scipionem, Alexandrum, Hanibalem et Pyrrum*, where Pompey and Marius are named as heroes who lived too long and had their brilliant fame adulterated by fortune's reversals in the course of their old age; indeed, Petrarch argues, long life debilitates even the greatest souls:

> quid Gaio Mario violentius, quid Magno Pompeio clarius mundus habuit? Sed expecta paululum [...] monstrabo Marium, quem "fortune depositum"[396] vocant, post tantas hostium strages, palustri limo latebras captantem, et longi carceris squalore obsitum mucidi panis frusta mendicantem; detegam Pompei miserabile cadaver, proiectum post triumphos in pulvere niliaco, capite tanti viri inulto etiam Romanis ad ludibrium reservato. Comunes sunt eminentis tales exitus fortune; nemo mirari debet, hec audiens, cum quid taliter acciderit; stupendum est quando non suis moribus utitur. Longa etas magnos animos debilitat; vivendo senescunt omnia; et siquis fuerit tantus vigor animorum ut resistatur senio, at ipsa certe felicitas humana caduca et fugacissima rerum evique brevissimi est.[397]

Crevatin points to Florus as Petrarch's main point of reference for the idea of Pompey's excessively long life as a source of shame (*dedecus*),[398] but the concept is first and foremost Lucanian. The passage from the *Collatio* closely reproduces Lucan's depiction of the ruin of the once powerful Marius, an event which in the context of the *Bellum Civile* is evoked as a precedent to the great fear of the civil war ("exemplum magno timori"):

> "Non alios" inquit "motus tunc fata parabant,
> Cum *post* Teutonicos uictor Libycosque triumphos
> Exul *limosa* Marius caput abdidit ulva.
> Stagna avidi texere soli laxaeque *paludes*
> *Depositum, Fortuna*, tuum; mox vincula ferri
> Exedere senem longusque in *carcere* paedor:
> Consul et eversa felix moriturus in Urbe
> Poenas ante dabat scelerum."[399]

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[395] "This was the end of the Thessalian battle. Oh, if only it had also been the end of Pompey, so that he did not have to live a few more days to his own shame, disfiguring and defiling his long-achieved glory in a short span of time. But this is how human matters go: there is nothing so high that it cannot be brought low, nor anything so splendid that it cannot be tarnished" (*De gestis* 21, 30; my transl.).

[396] Lucan. II, 72.

[397] "Did the world see anything more violent than Marius or more splendid than Pompey? But wait a moment [...] I will show you Marius, whom they call "Fortune's pledge": after slaughtering so many enemies, he went in search of a refuge amid muddy swamps and, marked by the squalid experience of a long stay in prison, begged in vain some stale bread; I will show you Pompey's miserable corpse, thrown on the Egyptian sand after so many triumphs, and his severed head, not only unavenged, but even destined to the Romans' mockery. The outcomes of renowned people's destiny are very similar: no-one should be surprised to hear how these events went; on the contrary, it would be surprising if Fortune changed her habits. A long existence debilitates even great souls and everything gets old by living; even if humans have some spiritual vigor that resists ageing, their happiness is fleeting, transient, and extremely short-lived" (*Collatio* 22,1-23, 15; my transl.). The "tragic" figures of Pompey and Marius are assimilated also in Petrarch's *De remediis* (Preface, 14, 176-80) and Boccaccio's *De casibus* (on which see pp. 106-7 below).

[398] Crevatin, "L'empio dono," 172.

[399] "No different, the troubles the Fates prepared that time Marius, the exiled victor — after his German and Libyan Triumphs — hid his head in the slimy sedge. Bogs of sucking mud and spongy swamp concealed the pledge you put

Moreover, both Petrarch's *De gestis* and his *Collatio* reproduce the gnomic tone and the specific terms and concepts of Lucan's remark on Pompey's shameful death:

> [...] Sic *longius* aevum
> Destruit ingentis *animos* et vita superstes
> Imperio; nisi summa dies cum fine bonorum
> Affuit et celeri praevertit tristia leto,
> *Dedecori* est fortuna prior. [...][400]

A validation of Lucan's centrality for Petrarch's reflection on this topic comes from the *De ignorantia*, where Lucan is explicitly cited as the source of the maxim quoted by Petrarch:

> Senescunt homines, senescunt fortune, senescunt fame hominum, senescunt denique humana omnia [...] verumque fit illud Cordubensis: "Longius evum destruit ingentes animos."[401]

Pompey's glory is presented by Petrarch as precarious and defective, but this is not out of line with the *Bellum Civile*. This is true with respect to Petrarch's references to the excessive length of Pompey's life,[402] but also to the commander's indecisiveness and inability to take advantage of his military victories.[403] Petrarch is in line with Lucan in representing Pompey as the great and yet imperfect hero doomed by misfortune.[404]

There are some textual hints suggesting that Petrarch read the *Bellum Civile* as prefiguring Caesar's own tragedy, beyond merely Pompey's. In fact, Lucan's work contains various anticipations of Caesar's death in the form of prolepses.[405] Based on these elements and in light of their awareness of the subsequent developments of Roman history, medieval and humanistic commentators often interpreted the poem as aiming to show the disastrous consequences of civil war by pointing to the downfall suffered by the main actors of the conflict, including Caesar. Benvenuto da Imola, for example, writes:

> Certe intentio optima, quia intendit arcere tam principes quam plebeios a penetratione bellorum intestinorum, ostendendo fines miserabiles ad quos devenerunt principales qui commiserunt ipsa bella civilia et eorum sequaces. Quod quidem ex hoc manifestari potest: Pompeius enim decapitatus est a Ptolomeo cui ipse regna donaverat; Cesar iugulatus est in senatu a Bruto et Cassio [...]; Cato similiter Utice se transfixit; Marcus Tullius iugulatus est a quodam cui maximum bonum in preterito fecerat, et sic de aliis.[406]

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there, Fortune; soon, chains of iron chafed the old man — and a stretch in prison filth. Consul and millionaire, he would die in a humbled City: he paid for his crimes in advance" (Lucan. II, 68-75; Italics mine; transl. Joyce, *Pharsalia*, 32). In *Rem. Preface* I, 14 Marius and Pompey are indicated as examples of great men afflicted by Fortune.

[400] "Thus exceptional souls are undone by too long a life, by a span of years outlasting power. Unless the final day arrives at good luck's termination and outruns grief with a swift demise, former fortune is heartbreak" (Lucan. VIII, 27-31; Italics mine; transl. Joyce, *Pharsalia*, 198-99). Cfr. also Juv. 12, 128 ("mucida [...] panis [...] frustra").

[401] "People grow old, fortunes grow old, and reputations grow old [...] the words of the Cordovan poet prove true: 'A long age destroys even the great souls'" (*De ign.* III, 44; transl. Marsh, *Invectives*, 253).

[402] Cfr. *Triumphus Fame* I, 90-92; *Fam*. II, 10, 11. In *RVF* 331, 45 the motif is reconfigured, as Petrarch states that, had he died before, the best part of him would have survived.

[403] *Fam*. III, 3, 8; cfr. Lucan. VI, 299-303 (cfr. Fera, "Petrarca e Scipione," 143-44).

[404] Petrarch follows Lucan also in highlighting Pompey's dignity, undiminished by death: *Fam*. III, 10, 6 (Lucan. VIII, 395-96); *Rem.* II, 73, 16 (Lucan. VII, 706); *Rem*. II, 73, 20 (Lucan. VII, 217-18).

[405] Lucan. V, 206-8; VI, 91-92 and 805-7; VII, 592-96; VIII, 609-10.

[406] "The author's purpose in writing is certainly excellent, for he intends to warn both rulers and common citizens against the spread of civil wars, by showing the pitiful ends encountered by the major authors of the civil war and their followers. This is made apparent by the fact that Pompey was beheaded by Ptolemy, whom he had gifted with

Petrarch quotes Lucan to underline how Caesar directly experienced the precariousness of glory and instability of fortune:

> Noverat ille vir, quem natura ingeniosissimum fecerat, ars et experientia longa doctissimum, ubi radices haberet sua illa felicitas et, quod de eodem legimus, sciebat expertus:
>
> Quam non e stabili tremulo sed culmine cuncta
> Despiceret staretque super titubantia fultus.[407]

Furthermore, in remarking upon the decease of Andrea Dandolo in a letter from 1355, Petrarch affirms that the Venetian Doge shared Scipio's and Caesar's conviction that present luck is a sure indicator of enduring divine benevolence; however, according to Petrarch, this unfounded belief was proven false by Dandolo's death:

> Itaque sepe mecum illud Scipionis Africani dictum usurpabat [...] illud quoque Cesareum:
>
> Hec, fato que teste probet quis iustius arma
> Induit, hec acies victum factura nocentem.
>
> Et quantulum illi vivendum erat ut in eundem ista reflecterem, nocentem fato teste convincens, qui teste fato innocentiam astruebat! [408]

In Petrarch's opinion, Dandolo's mistake consisted in presuming his own innocence based on the supposed ratification of his precarious good fortune. Questioning the validity and universality of Caesar's dictum, Petrarch discloses the significant gap intervening between the self-righteous viewpoint of the victorious individual and the broader perspective of history, where individual claims are often disproved. We might argue that such a hiatus is also demonstrated by the conclusion of Caesar's own life. In fact, according to the Petrarch of the *De gestis*, Caesar cries in front of Pompey's head because the demise of his enemy reveals his own vulnerability.[409] Significantly, the *De gestis* ends with a vivid description of Caesar's death.[410]

Finally, not only does Petrarch allude to the *Bellum Civile* as a source of *pathos*, he also expressly refers to Lucan as a master of dramatic verisimilitude. In the *De remediis*, Reason explains the concept of "in dolore sermo intimus" and cites as an example the speech attributed by Lucan to the dying Pompey (followed by another example from contemporary history):

> Quis est hic in dolore sermo intimus? Meministi quibus verbis Lucanus Magnum Pompeium inter carnificum gladios usum facit; sed quia hoc pro qualitate persone a poeta fictum, et

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kingdoms, Caesar was stabbed in the Senate by Brutus and Cassius [...]; Cato likewise stabbed himself in Utica; Cicero had his throat cut by a person whom he had treated with the greatest generosity in the past, and so on" (F. 1*rb*; Rossi, 196-97; my transl.).

[407] "He whom nature had endowed with the greatest gifts and skills, whom long experience had made most learned, knew the roots of his good fortune, and knew by experience, as is written about him, 'that he looked down upon everything from heights not stable but shaky, and that he stood upon uncertain ground.'" (*Fam.* XVII, 3, 24; cfr. Lucan. V, 250-1; transl. Bernardo, *Letters on Familiar Matters*, III, 14).

[408] "And thus, he would often appropriate the words of Scipio Africanus [...] and also those words of Caesar: 'This war, with fortune as witness, will prove who armed themselves more justly, this battle will show that the guilty suffer defeat.' Would that he had lived a little longer so that I could turn these arguments against him, proving with fate as witness, that he was the guilty party for having based his innocence on the testimony of fate!" (*Fam.* XIX, 9, 15; cfr. Lucan. VII, 259-60; transl. Bernardo, *Letters on Familiar Matters*, III, 92-93). This passage represents a further proof of the overlap between Caesar and Scipio in Petrarch's (later) writings.

[409] *De gestis* 22, 3; cfr. Crevatin, "L'empio dono," 175.

[410] *De gestis* 26, 42; cfr. Crevatin, "L'empio dono," 180.

> secundum veri similitudinem, animo viri illius in eo statu convenientibus verbis expressum est, exemplum verum recensque alterum adiciam. [...][411]

Although invented by Lucan ("a poeta fictum"), Pompey's lament is, according to Petrarch, composed with due consideration for his character's nature ("pro qualitate persone") and for the criterion of verisimilitude ("secundum verisimilitudinem"): as such, it would respect the principle of *convenientia* or *decorum*.[412] At an immediate level, this passage demonstrates Petrarch's appreciation of Lucan's poetry;[413] at an intertextual level, it has further implications for Petrarch's consideration of Lucan as a poetic model.

Bruère has shown that the dying Mago's soliloquy in the *Africa* is inspired by Pompey's monologue in the *Bellum Civile*.[414] It is also well-known that the pericope of Mago's speech circulated as an independent excerpt before the publication of the *Africa* and soon became the target of criticism, since the contents of Mago's discourse were deemed inappropriate to the character in light of his moribund state, pagan beliefs, and youth.[415] Replying to such critiques in a letter to Boccaccio from 1363, Petrarch admits the importance of the rhetorical principle of *decorum*:

> Nichil enim, quamvis graviter dictum diserteque, reprehensione legitima cariturum scimus, quod dicentis statui moribusque non convenit; [...] Hoc est namque decorum illum poeticum ex persona de quo Cicero egit in Officiis et Flaccus in Arte Poetica.[416]

However, Petrarch claims that the passage on Mago's death is not deficient in any of the three respects mentioned; the first part of his point-by-point reply to his enemies' criticism is of particular relevance to the present study, as Petrarch claims that it is entirely appropriate for poets to assign articulate speeches to characters on the point of death.[417] When read in conjunction, the metapoetic pieces contained in the *De remediis* and the epistle to Boccaccio reveal Lucan's importance as Petrarch's predecessor in the field of plausible poetic-historical invention.

Other Petrarchan pieces contribute to the justification of this inference. In two (already quoted) pages of the *Familiares*, Petrarch points to the fact that Lucan praised Pompey without having direct knowledge of him and represented Caesar's state of mind based on how he thought such a character could or should have felt in a given situation ("Noverat poeta quid maxime tali

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[411] "What constitutes *sermo intimus* in the event of pain? Do you remember what words Lucan makes the great Pompey use when faced with the swords of his murderers? But here we have the invention of a poet in keeping with the quality of the individual involved, and words, chosen to express sentiments of a man of his station. So I add here a second instance, true and recent [...]" (*Rem.* II, 114, 62; cfr. Lucan. VIII, 618-35; transl. Rawski, *Petrarch's Remedies*, II, 277-78).

[412] For Cicero's and Horace's definitions of this rhetorical principle, with which Petrarch was familiar, cfr. n. 416 below.

[413] Cfr. Crevatin 2002, 242.

[414] The passage corresponds to *Africa* VI, 885-918; cfr. Bruère, "Lucan and Petrarch's *Africa*," 94.

[415] On this matter see for example Quillen, *Rereading the Renaissance*, 117-18.

[416] "For we know that nothing, however powerfully and skillfully expressed, could avoid well-deserved criticism when not in keeping with the speaker's rank and character [...] This is the poetic canon of the speaker discussed by Cicero in *De officiis* and by Flaccus in the *Art of Poetry*" (*Sen.* II, 1, 32; transl. Bernardo, *Letters of Old Age*, I, 43; cfr. Hor., *Ars* 119-27; Cic., *off.* I, 21, 97).

[417] *Sen.* II, 1, 36-42. Also in a note on Quintilian IX, 2, 30, Petrarch argues in favor of the poet's right to endow his characters with credible words (cfr. Crevatin, "La presenza," 243-44 with bibl.).

viro aut molestum fuisset in eo statu aut esse debuisset").[418] In another epistle, Petrarch argues that it is noble to support the weaker part, as Cicero did with Pompey in Lucan's poem:

> Unde non sine audientium assensu per grammaticorum testudines sonat ille versiculus
>
> Addidit invalide robur facundia cause;
>
> quamvis a Lucano tota illa res ficta sit; neque enim Tullius thesalicis campis interfuit, sed ad perferendum voces ac vota omnium in aures ducis haud immerito ille unus ydoneus visus est.[419]

Even though Cicero's presence at Pharsalus is *res ficta*, invented entirely by Lucan, Petrarch justifies this poetic device as appropriate, in that the character of Cicero is the most apt (*ydoneus*) to the role that Lucan attributes to him.

Lucan's poetics of merging history and fiction seems to have been congenial to Petrarch. Indeed, in the last book of the *Africa* — which like the *Bellum Civile* is a historical epic — the character Ennius explains that the most praiseworthy poems are those built on the truth and adorned with poetic inventions:

> *Scripturum iecisse* prius firmissima veri
> fundamenta decet, quibus inde innixus amena
> et varia sub nube potest, abscondere sese
> Lectori longum cumulans placidumque laborem,
> Quesitu asperior quo sit sententia, verum
> Dulcior inventu. [...][420]

The metaliterary passages discussed above reveal that, far from neglecting or despising the *Bellum Civile*, Petrarch draws inspiration from Lucan's poem, defends it against possible criticism, and takes it as an authoritative antecedent in his life-long reflection on dramatic invention in historical poetry. Analogous or even greater significance is acquired by the ethical-philosophical implications of Lucan's poem in Petrarch's works.

READAPTING LUCAN'S ETHICS

Petrarch clearly acknowledges the profoundly philosophical nature of Lucan's poetry. The passage of the *Contra quendam magni status hominem* mentioned above emphasizes the "depth" and "verity" of Lucan's words about virtue and fortune;[421] a line of the *Contra medicum* similarly highlights the strong affinity between Lucan's poetry and philosophy:

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[418] *Fam*. IX, 1, 6 and II, 7, 7; cfr. pp. 59-60 above.

[419] "Whence it is with general assent that we hear this short verse ringing out in the schools of grammar, 'Eloquence provided strength to a doubtful case,' although Lucan invented the whole story; for if Cicero did not visit the Thessalian camps, he understandably seemed to the poet most suitable for conveying everyone's feelings and preferences to the commander" (*Fam*. XIII, 9, 8; Lucan. VII, 67; transl. Bernardo, *Letters on Familiar Matters*, I, 208). Cfr. Crevatin, "La presenza," 241, 242; Martellotti, "Lucano come fonte," 1464-65.

[420] "For, mark you, first, one who would plan a poem must lay down a firm foundation of the truth whereon he then may build a cloud-like structure, sweet and varied, veiling the foundations" (*Africa* IX, 92-97; transl. Bergin and Wilson, *Petrarch's Africa*, 226). Cfr. Martellotti, "La difesa," 272. Also in the proem of the *De viris*, Petrarch states that he does not mean to invent fables, but rather to re-tell histories ("neque michi fabulam fingere, sed historiam renarrare propositum est": cfr. Crevatin, "Il pathos," 155).

[421] *Contra quendam* 96; cfr. p. 55 above.

> Philosophia "suas" illas Musas, et earum meritum "suum" dixit Euripidem, Lucanum quoque "familiarem suum" non eribuit confiteri.[422]

In keeping with a common medieval practice, Petrarch regards the *Bellum Civile* as a repository of abiding ethical truths, extrapolating from Lucan's text some specific elements which are particularly prone to be endowed with high moral significance and acquire paradigmatic value.[423]

In Petrarch's texts, Lucan's characters become exemplary figures representing their distinctive qualities. Just as Lucan's Caesar is often adduced as a paragon of political and military virtue,[424] so his Pompey personifies temperance,[425] and his Cato is cited as *exemplum* of perseverance, altruism, and noble self-denial;[426] Vulteius similarly personifies quick action, while Pothinus is the traitor *par excellence*.[427] The tenacity of Caesar, Pompey, and Cato is frequently recalled by Petrarch to dissuade his interlocutors from deplorable self-pity and underscore the formative and ennobling function of difficulties for the human spirit. For example, in order to prove that true glory cannot be achieved without effort, Petrarch writes:

> Quid Cato? nonne domum suam poterat incolere? siticulosas arenas circumire maluit et lybicis vitam obiectare serpentibus; tanta eum virtus, tantus amor libertatis accenderat; huic tamen domus angustior. Quid vero Pompeius et re magnus et nomine? nonne amplissimis atque opulentissimis edibus derelictis patriaque in qua princeps erat, toto vagus victor orbe terrarum quietem sibi abstulit ut gloriam inveniret? quid Cesares Iulius et Augustus [...]?[428]

In another letter, Petrarch similarly warns his addressee against complaining about ordinary issues by recalling the labours faced by Caesar's and Pompey's armies:

> Hanc tu maris iniuriam existimas; natura est. Digniorem querele causam preferres, si vel illud tibi contigisset, quod quondam cesarea classis inter Italiam Greciamque sustinuit, quando per Adriaticum mare glaciali velut torpore constrictum cursum expedire non valuit; vel illud quod, terra sub pedibus tremente, pompeianus exercitus tulit in Lybia, ubi
>
> nullus... potest consistere miles
> Instabilis, raptis etiam quas calcat arenis.[429]

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[422] "Philosophy called the Muses 'her own,' [...] Thanks to the merits of the Muses, she also called Euripides her own, and did not blush to acknowledge Lucan as her intimate" (*Contra med.* III, 95; cfr. Boeth. *cons.* IV, 6, 33; transl. Marsch, *Invectives*, 97).

[423] On Lucan in medieval *exemplum* literature, see Jennings, "Lucan's Medieval Popularity."

[424] E.g. *Rer. mem*. II, 18, 6; *Fam*. III, 22, 2; X, 1, 6; XXIII, 2, 12; *Sen.* XIV, 1, 55; *DVS* II, 9, 14 (see above, pp. 63-70).

[425] E.g. *Rem.* II, 38, 2 (Lucan IX, 195); *Sen*. IV, 1, 34, 37; see n. 311 above.

[426] *Fam.* XX, 10, 3; XXII, 12, 1 (cfr. Lucan. II, 239-41).

[427] *Fam.* XVI, 12, 2 (cfr. IV, 465ff.); *Rem.* I, 93, 6 (with direct mention of Lucan).

[428] "What shall I say of Cato? Could he not have lived in his own home? He preferred instead to cross parched deserts, subjecting his life to Libyan serpents, so great was the virtue and the love of freedom which enkindled him; for this man his home was too confining. What can be said of Pompey, great in both deeds and repute? He forsook his enormous and opulent palaces and his country, where he was a distinguished leader, to wander as a conqueror throughout the world; did he not lay aside peace for himself in order to find glory? What shall I say about the Caesars, Julius and Augustus [...]?" (*Fam*. XIII, 4, 15; Transl. Bernardo, *Letters on Familiar Matters*, II, 183; cfr. Lucan. IX, 368ff., I, 121-44; VII, 694).

[429] "You would offer a more worthy cause of complaint if what once Caesar's fleet had to suffer between Italy and Greece had happened to you. Because of the frozen Adriatic he was not able to hasten his journey which was stalled because of the numbing cold. Likewise you would have cause for complaint if you had undergone what Pompey's army underwent in Libya when the land shook under their feet, and 'no soldier could stand erect because of the trembling sands on which they stood.'" (*Fam.* II, 8, 4; transl. Bernardo, *Letters on Familiar Matters*, I, 96-97; cfr. Lucan V, 436ff. and IX, 464-65).

These and other examples suggest that the value of fortitude is, overall, one of the major moral lessons that Petrarch draws from the *Bellum Civile*;[430] this way of regarding Lucan's poem finds an echo in Benevenuto da Imola's commentary on Dante's *Comedy*.[431]

Furthermore, Petrarch redeploys some Lucanian *sententiae* on human existence and institutional organization as maxims of permanent value.[432] He quotes Lucan, for instance, to remark that the evil man is often aided by fortune and the successful one never really knows if he is truly loved;[433] other redeployed Lucanian *sententiae* concern loyalty and old age, the power of weapons, and the cruelty and wickedness of military legions.[434]

A semantic field much exploited in Petrarch's citations of Lucan is that of poverty and sobriety. As Alain of Lille, John of Hauvilla, Peter the Chanter, and Dante did before him, Petrarch associates Lucan's name with the cause of *paupertas*. In the *Epistles* and *Invectives*, he remarks that Lucan followed his uncle Seneca in maintaining the sufficiency of bread and water for human life,[435] and claims that poverty is still a divine gift (*munus Dei*) as it was in Lucan's time.[436]

Petrarch's intertextual references mostly evoke Lucan's eulogy of the sober life in order to reassert it as a still-valid ideal. Announcing his discharge from the service of Giovanni Colonna in *Buc. carm.* VIII, Petrarch represents himself as the poor but dignified Amyclas, a poetic mask he uses, here as on other occasions, to negotiate and reconfigure his position of relative independence from political power.[437] The words with which, in the *De remediis*, Reason exhorts Pain to desire only what is necessary and condemns riches as a despicable source of discord ("pars vilissima rerum, certamen movisti, opes") are likewise drawn from the *Bellum Civile*.[438] Similar "Lucanian" encomia of sobriety as the basis for serenity can be found also in the *De vita solitaria* and other Petrarchan works.[439]

All this confirms Lucan's relevance for Petrarch as a moral and philosophical, as well as poetic, authority. However, while referring to Lucan as a guide on ethics, Petrarch slightly

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[430] Also in *Fam.* III, 10, 5-6 Petrarch cites Cato's opinion that difficulties are good for the strong man and Pompey's declaration that death must not be feared (Lucan. IX, 402-3 and VIII, 395-96), while in *Rem.* I, 48, 6 Reason quotes Caesar's famous aphorism "disce ferire, disce mori" (Lucan. V, 363-64). Similarly, Petrarch includes the elderly father of the Phocaean Argus and Cornelia among the *fortia exempla* of *Variae* 32 (ll. 291-96 and 302-7; Lucan. III, 723-51 and IX, 108).

[431] In his commentary on Dante, *Inf.* IV, 88-90, Benvenuto da Imola reports a widespread opinion according to which Homer, Horace, Ovid, and Lucan represent the four cardinal virtues, and Lucan stands for fortitude, since his poem deals with heroic deeds ("per Lucanum fortitudinem, qui describit gesta fortium virorum;" ed. Lacaita, I, p. 153; cfr. also Benvenuto I, ed. Promis and Negroni, p. 29). Although Benvenuto does not personally support this thesis, his words reflect a common late-medieval interpretive trend, which is also witnessed by the *glosse posteriori* of the *Codice cassinese* (*Il codice cassinese*, ed. Monaci di S. Benedetto, 37: "per Lucanum fortitudinem quia describit gesta armorum").

[432] On this characteristically medieval modality of reusing Lucan, see for example Fraenkel, "Lucan as the Transmitter," 29-30; Sanford, *Quotations*, 4ff.

[433] *Fam.* V, 5, 18 (Lucan. III, 448); *Fam.* XIV, 1, 34 and *Rem*. I, 50, 6 (Lucan. VII, 727).

[434] *Sen.* V, 5, 23 (Lucan. VIII, 282); *Fam.* XXII, 14, 5 (Lucan. VIII, 385-86); *Rem.* I, 97, 10 (Lucan. X, 407).

[435] *Sen.* XV, 3, 11; *Contra eum q. m. Ital.* 12; cfr. Lucan. IV, 381.

[436] *Fam*. VI, 3, 40; cfr. Lucan. V, 528-29 ("O munera nondum / intellecta deum").

[437] Cfr. Ascoli, "Petrarch's Private Politics," 143ff. (on *Fam*. XIX, 5, 3); *Variae* 17, 40-51 (cfr. n. 450 below).

[438] *Rem.* II, 7, 16 and II, 119, 24 (Lucan. IV, 487); *Rem.* II, 13, 12 (Lucan. III, 120-1). Cfr. also *Rem*. II, 132, 6 and 16 on the unburied dead (cfr. Lucan. VII, 819 and IX, 235-36).

[439] *DVS* I, 2, 15 (Lucan. VIII, 242-43); *Triumphus Mortis* I, 97-99 (cfr. again Lucan. IV, 381). In *Africa* IX, 471-72, Petrarch expresses the wish that his poem be preserved in a humble place, with an echo of Lucan's description of Amyclas' house (Lucan. V, 27-28; cfr. Bruère, "Lucan and Petrarch's *Africa*," 98).

modifies, corrects, and criticizes the moral views of his *auctoritas*. First, unlike Dante, Petrarch expresses aversion from what we might call the "excesses" of Lucan's Stoicism.[440] In particular, he lessens the rigour of what he appears to consider Lucan's stance on *paupertas*. *Fam.* XIX, 5 already calls attention to the relativity of the concept of "poverty." Inviting Pietro da Moggio to join him and share his simple life, Petrarch claims that his *honesta paupertas* is much preferable to wealth under a master for those who desire freedom, peace, and frugality.[441] This figuration of poverty as a status of liberty and dignity is in keeping with the ideal embodied by the Lucanian character of Amyclas and elsewhere appropriated by Petrarch. Yet, in the subsequent lines of his letter, Petrarch specifies that his *paupertas* is distinct from both gloomy indigence (*mesta indigentia*) and anxious, restless opulence ("solicitas et graves [...] divitias"), and adds that the notions of poverty and wealth are defined by comparison. When compared to Amyclas, Petrarch explains, even people who always lament their poverty will seem incredibly rich.[442]

Petrarch's definition of his status as an ideal middle way between sordid poverty and troubled wealth is inspired by the famous Horatian precept of *aurea mediocritas*.[443] Indeed, Petrarch continues his letter by stating that in his place Pietro will find the two best possible values, that is *paupertas* and – significantly – *mediocritas*: a statement that is both a reassertion of his previous evocation of *honesta paupertas* and a correction or clarification of it in the sense of a "moderate" application of the concept of poverty. Therefore, the degree of Petrarch's self-identification with Amyclas in this passage is more ambiguous than it would at first appear. The poor fisherman described by Lucan is here invoked as the poor man *par excellence*, whose condition is dangerously close to the indigence that Petrarch wants to escape.[444]

A passage from the *Secretum* confirms the thesis that Petrarch only cautiously accepts Lucan's concept of poverty. In the second book of Petrarch's autobiographical dialogue, Augustine reproaches Franciscus for his immoderate *cupiditas*, which has led him to abandon the simple and spiritually fulfilling life of the countryside for the tumultuous luxury of the city.

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[440] As might be anticipated, Petrarch expresses strong disapproval of Cato's death by suicide, which in Lucan's unfinished poem is not recounted, but nevertheless represents the necessary corollary of Cato's Stoic heroism as praised in the *Bellum Civile.* In *Fam.* III, 10, 12 Petrarch commemorates Cato's spiritual strength, supremely revealed by his Libyan deeds (Lucan. IX, 586-610), but at the same time rejects Cicero's and Seneca's positive evaluation of his suicide. The same opinion is reasserted in *Rem.* II, 118 and *De ges*. XXIV, 49-53 (see Crevatin "'Fu vera gloria?';" cfr. Carron, "Le *Comentum").*

[441] *Fam.* XIX, 5, 2.

[442] *Fam.* XIX, 5, 3:" Neve paupertatis nomen forte suspectum sit, scito, ut nichil hic sordidi, nullum meste indigentie locum esse, si solicitas et graves hinc abesse divitias. Comparatio sola est que vulgo divitias et pauperiem facit; quemlibet ex his querulis, qui perpetuis sortem suam inutilibusque convitiis, ac lamentiiis, exagitant, Amicle illi Cesareo comparatum, divitem extimabis [...]" ("Lest the word, poverty, cause misgivings, know that just as there is here nothing sordid and no room for painful want, so too worrisome and burdensome wealth is kept at a distance. Common notions of wealth and poverty are built solely by comparison; if you were to compare to Caesar's Amyclas anyone who constantly complains of his lot with futile outcries and lamentations, you would consider him wealthy [...]" Re-adaptation of Bernardo, transl., *Letters on Familiar Matters*, III, 85).

[443] Hor. *carm*. 2, 10, 5-8: "auream quisquis mediocritatem / diligit, tutus caret obsoleti / sordibus tecti, caret invidenda / sobrius aula" ("the man who cherishes the golden mean maintains a safe position: he escapes the squalor of a tumbledown house and also escapes, because of his moderation, the resentment caused by a mansion;" transl. Rudd, *Odes and Epodes*, 115); these lines are explicitly cited in *Secretum*, II, 14, 10. I thus disagree with Dotti's opinion that here Petrarch traces a distinction between *paupertas* and *egestas* following Seneca. As a reading of book II of the *Secretum* also reveals, Petrarch espouses the Horatian ideal of *mediocritas* in contrast with the radical views on poverty he attributes to Seneca (see p. 82 below).

[444] In the *Bellum Civile* we read of Amyclas living in a hut of reeds and canes and sleeping on a couch of seaweed (Lucan. V, 515-21): plainly a different standard from that of Petrarch's Horatian *mediocritas.*

However, the "right path" indicated by Petrarch's spiritual guide is not that of *paupertas*, but rather *mediocritas*:

> Quid ergo? Pauperiem ne suadeo? Optare quidem minime [...] Mediocritatem sane in omni statum expetendam censeo. Non igitur ad illorum statuta te revoco qui aiunt: "Satis est vite hominum panis et aqua; nemo ad hec pauper est, intra que quisquis desiderium suum clausit, cum ipso Iove de felicitate contendet";[445] nec modum vite hominum "fluvium Cereremque"[446] constituo. Sunt enim ut magnifice sic auribus hominum importune pridem odioseque sententie. Itaque, ut infirmitati tue morem geram, exinanire naturam non doceo, sed frenare.[447]

Augustine embraces the Horatian "middle way" tenet, in stated opposition to the radical Stoic precepts of Seneca and Lucan, whose drastic ideas on material goods are also mentioned together in other Petrarchan works.[448] Also in *Variae* 17 (presumably written in 1353), Petrarch contrasts Caesar's limitless aspirations with Amyclas' extreme poverty, which he compares to monastic life. [449] Overall, Petrarch's "moderate poverty" looks like a "third way" between Caesar and Amyclas, between the lifestyle of the powerful and that of the monk. This allows "the humanist" Petrarch to maintain a delicate relationship of proximity to, and detachment from, political power and monastic models, establishing his intellectual authority as contiguous to and yet independent from both the principal court and the cloister.[450]

Petrarch's option for a "moderate poverty" appears even more significant when read in the context of fourteenth-century debates on poverty within the Church and the Franciscan order. Under John XXII (d. 1334) and his successors, the institutional Church often displayed open hostility towards the Spiritual Franciscans, who argued for a radical application of the concept of poverty.[451] Petrarch himself was somewhat involved in these debates and disagreements. After

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[445] Sen. *epist.* 25, 4.

[446] Lucan. IV, 381.

[447] "Am I then trying to persuade you to live in poverty? No, I certainly do not wish you to desire it [...] I do indeed think that the middle way is always to be preferred. So I am not recommending the regimen of those who say that bread and water are enough to keep human beings alive, and that there is no one who is without these two things, and that he who limits his desires to them rivals Jove in happiness. I am not setting up what has been called 'a river and Ceres' as the measure of human life. That may sound magnificent, but it started to be irritating a long time ago. No, the remedy I suggest for your weakness is not to annihilate your nature but to restrain it" (*Secr.* II, 7, 4; transl. Nichols, *My Secret Book*, 35).

[448] *Sen.* XV, 3, 11; *Contra eum q. m. Ital*. 12. Later in the *Secretum*, Franciscus himself wholeheartedly welcomes the ideal of *mediocritas*, explicitly recalling Horace's teachings on the topic (*Secr.* II, 14, 9-11).

[449] Ll. 40-51: "Quidam vasti animi sunt, et appetitum nonnisi ad immensa transmittunt. His orbis ipse terrarum carcer videtur, et angustie, quod de Alexandro Macedone, ac de Iulio Cesare lectum est: contra alii minimis delectantur, magna fastidiunt: his tugurium regia est, ampla domus ergastulum. Tales puto fuisse Diogenem et Amiclam illum Cesareum [...] Multos quoque alios precipue ex nostris, qui pauperem ducem nacti omni studio fecerunt sibi familiarissimam paupertatem, in scissuris lapidum atque in desertis specuum habitantes: sic et in reliquis invenies" ("Some individuals are great-souled and invest their desire only in huge things; the whole world looks like a cramped prison to them, as we read of Alexander of Macedonia and Julius Caesar. Others, on the contrary, find pleasure in the smallest things and reject the great ones: for them, a hovel is a realm and an ample mansion a jail. I reckon that Diogenes and that Caesarian Amiclas were people of this kind [...]; the same is especially true for many others among our contemporaries, who followed our poor Lord and put all their efforts into making poverty their constant companion, by living in rocky crevices and desert caves ...) (My transl.).

[450] On Petrarch's complex attitude towards political power, see Mazzotta, *The Worlds of Petrarch*, 181-92; Id., "The Road to Freedom;" Dotti, *Petrarca civile*, 127-57, 179-214, 222-35; Ascoli, "Petrarch's Private Politics," with bibl. On Petrarch's problematic monasticism, see n. 473 and 474 below.

[451] Burr, *The Spiritual Franciscans*, 279-304; Nimmo, *Reform and Division*, 134-259, 353-429; Moorman, *The Franciscan Order*, 305-49. Cfr. Kircher, *The Poet's Wisdom*, 22-23.

Thomas of Frignano, the newly elected Minister General, tried to reform the Order by supporting some spiritual renewal movements connected with Gentile da Spoleto and Pauluccio Trinci, he was accused of favoring the *Fraticelli* and removed from his office. In 1369 Petrarch wrote to pope Urban V in defense of Thomas, who was restored early in 1370.[452] Although some aspects of the Spiritual Franciscan *ethos* must have been appealing to Petrarch, both his writings on poverty and his diplomatic ativity are ultimately aimed at finding a compromise solution with the more moderate and traditional factions within the Church.

Second, Petrarch points out the limits of Lucan's paganism. Various Petrarchan passages attempt to unmask the falsehood of Lucan's pagan occultism and dark esotericism with the light of the Christian faith. *Fam.* XVIII, 12 opens with Petrarch's complaints about the lack of copyists, which he defines as a much more serious problem than the silence of the Delphic oracle. Recalling Lucan's definition of the oracle as the greatest gift bestowed by the gods on humankind in his times, Petrarch remarks that it would have actually been better if the Delphic shrine had always remained silent, since it was animated by a demon, as Scriptural and patristic sources attest:

> Illud fidentissime dixerim, maiorem hanc nostri temporis iacturam aliquantoque iustius deflendam quam delphica sedes quod siluit, quo deorum singulari quodam dono et quo nullum, se iudice, maius esset, Lucanus seculum suum caruisse conqueritur.[453] Que sedes melius omni tempore siluisset et cum incola suo penitus obmutuisse Apolline, qui non prophetico tantum testimonio, quoniam "omnes dii gentium demonia",[454] sed proprio etiam ore convincitur; siquidem interroganti cuidam quem se faceret, —quanta veri vis! — "demonem se esse confessus est."[455]

Similar observations are included in the second book of the *De otio*, where Petrarch quotes Lucan's regretful words about the silence of the oracle and comments that, had the ancient poet known the cause of this phenomenon, he would have been grateful rather than downcast, because the false and undeservedly venerated Delphic deity was silenced by the advent of Christ.[456]

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[452] Moorman, *The Franciscan Order*, 337; Robson, *The Franciscans in the Middle Ages*, 189; cfr. Nimmo, *Reform and Division*, 397-402.

[453] Lucan. V, 111-13.

[454] Sal. 95, 5.

[455] "I even venture to say with great confidence that for our age this loss is greater and more deplorable than the silence of the Dephic oracle which Lucan laments in his day and calls a unique gift of the gods and the greatest of all gifts. It would have been better had the oracle always been silent, and its tenant, Apollo, forever mute; for he is condemned not only by the prophet's testimony, for whom 'that people's gods are all demons,' but even by his own words, if it is really true (such is the power of truth!) that he 'admitted to be the devil' when questioned as to what he was" (*Fam.* XVIII, 12, 2; transl. Bernardo, *Letters on Familiar Matters*, 63; cfr. Lact. *Div. inst.* 1, 7, 9).

[456] *De ot.* I, 10, 10: "Quod iam ab ipsis fidei primordiis in Apolline delphico magni temporis illius fatentur auctores, quamvis, cause ignari, ceu gravissimam hanc iacturam defleant, "non maiore ullo deorum dono secula sua carere" iactantes 'quam delphica sedes quod siluit' [Lucan. V, 111-13]. Nosses autem, Lucane, rei causam, equidem non querelis sed gratulationibus uterere, quod veterator ille spiritus qui se divinationis deum cunctisque, ut sic dixerim, diviniorem atque, ut Lactantii verbo utar, 'quasi deorum Africanum' [Lact. *div. inst.* I, 9, 1] esse falsa persuasione vulgaverat, Christi confusus adventu obmutisset et veritatis ante oculos mentiri timuisset ac fallere" ("Writers during that great period of our history confess that this happened to the oracle of Apollo at Delphi in the earliest age of faith, although, being ignorant of the reason, they lament this as a most serious loss, boasting that 'their age lacked no gift of the gods greater than the oracle at Delphi, a gift which has grown silent.' Lucan, you should, however, have known the cause of this. Indeed, you would not have complained, but would rather have congratulated yourself, because that crafty old Satan, whom Lactantius called the 'Africanus of the gods,' and who had used false persuasion to spread the word that he was the god of prophecy and more divine than all others, had grown

Likewise, in his *Rerum memorandarum* Petrarch argues that *amor* has no need of arcane spells and obscure practices, for the most direct and honest way to be loved is to love:

> Non est necesse thesalica Tempe fixis in terram oculis lustrare et per herculeos colles Medee stupenti expertas herbas internoscere, non ferino ritu corporibus humanis particulas rapere et informia deformare cadavera, non carminibus Tartarum et elementa concutere; licet ferales sucos ab amatis labiis avertere, licet spiritibus et sepulcris parcere. Ad id enim quod cupimus compendiosior et honestior via fert: "Si vis amari, ama."[457]

As Petoletti points out, *oculis lustrare* is a phrase used by Lucan to describe Caesar's rapacious gaze at the Thessalian fields covered with corpses after the battle of Pharsalus.[458] Also, Petrarch's mention of the practice of using love potions, setting Tartarus and all elements in motion with magic *carmina*, profaning sepulchres, and dissecting dead bodies is a likely reference to Lucan's account of Erichtho.[459] Despite his taste for *pathos*, Petrarch approaches Lucan's occult marvels with a higher degree of diffidence than does Dante.

Petrarch is similarly critical of Lucan's assimilation of poetic glory to divinity, which he marks as a characteristic mistake of ancient pagan poets, including Virgil. In the second book of the *De otio*, Petrarch inveighs against the ancient Roman custom of divinizing powerful leaders and honoring them as gods. Among the factors determining this profane error are, to Petrarch's mind, the wealth and fame of the illustrious Roman generals, the credulity of their fellow citizens and subjects, and, significantly, the celebration of poets, conferring on them not only a fictitious divinity, but also true glory ("idipsum [...] non modo ficte divinitatis, sed etiam vere glorie").[460] In the development of Petrarch's argument, poetry is pointed to as the chief, indeed quintessential reason for the veneration of the ancient *imperatores*:

> Ecce et consecrare immortalitatem parere linguam ingenium quoque vatum audio; quid multa? [...] Que omnia si nonnisi per famam poeticamque facundiam fieri consentium, liquet hauddubie qualis esset illa divinitas, que doctissimos homines splendore nominum captos, scientes prudentesque sacrilegi erroris in foveam traxit. Iam illud Lucani de Cesaribus expositionem non requirit, ubi ait:
>
> "Bella pares superis facient civilia divos;
> fulminibus manes radiisque ornabit et astris
> inque deum templis iurabit Roma per umbras."[461]
>
> Quod etiam extincta progenie Cesarum in illo nomine multis post seculis servatum scimus [...][462]

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speechless and confused by the arrival of Christ and feared to tell lies and deceive the world before the eyes of the truth;" transl. Schearer, *On Religious Leisure*, 49).

[457] "It is not necessary to scan the Thessalian Vale of Tempe with eyes fixed upon the ground, nor to pick out upon the hills of Hercules the herbs that Medea used to perform her marvels, nor to dismember human bodies with savage rituals or deform hideous corpses, nor to shake Tartarus and all the elements with magic spells. We can keep deadly potions away from beloved lips and cease to trouble spirits and tombs. Indeed, there is a more honest and direct way to achieve what we desire: 'if you want to be loved, love!'" (*Rer. mem.* III, 82, 2-3; cfr. Sen. *Ep*. 1, 9; my transl.).

[458] Lucan. VII, 794-95 (Petoletti, ed., *Rerum memorandarum*, 328).

[459] Lucan. VI, 483-588.

[460] *De ot.* II, 5, 3.

[461] Lucan. VII, 457-59. Petrarch quotes this same line also in his note on Virg. *Aen*. XII, 139, again in a passage about the divinization of ancient emperors (Petrarch, *Le postille*, 959 n. 1818).

[462] "Listen! I hear the tongue and the genius of poets hallowing and giving birth to immortality! What more is there? All these sources agree that such stories arise from fame and poetic eloquence. It is not at all clear what sort of god lured into such sacrilegious error those very learned, knowledgeable, and prudent men who had been captivated by

In the context of the *Bellum Civile* the passage quoted here by Petrarch constitutes a polemical reference to the divinization of deceased *imperatores* as humankind's supposed revenge for the gods' indifference at Pharsalus. Petrarch does not, apparently, acknowledge Lucan's sarcasm; while reading the above lines as a proof of the artificial and socially constructed nature of Caesar's presumed divinity, the humanist deems Lucan's poetry a powerful agent of his sacrilegous elevation to a god-like status.[463]

More generally, and quite apart from any overtly polemical intent against Lucan, Petrarch's citational strategy aims at transposing the characters, images, and values of the *Bellum Civile* onto a Christian and metaphysical level. In the *Triumphus Pudicitiae*, for example, Laura is said to fight against love more fiercely than Caesar against Pompey in Thessaly ("non fu sì ardente Cesare in Farsaglia / contra 'l genero suo, com'ella fue / contra colui ch'ogni lorica smaglia");[464] likewise, in *Rem.* II, 75, 2, the inner conflict of the soul at war with itself is defined as "worse [...] than civic strife" ("bellum plus quam civile") with an allusion to Lucan. I, 1.[465] The "blood pact" between Caesar and the king of Egypt following Pompey's assassination is reconfigured by Petrarch into Christ's self-sacrifice for humankind, a pact ratified by God through the blood of his Son.[466]

Many Petrarchan allusions to the *Bellum Civile* emphasize how Christian virtue subsumes and transcends pagan heroism. In a letter to his brother Gerard, Petrarch recalls the devotion of Cato's and Caesar's soldiers towards their commanders as a figure of the Christian ascetic's reverence for Christ:

> Audisti ex historiis Marci Catonis milites illo presente et sitim et pulverem et estum et serpentum morsum tolerare solitos et sub illo teste sine gemitu ac lamentis occumbere.[467] Audisti Scevam, illum fortem potius quam iustum virum, sub oculis sui ducis non modo pugnare sed mori etiam exoptantem.[468] Quodsi mortalis domini veneratio prestare potuit, quid Cristi presentia posse debet? Is equidem non expectandus ut veniat, sicut Cesarem suum infelix ille bellator expectat, sed suscipiendus colendusque; omnibus locis omnibusque temporibus presens est, videt actus nostros, cogitationes introspicit, ingens calcar animo nisi funeste consuetudinis torpor obsistat.[469]

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the glory of those people's name. Lucan's words about the Caesars do not require explanation when he says, 'Civil wars will make them divine and equal to the gods above. Rome will adorn their souls with lightning bolts, halos, and stars and will swear oaths through the shades in the temples of the gods.' Even after the race of the Caesars had been extinguished, we know that their name was preserved for many centuries afterward" (*De ot.* II, 5, 10-1; transl. Schearer, *On Religious Leisure*, 118).

[463] According to Petrarch, Virgil is guilty of the same mistake because of his celebration of Augustus (*De ot.* II, 5, 11). In *Contra med.* IV, 176 Petrarch refers to Lucan's representation of Pompey as a semi-god (Lucan. IX, 1-14).

[464] *Tr. Pud.* 73-75. In *RVF* 268, 72, the description of Laura's smile after her death recalls Lucan's lines on Pompey's afterlife (Lucan. IX, 11-14; cfr. also *Africa* I, 336-40).

[465] Transl. Rawski, *Petrarch's Remedies*, II, 170.

[466] *Fam.* XVI, 4, 10 (Lucan IX, 1021).

[467] Lucan. IX, 379-406, 498-510 and 585ff. (about the soldiers' shame at crying in front of Cato, see in particular lines 886-87, which are also referred to by Petrarch in *DVS* I, 5, 15).

[468] Lucan. VI, 140-262. Scaeva is mentioned by Petrarch also in *Tr. Fam.* I, 106; *Fam.* XVII, 3, 40; XXII, 14, 25; *Rem.* II, 77; *Sen.* IV, 1, 28 (cfr. Dotti, ed., *Familiares*, vol. II, 1397, n. 57).

[469] "In histories you have read that the soldiers of Marcus Cato endured in his presence thirst, dust, heat, serpent bite, and died in his presence without a groan or lament. You have heard that Scaeva, a man more powerful than just, wished not only to fight but to die under his leader's eyes. But if reverence for a moral lord could have such influence, what ought the presence of Christ inspire? Indeed one must not wait for his coming, as did the unfortunate warrior for the coming of his Caesar, He must instead be welcomed and venerated. He is present in all places and in all ages, He sees our every act and listens to our thoughts, He is a tremendous strength to our minds if the

Unlike Scaeva, the Christian soldier is, or is expected to be, *iustus* as well as *fortis*; unlike Caesar, Christ does not have to be waited for, as he is omnipresent and omniscient. Petrarch stresses that Christian monastic ascesis is the true and ultimate fulfillment of classical pagan virtue and ethics.[470]

In his *Supplementum Romualdinum*, Petrarch compares St. Romuald's alacrity to Caesar's and yet underlines the difference between the inspiration of the Christian hermit and the Roman dictator:

> ea demum solicitudine tam iugi tamque anxia et usque ad ultimum indefessa, ut more cesareo sed intentione alia, nil actum credens dum quid superesset agendum, his sacris edificiis ad exitum vix perductis, semper incipiens ac festinans nova iaceret fundamenta, prorsus quasi totum orbem unam heremum, omnes homines monachos facere decrevisset.[471]

As scholars have so far failed to notice, "nil actum credens dum quid superesset agendum" is a reference to Lucan, whose famous line on Caesar's restlessness[472] is reused by Petrarch to characterize his Christian hero, although the humanist clarifies that Romuald's action is driven by another spirit and aim (*intentio*) than Caesar's.

The Christianization of Lucan's epic models in Petrarch's works is of relevance to the wider problem of Petrarch's Christian classicism,[473] and particularly to the highly-debated issue of the divergence between or integration of "monasticism" and "humanism" in Petrarch's writings.[474] Scholars such as Leclercq, Mazzotta, and Maggi have attempted to overcome the supposed dichotomy between monastic spirituality and humanistic culture within Petrarch's later works, and to emphasise instead the "dialogue" and "interrelation" between these two basic impulses within texts such as the *De vita solitaria*.[475] Petrarch's above-mentioned comparisons between Christian monks and Lucan's ancient heroes partly support this conclusion. In Petrarch's view,

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sluggishness of evil habit does not interfere" (*Fam*. X, 3, 46-47; transl. Bernardo, *Letters on Familiar Matters*, II, 65-66).

[470] See also *Fam.* XVI, 8, 9, where Petrarch compares the ancient Roman *matronae* (among whom is Cato's Marcia) to Roman Christian virgin and martyr women.

[471] "And with this solicitude, moreover, so continuous, so anxious, so indefatigable to the last, that like Caesar, but with a different ambition, thinking nothing done as long as something remained to be done, he had scarcely brought to completion these holy edifices than he was beginning in haste to lay new foundations, as if he had quite decided to convert the whole city into a hermitage, and all men to monks" (*DVS* II, 8, 6, transl. Zeitlin, *The Life of Solitude*, 229).

[472] Lucan. II, 657. In his edition of the *De vita solitaria*, Carraud points to Suetonius' *Life of Caesar* 7, which, however, seems a more distant point of reference (Carraud, ed., *La vie solitaire*, 421, n. 547).

[473] In my view, the presence of classical references and examples in the second book of the late *De vita solitaria* warns us against postulating too sharp a divide in Petrarch's thought between "a time of great boldness and worldliness in which [...] he had been nourished solely by the ancient authors" (before the *Secretum*) and "a period of sharper awareness of the insufficiency of such a way of life and of the need for establishing closer connections with the modes of thought found during the Christian centuries" (Baron, "Petrarch: his Inner Struggle," 20). Medieval Christianity and Renaissance Humanism appear to coexist in Petrarch's works until the end of his life and activity (cfr. Barsella, "Boccaccio, Petrarch and Peter Damian;" Ead., "A Humanistic Approach to Religious Solitude;" Maggi, "You Will Be My Solitude;" Gerosa, *Umanesimo cristiano del Petrarca,* 137-42).

[474] On the relation between monasticism and humanism in Petrarch, a good bibliographical survey may be found in Voci, *Petrarca e la vita religiosa,* 94-95; cf. also Leclercq, "Temi monastici," 42-43. Scholars such as Charles Trinkaus and Giles Constable have especially stressed the similarities between monastic and lay forms of solitude as described in Petrarch's *De vita solitaria* and *De otio*, while others (Paul Oskar Kristeller, Michael Siedlmayer, Anna Maria Voci) have rather focused on the differences between Petrarch's lay, humanistic solitude and the monastic *solitudo* (for a further example of this latter critical stance, see also Barsella's above-mentioned studies).

[475] Leclercq, "Temi monastici," 45; Mazzotta, "Humanism and Monastic Spirituality," especially 57-58, 63, 72-73; Maggi, "You Will Be My Solitude" (on the *De vita solitaria*), 179-80, 187-88.

Christian monasticism and classical ethics do appear profoundly interconnected: monastic spirituality proves to be nourished by the ancient, secular ideal of heroic virtue which faith enlightens and brings to its peak.[476]

Nonetheless, Petrarch's cultural translation and spiritual refashioning of his classical models also disclose the substantial divide between ancient pagan and Christian ethics. In this account, in various Petrarchan passages the *virtus* of the pagan leaders who fought against each other in the Roman civil war is represented as intrinsically flawed and, as such, incomparably inferior to Christ's humble glory and to the true spiritual freedom of the Christian faithful. *Fam*. VII, 2, 12-14 contrasts the humility of God's adepts (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) with the earthly glory of powerful men such as Pompey and Caesar:

> Quodsi gloria temporalis coram Deo clarior foret quam humilitas, quis dubitet quam in partem iste tantus Dei favor multo propensior futurus esset? Confer enim cum his tribus senibus tam famosis cumque omnibus illorum gregibus atque coniugibus tres immensis exercitibus subnixos Romanorum duces, Scipionen Africanum Hanibalis cornua confringentem et tributario iugo imperiose Carthaginis colla subdentem, magnum Pompeium in Septentrione atque Asia tonantem et non lacte sed auro repleta patria captisque non ovium sed regum gregibus, a mari Rubro ad Meotidas paludes Ripheosque montes universa calcantem Iulium Cesarem in Galliis ac Germania fulminantem perdomitisque hostibus ad postremum in viscera patrie victricia pila vertentem ipsamque tunc gentibus imperantem Romam et in ea terrarum orbem unico thesalico prelio vincentem.[477]

In retracing Caesar's and Pompey's triumphs, Petrarch utilizes typically Lucanian *iuncturae* and references. Pompey's fame in the region of the Maeotian Swamp is pointed out in the *Bellum Civile*, as Dotti notices;[478] moreover, Petrarch's mention of the attack brought by the victorious Caesar against the "bowels" of Rome ("in viscera patrie victricia pila vertentem") again recalls Lucan. I, 3,[479] while the battle of Pharsalus is, of course, the main subject of Lucan's poem. In all their worldly power, the Lucanian characters of Caesar and Pompey are said *not* to be God's chosen ones.

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[476] In the same chapter of the *De vita solitaria*, Petrarch compares Romuald's imperturbable serenity to that of the ancient Socrates and Lelius, to whom the Christian saint would, however, be superior by virtue of his *pietas* and *religio*: "Quanta illi in adversis alacritas atque letitia, magnum solide mentis indicium, et in statu quolibet frons una perpetua serenitate notabilis! — Quod in primis Socrati Lelioque tribuitur, quibus hic sanctus, de quo loquimur, uniformitate par fuit, pietate autem ac religione superior" ("In adversity what alertness and gaiety he had, — a great proof of a substantial mind, — and in all circumstances a brow marked by its constant serenity, such as is attributed to Socrates and Laelius, to whom our saint is comparable in evenness of temper but superior in piety and religion;" transl. by Zeitlin, *Life of Solitude*, 229).

[477] "But if temporal glory were personally superior in God's eye to humility, who would doubt in what direction that great love of God would have been much more inclined? Compare with these three aged men, who were so famous, together with all their flocks and wives, the three Roman leaders who were supported by immense armies: Scipio Africanus, who destroyed the strength of Hannibal and subjected powerful Carthage to the tributary yoke; Pompey the Great, who raised thunder in the North and in Asia and who filled his homeland not with milk but with gold, and who captured flocks, not of sheep but of kings, as he proceeded from the Red Sea to the Maeotic Marshes and the Rhiphean mountains; Julius Caesar, who drove like lightning into Gaul and into Germany, and once having subdued the enemy finally turned his victorious spear against the organs of his homeland, and in a single battle in Thessaly defeated Rome herself, who then ruled over the gentiles and who contained within her the entire world" (transl. Bernardo, *Letters on Familiar Matters*, I, 336).

[478] Lucan. VIII, 318; Dotti, ed., *Familiares*, vol. II, 911, n. 24

[479] Petrarch's description of Caesar as a thunderstorm also seems reminiscent of Lucan. I, 151, as well as of Dante, *Par*. VI.

Along the same lines, both *Secr.* II, 14, 18 and *Contra quendam* 167 deal with Caesar's maxim "the human race exists for the sake of the few,"[480] the paradoxical character of which Petrarch underlines. While affirming that the multitude serves a small number of masters, Caesar would not have been aware of his own spiritual slavery, consisting in his subjugation to worldly concerns and duties and his constant fear of his subjects. In *Contra med.* IV, 142-45, Petrarch similarly stresses that, in his search for freedom and peace of the soul ("tranquillitatem mentis ac libertatem") he would venture to the sources of the Nile, which Alexander the Great and Cambyses were not able to reach:

> Illas ego non tantum ad Sorgie, sed ad Nili fontem querere non gravabor. Ibo quo nec Alexander mittere, nec Cambises potuit pervenire. Non me rubicunda perusti zona poli, non epularum defectus impediet, que causa duplex cepto arcuisse legitur tantos reges.[481]

The account of Alexander's and Cambyses' failed expeditions is drawn from Lucan, X, 272-82.[482] Petrarch pictures himself as "the new Alexander," endowed with a task spiritually superior to that of the ancient conqueror and thus able to achieve new horizons, overcoming the intrinsic limits of pagan ethics and heroism.

In Petrarch's readaptations of the *Bellum Civile*, the Christian believer is called to a similar and yet more profound and fundamental mission than the heroes of Lucan's poem: attaining true spiritual enlightenment and freedom. Petrarch's rewriting strategy aims at recovering Lucan's pagan epic and transposing it into a new, Christian framework in which ancient models of ethical and literary excellence are absorbed and displaced.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown that Petrarch turns to Lucan as a crucial point of reference for discourses on poetics, politics, and ethics. Unlike his predecessors', Petrarch's approach to Lucan is strongly biographical and emphasizes the idea of Lucan's rivalry with, and opposition to, Virgil, and the notion of Lucan's moral fallibility as an individual. Nonetheless, for Petrarch Lucan is still clearly an important member of the ancient epic canon and a model of verisimilitude in historical poetry. Moreover, Petrarch does not view Lucan as a resolute opponent of Caesar, as scholars have long assumed, but rather as a narrator who is able to understand and embrace the

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[480] Lucan. V, 343 (transl. by Nichols, *My Secret Book*, 49). In *Contra eum q. m. Ital.* 32, Petrarch explains what, in his view, this line properly means in the context of the *Bellum Civile*.

[481] "I would be no more reluctant to seek these things at the source of the Nile than at the source of the Sorgue. I would go beyond where Alexander could lead, and Cambyses journey. Neither 'the blazing zone of parched sky' nor 'the shortage of provisions' would stop me, even though we read that these two causes kept such great kings from attaining their goals" (transl. Marsh, *Invectives*, 79).

[482] "Summus Alexander regum, quem Memphis adorat, / Invidit Nilo *misitque* per ultima terrae / Aethiopum lectos; illos *rubicunda perusti* / Zona poli tenuit: Nilum videre calentem. / Venit ad occasus mundique extrema Sesostris, / Et Pharios currus regum ceruicibus egit: / Ante tamen vestros amnes, Rhodanumque Padumque, / Quam Nilum de fonte bibit. Vesanus in ortus / Cambyses longi populos *pervenit* ad aevi / *Defectusque epulis* et pastus caede suorum / Ignoto te, Nile, redit. [...]" (Italics mine; transl. Joyce, *Pharsalia*, 278: "Alexander, greatest of kings, worshipped by Memphis, was piqued by the Nile; he sent picked men to the farthest reaches of Ethiopian lands. The red-hot zone of roasting air held them back — they saw the Nile steam! Sesostris marched westward to the ends of earth and drove his Pharian chariots over the necks of kings; but he drank from your streams, the Rhone and the Po, more than he sipped at Nile's source. In the East, lunatic Cambyses got as far as the long-lived tribes, ran short of food, fed on the flesh of his own troops and, having failed to find you, Nile, returned home"). Cfr. also Petrarch's *Collatio* 11, 18-19 (on Alexander and the Nile) and *Sine nomine* 10, 2, where Petrarch mentions "the mad Cambyses" in his invective against Avignon-Babylon.

contrasting standpoints of his characters. Petrarch himself reactivates the ambiguities of Lucan's political ideology to express a nuanced understanding of Caesar's actions, whose historical implications for the Roman Republic he fully appreciates, as well as a generally positive, but still ambivalent view of the autocracy of his own age. At the same time, Petrarch is also sensitive to Lucan's narrative about Pompey as an imperfect and ill-fated hero, according to a pattern which is fully exploited by Boccaccio. In line with a common medieval trend, Petrarch reads the *Bellum Civile* as a source of everlasting moral teachings; at the same time, however, he criticizes and readapts Lucan's Stoic and pagan attitudes and more generally transposes Lucan's heroic epic into a new, Christian system of values, both preserving the force of his ancient model and displacing its authority.

BOCCACCIO'S LUCAN

Older studies of Boccaccio's attitude to Lucan were vitiated by the same prejudice characterizing analogous scholarly works on Petrarch; the early humanist Boccaccio was supposed to strongly disdain the Cordovan poet, a view based in part on the apparently negative judgments on him found in the *Genealogy* and the *Esposizioni.*[483] In the early 1960s, Quaglio drew attention to the fact that the *Bellum Civile* underpins some passages of Boccaccio's early vernacular works (*Filocolo* and *Amorosa Visione* in particular), where the scenes of the battle of Pharsalus and the death of Pompey are artistically translated and readapted. Quaglio tried to reconcile this discovery with the traditional scholarly narrative by stating that Boccaccio's youthful attraction to Lucan's poem was replaced by coldness and detachment in his mature years (from ca. 1348 onwards), when Dante's influence on him was superseded by Petrarch's.[484] A decisive step forward in challenging this narrative was made sixteen years later by Velli, who drew out the implications of Quaglio's insights: Velli identified various other Lucanian allusions in the first book of the *Filocolo* and some other Boccaccian works, and underscored Boccaccio's profound familiarity with, and creative appropriation of, the *Bellum Civile*.[485] Meanwhile, the supposed negativity of Boccaccio's judgment on Lucan in the *Genealogy* had also been questioned by Martellotti.[486]

Much work remains to be done on the topic. References to the *Bellum Civile* abound in Latin and vernacular texts by the "Third Crown" (*Epistulae, Carmina*, *Genealogia, De casibus, De mulieribus, De montibus*, *Esposizioni, Genealogia*).[487] Lucan's presence in Boccaccio's late works is a strong rebuff to the idea that his youthful appreciation of the *Bellum Civile* vanished in his mature years. On the contrary, Boccaccio's enduring interest in Lucan now seems to require a general reassessment of the relation between these two authors.

My analysis confirms that some degree of irresolution is undeniably present in Boccaccio's opinion of Lucan, as in Petrarch's. Following Suetonius, Tacitus, and Petrarch himself, the older Boccaccio underlines Lucan's excessive ambition and cowardly suicide; moreover, he expresses misgivings about the poet's violent opposition to Nero (an element Boccaccio emphasizes) and his unreceptiveness towards the Christian message. Nevertheless, despite these reservations of a moral order, Boccaccio always points to Lucan as an emblem of high style and a major ancient Latin poet. What he stresses is, rather, the fundamental difficulty of classifying Lucan's poetry according to well-defined conventions of genre and style. For Boccaccio, Lucan is first and foremost the singer of Pompey's dramatic vicissitudes, which he himself commemorates with pity and admiration, and the *Bellum Civile* is presumably "a tragedy in a figurative sense," for it recounts Pompey's fall from prosperity into disgrace. While reading the *Bellum Civile* mostly as expressive of Republican sentiments, the Guelph Boccaccio partly embraces Lucan's criticism of Caesar and produces nuanced representations of the Roman dictator. However, he looks at the

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[483] Hortis, *Studj sulle opere latine*, 405-7; Fischli, *Studien zum Fortleben*, 40-41; cfr. also Hecker, *Boccaccio-Funde*, 31; Moore, "Lucan," 228; Nolhac, *Pétrarque et l'humanisme*, 195; Toynbee, *Index of authors*, 155. Hortis' conclusions are still invoked by Mazza, despite her discovery of a manuscript of the *Bellum Civile* in Boccaccio's library (Mazza, "La biblioteca," 24).

[484] Quaglio, "Boccaccio e Lucano;" a similar stance can be found in Pastore Stocchi, "Il primo Omero," 121-22.

[485] Velli, *Petrarca e Boccaccio*, 77-113.

[486] Martellotti, "La difesa."

[487] A few examples of these references are given by Quaglio, "Boccaccio e Lucano," 166, n. 22; Velli, *Petrarca e Boccaccio*, 94-95. The allusions to Lucan discussed below are cited following the commented editions of Boccaccio's works collected in the series: *Giovanni Boccaccio, Tutte le opere, a cura di Vittore Branca.*

conflict recounted by Lucan in a considerably less politicized way than later, fifteenth-century humanists who live in the age of the *Signorie*. Boccaccio's interest in the *Bellum Civile* is at the same time poetic and erudite: he reuses the poem both as a repertory of literary motifs to be combined and readapted and as a mythological, historical, and geographical source; what is more, he produces a systematic theoretical attempt to decipher and explicate the multifarious meanings of the ancient myths transmitted by Lucan and other classical poets.

A PORTRAIT OF LUCAN

Boccaccio likely made his first full acquaintance with the *Bellum Civile* during his youthful stay in Naples; here he must have studied Lucan's text in a less elegant copy than the precious ms. Laur. Pluteo 35.23, which he later owned, consulted, and annotated in Florence.[488] In Boccaccio's early writings, Lucan is consistently listed among the major poets of the ancient Latin canon and his work is specifically described as having a high, "tragic" style and a noble, epic-military subject matter. Lucan's name appears in Boccaccio's *recusatio* of poetry with an elevated subject matter at the end of the *Filocolo* (1336-38):

> con ciò sia cosa che tu da umile giovane sii creato, il cercare gli alti luoghi ti si disdice: e però agli eccellenti ingegni e alle robuste menti lascia i gran versi di Virgilio. [...] *E quelli del valoroso Lucano, ne' quali le fiere arme di Marte si cantano, lasciali agli armigeri cavalieri insieme con quelli del tolosano Stazio*. E chi con molta efficacia ama, il sermontino Ovidio seguiti, delle cui opere tu se' confortatore. Né ti sia cura di volere essere dove i misurati versi del fiorentino Dante si cantino, il quale tu sì come piccolo servidore molto dei reverente seguire. Lascia a costoro il debito onore, il quale volere usurpare con vergogna t'acquisterebbe danno. Elle son tutte cose da lasciare agli alti ingegni. La cicogna figliante nell'alte torri discende a vivere a' fiumi. A te bisogna di volare abasso, però che la bassezza t'è mezzana via.[489]

Pastore Stocchi posits that this Boccaccian passage stands in continuity with the medieval cult of the four *magni auctores* (Virgil, Ovid, Statius, Lucan) as witnessed by works such as John of Garland's rhetorical writings and Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia* (II, vi, 7). At the same time, according to Pastore Stocchi, Boccaccio changes this traditon from within by placing emphasis

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[488] Membr., cc. I + 97, c. XII and XIV. The Laurentian codex is included among the holdings of the "Parva Libraria," the collection of manuscripts bequeathed by Boccaccio to the Convento di Santo Spirito. It contains a corpus of glosses mainly derived from Anselm of Laon's commentary and copied by an earlier hand than Boccaccio's. What can be confidently attributed to Boccaccio is only: the comment "Nota" at c. 66v; a *manicula* (c. 19r; Lucan. III, 39ff.); a head of a bearded man (c. 23r); perhaps the variant "vel Teutaces" (c. 6r); and the note: "Et nos eo more processiones facimus" (c. 8r; Lucan. I, 596ff.). See Hecker, *Boccaccio-Funde*, 31; Quaglio, "Boccaccio e Lucano," 163-64; Marti, "Vacca," 203; Mazza, "La biblioteca," 24; Auzzas, *I codici autografi*, 9; the excellent summary of Fiorilla and Cursi, *Giovanni Boccaccio*, 54 with bibl.; De Robertis, "Boccaccio copista," 329; Ead., "L'inventario," 405.

[489] "Since you were created by a humble youth, it is not for you to seek out higher places. So leave the great verses of Virgil to the excellent wits and vigorous minds. Your task is to delight the lovely lady with a piteous voice, and convince her to be happy with a single lover. And those verses of mighty Lucan, in which the fierce arms of Mars are sung, leave them to martial knights, along with those of Statius from Toulouse. And whoever loves with great purpose, let him follow Ovid of Sulmona, of whose works you are a supporter. And do not be concerned to aspire to be where the measured verses of the Florentine Dante are sung, whom you ought to follow very reverently as a minor servant. Leave them their deserved honors, for to attempt to usurp them shamefully would bring you harm. Those are all things to leave to high minds. The stork gives birth in the high towers but descends to live on the rivers. For you it is necessary to fly low, since for you the low road is the middle way" (*Filocolo* V, 97, 4-6; Italics mine; transl. Cheney, *Il Filocolo*, 470).

on Ovid's "minor," elegiac works rather than the *Metamorphoses*, possibly under the influence of Dante's description of the *bella scola* in *Inferno* IV.[490]

Boccaccio's treatment of the topic of "high subject matter" may also be related to Dante's famous definition of *salus*, *venus*, and *virtus* as the three highest subjects (*magnalia*) proper for the illustrious vernacular and the "tragic" style (*DVE* II, iv, 5-8).[491] In the above passage from the *Filocolo*, Ovid appears as the poet of *venus* and Lucan and Statius as the poets of *salus*;[492] Virgil's poem can well exemplify *virtus*, while Dante himself, mentioned after the four ancient canonical *poetae*, looks like a writer whose "high" poetry encompasses and transcends distinctions of subject-matter.

However imperfect this parallel may be, what is of most relevance for the current study is Boccaccio's treatment of Lucan as a poet concerned with a dignified, martial topic. The author of the *Bellum Civile* is defined by Boccaccio as "[i]l valoroso Lucano" and assimilated to Statius based on the subject of their *versi*, in which "le fiere arme di Marte si cantano." A similar association of Lucan and Statius, based on their common engagement with a lofty, warlike subject matter, is also present in other Boccaccian works. In his *Epistola* 4 (1339), Boccaccio notes that his addressee has studied the classical poets, among whom is Lucan:

> Et iam tam mirifice scientie peritus effectus, tibi vidi altissimi poete Maronis visitare sophyam, et dulciloquos versus Ovidii, te Cythereia movens, Caliope modulante canebas; *et Lucanum Statiumque crudelia bella dicentes prolatu ferocissimo recitabas*, et cum istis prosayca verba Salustrii ac Titi Livii romanorum scribe perspicui.[493]

These lines once again cite the four great poets, who are here clearly distinguished from ancient Latin writers of *prosayca verba*; Lucan and Statius are again grouped together as the singers of cruel wars (*crudelia bella*). Also in the *De vita Francisci Petracchi* (1348-49), Boccaccio tells how the young Petrarch detached himself from the study of law and was attracted to poetry by the Muses, who made him familiar with the major ancient poets:

> Sed, iubentibus fatis, quibus de facili non obstatur, Pyeridum corus egregius illum indissolubilibus amplexibus circumdavit, [...] suis luminibus e vestigio apponendo quid Smirneus vates impellente Apolline de Ulixe Graysque reliquis plectro mirifico demonstrarit; quid Terrentius Culleus placida infestante Talya meretricum lenonum iuvenum et servorum actus describendo reliquerit; quid Maro divino dotatus ingenio, pastorum scenicos ludos, arvorum necessarios cultus, Troadum clades et arma victosque Penates et lacrimas morientis Elysse cantando narraverit; quid Flaccus lirica suavitate permotus ac acerbitate satyrica

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[490] Pastore Stocchi, "Il primo Omero," 101-5.

[491] On Boccaccio's possible familiarity with Dante's definition of poetic genres cfr. Kelly, *Ideas and Forms*, 149. Kelly notes that Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia* does not seem to have been fresh in Boccaccio's mind when he was working on the *Esposizioni* (1373-74), but Boccaccio's detailed knowledge of the treatise is undoubtedly proved by his *Trattatello*, whose two redactions were written between the early 1350s and the early 1360s (Kelly, *Tragedy and Comedy*, 47; Bocc. *Tratt.* I, 200 and II, 138; cfr. Padoan, "Boccaccio," 647; Gilson, *Dante and Renaissance Florence*, 10).

[492] Boccaccio's use of the epithet "Tolosano" in connection with Statius' name suggests that he confused the Flavian poet with the grammarian Statius Ursulus Tolosanus, thus falling into a common medieval mistake, originally caused by Jerome and also present in Dante (*Purg*. XXI, 89): cfr. for example Paratore, "Stazio," 419; Jeudy and Riou, "L'Achilléide," 150; De Angelis, "Lo Stazio di Dante," 55-56.

[493] Epist. 4, 12 (Italics mine): "And once you became expert in this admirable discipline, I saw you visit the wisdom of Maro, that highly excellent poet; urged by Citerea and modulating Calliope, you sang Ovid's very suave verses, you most fiercely declaimed Lucan and Statius, who recount cruel wars, and alongside them also the writings in prose by Sallust and Livy, a distinguished writer of Roman histories (my transl). Cfr. Quaglio, "Boccaccio e Lucano," 169.

> decantarit; quid Naso Elycona spirante fingendo peregerit; *quid Lucanus urgente Caliope fervida tuba altisona clangendo perflaverit*; quid Statius, quid Iuvenalis, quid etiam alii plures mirto edera lauroque conspicui, virtute pariter ac fama mirabiles, heroyco cantu reliquerint discedendo. Ipse quidem [...] iam dicto<s> accipiens autores ac in suos doctores etiam et magistros, sic totus ardore castalio inflammatus, se poesi patre etiam ignorante donavit, ut nichil vel modicum aliud cogitaret [...].[494]

Lucan, whose name is again followed by that of Statius, is said to be inspired by Calliope, the muse traditionally presiding over eloquence and epic poetry, and to play a trumpet-like instrument (*tuba*), which is another characteristic emblem of epic.[495] Lucan's style is connoted by means of two adjectives — *altisonus* and *fervidus* — that reinforce the designation of his poetry as high-sounding or "tragic."[496]

This passage clearly underscores Lucan's importance for Petrarch's poetic formation. In this account, it must be noted that the *Bellum Civile* is repeatedly evoked by Boccaccio in *Italiae sublimis honos*, his song in praise and defense of Petrarch's epic, the *Africa.*[497] Furthermore, in his own epic poem, the *Teseida* (ca. 1339-41), Boccaccio makes explicit reference to the Thessalian battle between Caesar and Pompey as a precedent to the fight between Arcita and Palemone.[498]

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[494] *De vita* 6 (Italics mine): "However, because of the will of fate, which it is not easy to contest, the noble band of the Pierides tied him to it with indissoluble bonds [...] placing before his eyes what the *vates* of Smyrna, prompted by Apollo, made known about Ulysses and the other Greeks through his lyre; what Terence Culleo [*sic*], encouraged by the serene Thalia, passed down by describing the actions of harlots, procurers, young people and servants; what Maro, gifted with divine genius, recounted in his verses: the scenes of pastoral songs, the necessary cultivation of fields, the Trojans' ruin, struggles, and defeated Penates, and the tears of the dying Elissa; what Flaccus sang, moved by lyric sweetness and satirical mordacity; what Naso created with his fantasy, inspired by the Helicon; what Lucan, urged by Calliope, made resound, loudly playing his fervid, high-sounding trumpet; what Statius, Juvenal, and the many others distinguished by mirth, ivy, and laurel and admirable for both their virtue and fame, left in their hexametric poems when they departed from this world. Petrarch himself [...], welcoming the above-mentioned authors and making them his masters and guides, gave himself to poetry without his father knowing, and was entirely inflamed by the Muses' ardour, to the point that he did not think of anything else, not even for a moment [...]" (my transl.). Cfr. Quaglio, "Boccaccio e Lucano," 170.

[495] Cfr. for example Mart. XI, 3, 8; X, 64, 4; Val. Flacc. I, 268f.; Claud. *Pan. Prob. et Ol*. 198.

[496] The adjective *fervidus* appears as a reminder and variation of the famous definition of Lucan as *ardens* by late-antique and medieval writers (see pp. 4, 54 above).

[497] In the poem Boccaccio utilizes some Lucanian *iuncturae*. *Livor edax* (*carm.* 9, 12) is a common phrase in classical Latin poetry, but is specifically used by Lucan in the opening of the hexameter (Lucan. I, 288), as in Boccaccio's poem. Also Boccaccio's exhortation to the *Africa* through the words "Rumpe moras" (*Carm*. 9, 152) recalls Lucan's famous expression (Lucan. I, 281); cfr. Velli, ed, *Carmina*, 484, 488.

[498] *Teseida* VIII, 2, 1 - 3, 5: "Ora la Musa a cui più di me cale / per me versi componga, or per me canti, / e noto faccia il gioco marziale / fieramente operato da' due amanti, / Se il romore del gonfiato mare / da fieri venti e forti stimolato / e quanto mai ne fero nel pigliare / porto li marinar fosse adunato / o quello insieme che si dovea fare / quando a Pompeo Cesar assembrato / si fu in Tessaglia, non fora ad assai / quanto fu quel, che non si udì più mai" ("Now let the muse that suits me best compose verses for me. Let her manifest the martial feats performed by the two lovers [...] If the bellowing of the swollen sea urged by fierce and strong winds combined with the roar made by the sailors when they reach harbor, and the roar that must have been caused when Caesar went against Pompey in Thessaly, it would not be as loud as was that, which was never heard again." Transl. Traversa, *Theseid*, 509); cfr. Quaglio, "Boccaccio e Lucano", 156. Of interest in this account is also the *ekphrasis* of the reliefs of the royal palace in the second book of the *Filocolo*, which looks like a compendium of the major traditional epic subjects (*Filoc*. II, 32, 3-4). The passage alludes to the struggle among the Trojan followers of Polynices and the subsequent conflict between Theseus and Creon (events recounted in Statius' *Thebaid* and evoked by Boccaccio in the *Teseida*), to the pyre of Eteocles' and Polynices' bodies (Stat. *Theb.* XII, 429-64; Lucan. I, 549-51; Dante, *Inf.* XXVI, 52-54), the Trojan war, Alexander the Great's deeds, and the battle of Pharsalus (cfr. Quglio, ed., *Filocolo*, 776-77).

Therefore, Boccaccio's earlier writings leave no doubt about Lucan's status as a poet, and an epic poet in particular. The Cordovan author is given an important place in the ancient poetic canon; his style is marked as high or "tragic" and his subject-matter as elevated and military in character. Moreover, the *Bellum Civile* is identified as a fundamental point of reference and source of inspiration for the constitution of an early-humanist poetic, and especially epic, repertory.

Boccaccio's later works have been thought to show a lesser degree of regard for Lucan's poetry. However, a careful reading of these texts disproves this thesis. Boccaccio constantly praises the fervent inspiration and sharp inventiveness of the author of the *Bellum Civile*. What emerges from the later Boccaccio is, rather, a certain uneasiness in classifying Lucan's poem according to well-defined stylistic-rhetorical conventions, as well as some discomfort with the moral attitudes of Lucan himself.

The question of whether or not Lucan can be considered a poet is touched upon by Boccaccio in a famous passage of *Genealogy* XIV, 13:

> [...] in eo stilo, quem in Eneida sumpserat [*sc*. Virgilius], poeticum sequeretur morem, et potissime Homeri, cuius fuit in eo poemate imitator. Nam poete non, ut hystoriographi, faciunt, qui *a quodam certo principio opus exordiuntur suum, et continua atque ordinata rerum gestarum descriptione in finem usque deducunt* (*quod cernimus fecisse Lucanum, quam ob causam multi eum potius metricum hystoriographum quam poetam existimant*), verum artificio quodam longe maiori aut circa medium hystorie, aut aliquando fere circa finem inchoant, quod intendunt, et sibi adinveniunt causam recitandi, quod ex precedentibus omisisse videbantur; ut in Odissea Homerus, qui quasi circa finem errorum Ulixis eum naufragum in litus Pheycum delatum scribit, et ibidem Alcinoi regi recitantem, quicquid illi ante diem illam post discessum a Troia contigerat, inducit.[499]

Martellotti has convincingly argued that here Boccaccio does not dispute Lucan's worth as a poet, but simply marks a distinction between the "ordo naturalis" of the *Bellum Civile* and the "ordo artificialis" of works such as Virgil's *Aeneid* and Homer's *Odyssey*.[500] In support of Martellotti it should first be noted that the purpose of Boccaccio's chapter is to defend Vergil against the accusation of being a liar; Boccaccio's focus throughout is on defending Vergil's narrative devices as entirely appropriate for poets. Boccaccio's reference to Lucan should be considered within this rhetorical context. Second, and related to this, Boccaccio does not express his own skepticism about Lucan's identity as a poet, but merely relates a widespread opinion ("multi [...] existimant") to which he himself does not necessarily subscribe.[501]

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[499] *Gen.* XIV, 13, 14 (Italics mine); "[...] in the same style he [Virgil] had adopted for the *Aeneid* he might follow the practice of earlier poets, particularly Homer, whom he imitated in his works. For poets are not like historians, who begin their account at some convenient beginning and describe events in the unbroken order of their occurrence to the end. Such, we observe, was Lucan's method, wherefore many think of him rather as a metrical historian than a poet. But poets, by a far nobler device, begin their proposed narrative in the midst of the events, or sometimes even near the end; and they find excuse for telling preceding events which seem to have been omitted. Thus Homer, in the *Odyssey*, begins, as it were, near the end of Ulysses's wanderings and shows him wrecked upon the Phaecian shore, then has him tell King Alcinous everything that had happened to him hitherto since he left Troy." (transl. Osgood, *Boccaccio on Poetry*, 67-68).

[500] Martellotti, "La difesa;" cfr. Stone, *The Ethics of Nature*, 134-36.

[501] Martellotti states that Boccaccio's phrase "artificio quodam longe maiori" recalls the language of medieval *artes dictandi*. An important source and implicit addressee of Boccaccio's passage, not identified by Martellotti nor, as far as I know, by later scholars, is Bernard Silvestris, who in the opening of his commentary on Virgil's *Aeneid* states: "Notandum est in hoc libro geminum esse narrationis ordinem, naturalem scilicet et artificialem. Naturalis est quando narratio secundum seriem rerum ac temporum distribuitur, quod fit dum eo ordine quo res gesta est narratur

A similar rhetorical move underlies Boccaccio's remarks on Lucan's poetry within the short biography of the Cordovan author that he inserts in his "literal exposition" of Dante's *Inferno* IV:

> Giovane uomo fu e di laudevole ingegno molto, sí come nel libro Delle guerre cittadine tra Cesare e Pompeo, da lui composto, appare. [...] Appresso fu costui, che cagion se ne fosse, assai male della grazia di Nerone, in tanto che per Nerone fu proibito che i suoi versi non fossono da alcun letti. Sono, oltre a ciò, e furono assai, li quali estimarono e stimano costui non essere da mettere nel numero de' poeti, affermando essergli stata negata la laurea dal senato, la quale come poeta addomandava: e la cagione dicono essere stata, percioché nel collegio dei poeti fu determinato costui non avere nella sua opera tenuto stilo poetico, ma piú tosto di storiografo metrico: e questo assai leggermente si conosce esser vero a chi riguarda lo stilo eroico d'Omero o di Virgilio, o il tragedo di Seneca poeta, o il comico di Plauto o di Terenzio, o il satiro d'Orazio o di Persio o di Giovenale, con quello de' quali quello di Lucano non è in alcuna cosa conforme: ma come ch'e' si trattasse, maravigliosa eccellenza d'ingegno dimostra.[502]

Like Petrarch, Boccaccio stresses Lucan's brilliance (*ingegno*), which he defines as praiseworthy (*laudevole*); furthermore, following Tacitus, he attributes the lack of public recognition of Lucan's poetry to Nero's envy.[503] The other possible explanation, i.e. that Lucan was denied the poetic crown because his style was judged more suitable to metrical historiography, is reported by Boccaccio as a conviction held by many (*assai*) both in the past and in the present.[504] However, after considering the arguments in favour of this widespread opinion, Boccaccio concludes that, whatever style he may have adopted, Lucan was undoubtedly talented ("ma come ch'e' si trattasse, maravigliosa eccellenza d'ingegno dimostra").

As Velli has noted in response to Quaglio, Boccaccio's concluding statement is not just an "involuntary confession" of appreciation for Lucan's poetry due to a sudden reminiscence of his youthful infatuation with the Latin poet ("ammissione involontaria [...] ricordo degli antichi amori"), but is rather a clear attempt to redeem the latter from the insinuations made by medieval

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dumque quid tempore primo quid consequente quid ultimo gestum sit distinguitur. Hunc ordinem Lucanus sequitur. Artificialis ordo vero est quando a medio narrationem incipimus *artificio* atque modo ad principium recurrimus. Hoc ordine scribit Terentius atque in hoc opere Virgilius" ("We should notice that in this book the narrative ordering is twofold: namely, natural and artificial. The ordering is natural when the narration is organized according to the chronological sequence of events: this happens when facts are recounted in the same order as they happened and are thus distinguished according to what occurred first, subsequently, and last. Lucan followed this ordering. The ordering is, instead, artificial when we start recounting from the midst of things and by means of some device we go back to the start. This ordering has been adopted by Terence and by Virgil in this work." Ed. Jones and Jones, *The Commentary*, 1, 15 - 2, 5; Italics and translation are mine).

[502] *Esp.* IV, esp. litt. 127-31. "He was a young man of very exceptional intellect, as is clear in his book on the civil war between Caesar and Pompey. [...] Later, for whatever reason, Lucan so fell out of Nero's good graces that the emperor forbade the reading of his verses altogether. There are many (and were many in the past) who consider (and considered) him to be unworthy of being named among the poets on account of the fact that the Senate denied the request he made to them to be crowned with the laurel wreath. The motive for their decision was based on the conviction of the College of Poets that his work was more similar to historical verse than to poetry. That this is true is quite easy to ascertain for anyone who compares it to the heroic style of Homer and Vergil, to the tragic style of Seneca the poet, to the comic style of Plautus and Terence, or to the satirical style of Horace, Persius, and Juvenal. Lucan's style, with regard to these poets, was entirely incongruous; nonetheless, however we may identify it, he was clearly a marvellously intelligent man" (transl. Papio, *Boccaccio's Expositions*, 193-94).

[503] Tacitus, *Annales*, XV, 49.

[504] On this traditional judgment of Lucan, see pp. 4, 6-7 above. Here Boccaccio specifically relates the vexed question on "Lucanus magis historicus et orator quam poeta" to the Senate's refusal to grant him the poetic crown.

exegetes ("netto indizio dirimente [...] sigillo finale").[505] In fact, as will be apparent from the discussion below, Boccaccio's *Expositiones* develop like a high-medieval philosophical treatise, in that the list of possible objections to Dante's authorial choices is followed by the enunciation of counter-objections. This dialectical structure allows Boccaccio to bring together diverging points of view, opening a space for disagreement and yet stifling radical dissent.

The above passage from the *Esposizioni* especially displays Boccaccio's refusal to classify Lucan's poetry according to traditional categories of style or genre. In Boccaccio's view, the *Bellum Civile* cannot be strictly defined as "tragic," "heroic," "comic," or "satiric": that is, it does not conform to any of those which Boccaccio elsewhere defines as the "varied manners" (*varie maniere*) of the "poetic narrations" (*poetiche narrazioni*).[506] However unclassifiable, Lucan's style is nevertheless designated by Boccaccio as excellent.

In a later paragraph of his commentary, Boccaccio similarly highlights the differences among the works of Virgil, Lucan, and the various members of the *bella scola*, whose poems deal with very dissimilar subject-matters. Also on this occasion Boccaccio asserts that, notwithstanding their diversity, the five ancient authors can all be honored as "poets":

> *Però che ciascun*, di questi quatro nominati, *meco si conviene*, cioè si confà o è conforme, *Nel nome che sonò la voce sola*, cioè quella che dice che udì: "Onorate l'altissimo poeta"; nella qual "voce sola" non è alcun altro nome sustantivo se non "poeta", nel qual nome dice questi quatro convenirsi con lui, in quanto ciascun di questi quatro è così chiamato poeta come Virgilio: ma in altro con lui non si convengono, per ciò che le materie, delle quali ciascun di loro parlò, non furono uniformi con quella di che scrisse Virgilio, in quanto Omero scrisse delle battaglie fatte a Troia e degli errori d'Ulisse, Orazio scrisse ode e satire, Ovidio epistole e trasformazioni, Lucano le guerre cittadine di Cesare e di Pompeo e Virgilio scrisse la venuta d'Enea in Italia e le guerre quivi fatte da lui con Turno, re de' Rutoli. *Fannomi onore, e di ciò fanno bene*. Convenevole cosa è onorare ogni uomo, ma spezialmente quegli li quali sono d'una medesima professione, come costoro erano con Virgilio.[507]

Therefore, neither Boccaccio's earlier writings nor his later treatises actually question Lucan's artistry or his standing as a poet. Rather, Boccaccio's later works demonstrate his increased awareness of the difficulty of labeling Lucan's poem stylistically and of locating it within existing definitions of literary genres. Boccaccio's observations speak to his familiarity with late-

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[505] Velli, *Petrarca e Boccaccio*, 93-95; cfr. Quaglio, "Boccaccio e Lucano," 170. Lucan's identity as a poet rather than a historian is confirmed by Boccaccio in *Esp*. IV, esp. all. 59-61 (see pp. 99-100 below).

[506] *Esp. Accessus* 17. On Trevet's possible influence on Boccaccio's distinction between tragic matter and tragic mode, see p. 102 below.

[507] *Esp.* IV, esp. litt. 134-35. "*'Because each one*,*'* of these four men mentioned, *'with me shares*,*'* deserves or merits, *'the name uttered by the lone voice*,*'* that he said he heard ('Honour the illustrious poet'). In this 'lone voice' only the name 'poet' is spoken and it is this name that, he says, these four men deserve, insofar as each of these four was called 'poet' like Vergil. Aside from this title, however, they do not share anything else, because the subjects that each of them treated were unlike Vergil's. Homer wrote of the battles at Troy and of the wanderings of Ulysses; Horace wrote odes and satires; Ovid wrote epistles and of transformations; Lucan of the civil war between Caesar and Pompey. Vergil wrote of Aeneas's arrival in Italy and of his wars there against Turnus, King of the Rutuli. *'They do me honour and in that they do well.'* It is proper to honour every man, but especially those who practise the same profession, as these do here who are poets like Vergil" (transl. Papio, *Boccaccio's Expositions*, 194-95). Boccaccio's words trace a resemblance between the subject matter of the *Bellum Civile* ("le guerre cittadine di Cesare e Pompeo") and those of Homer's *Iliad* ("le battaglie fatte a Troia") and of the second half of Virgil's *Aeneid* ("le guerre [...] fatte con Turno"), although a distinctive feature of Lucan's epic resides in its specifically "civic" engagement.

antique and medieval exegetical debates on Lucan, as well as with the fourteenth-century theorization on tragedy, epic, and poetic genres subsequent to the re-discovery of Seneca's tragedies. Nonetheless, Boccaccio merely hints at these discussions and his treatment of the problem indicates that classifying the *Bellum Civile* was not one of his main concerns in approaching Lucan.

As evinced by the already-mentioned digression on Lucan and by various other passages of the *Esposizioni*, the older Boccaccio's reservations are of a different, and specifically moral, kind. Like Petrarch, and under the likely influence of his *Seniles* V, 2, Boccaccio portrays Lucan as rather haughty (*alquanto presuntuoso*) and reports Suetonius' famous anecdote of Lucan boasting of his *Bellum Civile*'s comparability with Virgil's *Culex*. Having inferred that the poet was actually attempting to counterpose his work with the *Aeneid*, Boccaccio concludes that such a comparison was seriously misguided. [508] In fact, in Boccaccio's as in Petrarch's opinion, Lucan's greatness does not make him comparable to Virgil: also in the eighth eclogue of the *Buccolicum Carmen*, Lucan is said to be inferior to Virgil and Petrarch himself. [509]

Moreover, Boccaccio retraces the story of Lucan's involvement in Piso's conspiracy and his ignominious death, following the accounts of Tacitus and of Suetonius:

> Esso, ancora assai giovane uomo, fu da Nerone Cesare trovato essere in una congiurazione fatta contro a lui da un nobile giovane romano chiamato Pisone, con molti altri consenziente: e ritenuto per quella, avendo veduto, secondo che Cornelio Tacito scrive, una femmina volgare chiamata Epicari, avere tutti i tormenti vinti, e ultimamente uccisasi, avanti che alcun de' congiurati nominar volesse; non solamente alcuno n'aspettò per non accusare se medesimo, ma eziandio non sofferse di vedere né i tormenti né i tormentatori, ma, come domandato fu se in questa congiurazione era colpevole, prestamente il confessò, e non solamente gli bastò d'avere accusato sè, ma con seco insieme accusò Atilia sua madre. Per la qual cosa morto giá Lucio Anneo Seneca, suo zio, essendo a Marco Annenio commesso da Nerone che morire il facesse, si fece in un bagno aprir le vene; e, sentendo giá per lo diminuimento del sangue le parti inferiori divenir fredde, secondo che scrive il predetto Cornelio, ricordatosi di certi versi giá composti da lui d'uno uom d'arme, il quale per

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[508] *Esp.* IV, esp. litt. 128-29: "Fu alquanto presuntuoso in estimare della sua sufficienza, oltre al convenevole; percioché si legge che, avendo egli alcuna volta con gli amici suoi conferito, leggendo, del suo libro, dovette una volta dire: - Che dite? Mancaci cosa alcuna ad essere equale al Culice? - Culice fu un libretto metrico, il quale compose Virgilio, essendo ancora giovanetto: e posto che sia laudevole e bello, non è però da comparare all'Eneida: e quantunque Lucano il Culice nominasse, fu assai bene dagli amici compreso (in sí fatta maniera il disse) che egli voleva che s'intendesse se alcuna cosa pareva loro che al suo lavoro mancasse ad essere equale all'Eneida; della qual cosa esso maravigliosamente se medesimo ingannò" ("He was rather excessively presumptuous in the estimation of his own abilities. So much so, in fact, that we read that, while he was reading from his work among some of his friends, he once asked, 'What do you think? Isn't it as good as the *Culex*?' The *Culex* was a poetic work composed by Vergil when he was still a very young man. Though it is commendable and beautiful, it is not worthy of being compared to the *Aeneid*. Although Lucan made mention of the Culex, it was quite clear to his friends from the way he posed the question that he was really meaning for them to compare his work with the *Aeneid*. We can see in such a comparison that he was woefully mistaken." Transl. Papio, *Boccaccio's Expositions*, 194).

[509] *BC* XII, 197-98: "Solus inaccessum potuit conscendere culmen / nuper Silvanus, nobis nec carior alter / Minciadis post fata fuit; / non pastor Opheltis, / aonii pecoris stragem qui carmine pinxit"). Slavitt translates "Silvanus not long ago scaled the impossible peak, but few, since Minciades' death, have managed to do so – except for Opheltis, who sang of the slaughter of many sheep" (Slavitt, *The Latin Eclogues*, 105), but the correct translation would seem to be "not even Opheltis' shepherd." For the passage's translation, the identification of the relevant figures (Silvanus=Petrarch, Minciades=Virgil, Opheltis' shepherd=Lucan), and the interpretation of *Opheltis* as a genitive, cfr. Bernardi Perini, ed., *Buccolicum Carmen*, 845, 1031, and 1041; see also p. 101 below.

> perdimento di sangue morire si vedeva, quegli a' circustanti raccontò, ed in quegli l'ultime sue parole e la vita finirono.[510]

Building on the accounts provided by his ancient sources, Boccaccio depicts Lucan's end as strikingly cowardly and deeply anti-heroic.

Boccaccio condemns not only Lucan's inglorious conduct and self-murder, but also his very choice to violently oppose Nero. This latter problem is specifically discussed at a later point in the *Esposizioni*, where he attempts to explain and justify Dante's surprising choice to place in Limbo sinful characters such as Ovid, Aeneas, Caesar, Lucretia, and Lucan himself, who claimed for himself the right to punish Nero for his excesses:

> Appresso, è ancora di questi Lucano, il quale, come mostrato è, fu nella congiurazione pisoniana incontro a Nerone, il quale era suo signore: e, quantunque iniquo uom fosse e niuna, secondo che Seneca tragedo scrive in alcuna delle sue tragedìe, è più acetta ostia a Dio che il sangue del tiranno, nondimeno non aspettava a Lucano di volere esser punitore degli eccessi del signor suo.[511]

Here as in his *De casibus*, Boccaccio partially embraces the literary-ideological tradition exalting tyrannicide as an act approved by God and pointing to Nero as the tyrant *per excellence*.[512] Yet, he simultaneously raises concerns about the individual's right to dispense justice by killing the despot. Boccaccio emphasizes Lucan's relation to Nero as that of servant to his liege lord or seigneurial master (*signore*). Giorgio Padoan relates Boccaccio's reservations about tyrannicide to the late-fourteenth century Florentine social crisis and the bourgeoisie's fear of radical overthrow — a fear which, in Padoan's opinion, Boccaccio shared due to his characteristically hierarchical vision of society.[513] What is especially relevant for the purpose of the current study

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[510] *Esp*. IV, esp. litt. 132-33; cfr. Tacitus, *Annales* XV, 49-51, 56-57 and 70; Suetonius, *Life of Lucan*, 23-26; Eusebius, *Chronicle*, ed. Helm, p. 183. The sentence "essendo a Marco Annenio commesso [...] facesse" is the product of Boccaccio's misunderstanding of Tacitus' text (Padoan, ed., *Esposizioni*, 829-30). "Nero discovered that Lucan, while still quite a young man, was involved together with others in a treasonous conspiracy organized by a Roman nobleman called Piso. According to Tacitus, after he was arrested and charged with the offense, Lucan saw a woman of ill-repute called Epicharis, who had withstood all their tortures and managed to kill herself before revealing any of the conspirators' names. Unable to wait until they began the tortures (indeed, unable even to stand the thought of seeing the tortures and torturers), Lucan confessed his guilt as soon as they asked him if he was involved in the conspiracy. And, as if his confession were not enough, he also implicated his own mother, Atilia. After the death of Lucan's uncle, Lucius Annaeus Seneca, Nero ordered Marcus Annaeus to see to it that Lucan died, which he did by opening his own veins in a bath. Feeling his lower limbs drained of blood and becoming numb, as Tacitus relates, Lucan then recalled some verses he had written about a soldier who died from blood loss. His last words were a recitation of this passage to the people who were with him" (transl. Papio, *Boccaccio's Expositions*, 194).

[511] *Esp.* IV, esp. litt. 372; the reference is to Seneca, *Hercules furens* 738-39. "Next among these is Lucan, who, as we have seen, participated in Piso's conspiracy against Nero, who was his lord. Although the latter was iniquitous and no gift, as Seneca the tragedian writes in one of his tragedies, is better received by God than the blood of a tyrant, it was not up to Lucan to punish the excesses of his master" (transl. Papio, *Boccaccio's Expositions*, 238).

[512] In the fourth book of the *De casibus,* Boccaccio deals with the injustices committed by tyrants (*Cas.* IV, 3-6), while in the seventh book he provides a very dark portrait of Nero, recounting how the emperor created a climate of terror and was responsible for many deaths, including that of Lucan, whom he forced to have his veins opened by a physician (*Cas.* VII, 4, 43: "Sic et Marcum Anneum Lucanum [...] ut medico ad incidendas venas brachium exhiberet coercuit").

[513] Padoan, ed., *Esposizioni*, 850.

is that Boccaccio emphasizes opposition to tyranny as a chief element of Lucan's personality,[514] possibly if not necessarily regarding the poet's political attitude as a historical precedent to the anti-oligarchic radicalism of his own times.[515]

Boccaccio's commentary adduces two possible explanations for Dante's decision to locate Lucan and the other sinful ancient characters in Limbo: he states that, first, the vices defiling these souls are much more evident in others among the damned and, second, that Dante has privileged the virtues of these figures over their faults.[516] Skepticism as to Lucan's moral adequacy for the role assigned to him by Dante is thus at least partly overcome by Boccaccio's argumentative strategy.

In his allegorical exposition of *Inferno* IV, Boccaccio considers another and more substantial objection to Lucan's presence in Limbo. Unlike earlier classical authors, Lucan and his contemporaries lived in an era in which Christian doctrine was preached everywhere, so that their possible ignorance of Christ's message does not constitute a valid excuse:

> [...] come la legge, la quale a ciascuno apartiene, è provulgata e manifestata, non puote alcuno con acettevole scusa allegar la ignoranzia [...] E però se, dopo la dottrina evangelica predicata per tutto, è alcuno che quella seguita non abbia, quantunque per altro virtuosamente vivuto sia, sì come degno di maggior supplicio per la sua ignoranza, non dee a simil pena esser punito con gli inocenti, ma a molto più agra. E di questi cotali pone l'autore alquanti, come è Ovidio, Lucano, Seneca, Tolomeo, Avicenna, Galieno e Averoìs; li quali io confesso tra gli altri dall'autor nominati non doversi debitamente nominare, per ciò che di loro si può dir quello che scrive san Paolo: "A veritate auditum avertent, ad fabulas autem convertentur" etc.; [...] Nondimeno, che che qui per me detto sia, io non intendo di derogare in alcuno atto alla catolica verità né alla sentenzia de' più savi.[517]

As the use of the first person ("io confesso") reveals, the problem of Lucan's inexcusable paganism is felt as profoundly disquieting by Boccaccio himself. Nonetheless, Boccaccio's criticism is once again expressed in a cautious manner and the Tuscan author ultimately suspends his judgment on the question. The dialectical organization of Boccaccio's reasoning allows him to convey doubt and yet at the same time soften the impact of the alleged disagreement.

In this regard, the concluding paragraph of Boccaccio's allegorical commentary reasserts Lucan's moral and intellectual merit. Boccaccio explains that the castle in Limbo stands for the majesty of moral and natural philosophy, to which Dante is introduced by five distinguished poets, that is, by "those teachers who are praiseworthy enough to show the way"

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[514] Lucan's opposition to Nero, highlighted by some medieval Latin commentators (see n. 202 above), is also hinted at by Petrarch, who refers to Nero as the cruelest of tyrants (*Contra quendam* IV, 10) and reads Lucan's address to the emperor as highly ironical (Lucan. I, 52; Petr. *Contra med.* IV, 164).

[515] On the distance that, in my view, Boccaccio establishes between ancient Roman history and the politics of his own day, see pp. 109-115 below.

[516] *Esp.* IV, esp. litt. 376-78; cfr. pp. 112-13 below .

[517] *Esp.* IV, esp. all. 49. "[...] no one may acceptably excuse himself for not knowing a law that is disseminated and manifested. [...] Therefore, once the teaching of the Gospel has been preached everywhere, anyone who did not learn it, no matter how virtuously he lived, must not be given the same punishment that the innocents receive. Rather, he deserves a greater penalty, and one that is far worse, on account of his ignorance. The author places some of this last group here. Among them are Ovid, Lucan, Seneca, Ptolemy, Avicenna, Galen, and Averroes. I must confess that I do not believe he did the correct thing in placing them among the others, since it can be said of them what St Paul wrote: 'And they will indeed turn away their hearing from the truth, and they will be turned unto fables,' etc. [...] In any event, no matter what I say here, it is not my intention to contradict in any way Catholic truth or the utterances of men wiser than I am" (transl. Papio, *Boccaccio's Expositions*, 248-49).

thanks to their proficiency in the liberal arts.[518] Indeed, Boccaccio explains, the five poets are marvellous masters in this field, for although their books do not contain any specific rules for teaching the liberal arts, they are infomed by the beneficial effects of these arts.[519] Moreover, the poets are the best possible instructors in the arts because they are capable of eternalizing virtue:

> di queste così fatte dimostrazioni niun altro par dover essere miglior maestro, che colui il quale col suo artificio sa perpetuare i nomi de' valenti uomini e le glorie degl'imperadori e de' popoli: e questi sono i poeti, de' quali è uficio il perducere in lunghissimi tempi i nomi e l'opere de' valenti uomini e delle valorose donne; la qual cosa quantunque facciano ancora gli storiografi, per ciò che nol fanno con così fiorito, con così rilevato, nè con così ornato stilo, sono in ciò loro preposti i poeti, li quali in questa parte l'autore intende per la perseverante dimostrazione, la qual sempre davanti da sè porta i nomi e l'opere di coloro che son degni di laude.[520]

Boccaccio's qualms about Lucan's moral probity do not undermine his esteem for an author he regards as an excellent poet. This last paragraph of the *Esposizioni*, moreover, reveals that, in Boccaccio's view, poetic excellence could be itself a doorway to moral exemplarity.

For Boccaccio, poetic distinction is intrinsically connected with the capacity to immortalize, and he repeatedly alludes to Lucan while dealing with the topic of the eternalizing power of poetry in the *Epistles*.[521] Similarly, while commenting on the difference between *laude*, *gloria*, and *fama* in his *Esposizioni*, Boccaccio reflects on the centrality of writing for preserving human fame after death and significantly mentions the case of Pompey, followed by Caesar and Alexander the Great.[522] Boccaccio's reference to Pompey's literary fame can be read as an allusion to Lucan, who for Boccaccio is the poet who sang of Pompey and perpetuated his memory.

THE TRAGEDY OF POMPEY

While Albertino Mussato and several other medieval authors read the *Bellum Civile* as the

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[518] Esp. IV, esp. all. 55 ("[...] con cinque solenni poeti, cioè con quegli dottori li quali sieno per sofficienza degni a dimostrare quella via, per la quale alle filosofiche operazioni e perfezion si perviene"); transl. Papio, *Boccaccio's Expositions*, 250.

[519] *Esp.* IV, esp. all. 57.

[520] *Esp.* IV, esp. all. 60-1 ("[...] regarding the teaching of such things, it seems that there is no better instructor than one who knows how to use his art to give longevity to the reputation of valorous men and to the deeds of emperors and nations. These are the poets, whose duty is to convey the names and deeds of virtuous men and women across the centuries. Although historians do something similar, they do not have such an eloquent, lofty, and ornate style as the poets who in this endeavour enjoy pride of place. The author here represents poets as an enduring testimony to fame, which always keeps before his eyes the names and the deeds that are worthy of praise." Transl. Papio, *Boccaccio's Expositions*, 250).

[521] In *Epist.* 7, 9 (to Petrarch), Boccaccio exalts the name and role of the poet with a quotation of Lucan. IV, 812; in *Epist.* 13, 227, he states that Amyclas found a poet who made his name eternal.

[522] *Esp*. II, esp. litt. 108: "'Fama' è quello ragionare che lontano si fa delle magnifiche opere d'alcun valente uomo e che dopo la sua vita persevera nelle scritture di coloro li quali in nota messe l'hanno, spandendosi per lo mondo e molti secoli continuando; come ancora e udiamo e leggiamo tutto il dì di Pompeo Magno, di Giulio Cesare dettatore, d'Alessandro, re di Macedonia, e di simiglianti." ("'Fame' is what is said from afar about the magnficent deeds of some valorous man and what endures after his death in the writings of those who make note of them. It extends throughout the world and lasts for many centuries, just as we daily hear or read about Pompey the Great, Julius Caesar the dictator, Alexander king of Macedonia, and the like." Transl. Papio, *Boccaccio's Expositions*, 131).

celebration of Caesar's glorious deeds,[523] Boccaccio describes Lucan first and foremost as "the poet of Pompey." In the *Amorosa Visione* (ca. 1341-43), Lucan is represented as tearful because of Pompey's defeat:

> A' quai Lucan seguitava, ne' cui
> atti parea ch'ancora la battaglia
> di Cesare narrasse e di colui,
> Magno Pompeo chiamato, che 'n Tesaglia
> perdé il campo; e quasi lagrimando
> mostra che di Pompeo ancor li caglia.[524]

Still in the *Buccolicum Carmen* (1346-67), Lucan is referred to as "Pompey's shepherd" ("pastor Opheltis").[525] For Boccaccio more than for Petrarch, Lucan's *Bellum Civile* is the poem of Pompey.

At a political-ideological level, Boccaccio's interpretation of Lucan's epic as fundamentally Pompeian in character might be related to his view of Lucan as a fierce opponent of imperial despotism; indeed, as I will discuss below, Boccaccio reuses Lucan's philo-Republican discourse to produce a veiled denunciation of Caesarism.[526] At a literary level, Boccaccio's definition of the *Bellum Civile* as "the story of Pompey" implies that he read the poem as a narration ending in sorrow and thus, presumably, as a "tragedy" in a "figurative sense." In fact, the combination of various Boccaccian passages and extra-textual elements suggests that Boccaccio viewed Lucan's work as the tragedy of Pompey.

Boccaccio never gives an explicit definition of tragedy; yet his notion of *comedia* suggests that he conceived the difference between tragedy and comedy primarily as a matter of high versus low style and subject-matter.[527] In this account, we have seen that, according to the young Boccaccio, Lucan's poem is distinguished by loftiness of themes and expression, and is therefore "tragic" or "quasi-tragic" in style.[528]

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[523] See pp. 5-6, 12 above.

[524] *Am. Vis.* 5, 19-24 ("Then followed Lucan, who seemed from his behavior still to be telling of the war between Caesar and the one called Pompey the Great, who lost on the battlefield in Thessaly; near to tears, he shows that he still cares for Pompey;" my transl. I dissent from the translation by Hollander et al., which considers Caesar as the subject of "quasi lacrimando." Hollander, Hampton and Frankel, transl., *Amorosa Visione*, 23; cfr. for ex. Gigli, *Antologia*, 92).

[525] *Bucc. carm.* XII, 197-98 (see also *Bucc. Carm*. IX, 66, where Pompey is designated as *Opheltes*; cfr. n. 509 above).

[526] See pp. 109-113 below.

[527] Bocc. *Tratt.* I, 226 and II, 154; *Esp. Accessus* 18-19; cfr. Kelly, *Tragedy and Comedy*, 17-18, 45-48; Id., *Chaucerian Tragedy*, 20, 22.

[528] See pp. 91-94 above. From another standpoint, Boccaccio's depiction of Lucan as a tearful poet ("quasi / lagrimando") in the *Amorosa Visione* also recalls medieval definitions of the *Bellum Civile* as tragedy meant as "weeping poetry." See *Ottimo Commento*, ed. Di Fonzio, 144: "Tragedia è uno stile poetico nel quale si tractano magnifiche cose, come fa Lucano e Virgilio ne l'*Eneyda*. Scrivensi in questo stile le antiche opere e le fellonie delli scelerati re. E a li scrittori delle tragedie si dava per merito il becco, lo quale li Greci chiamano trages; scriveansi con versi piagnevoli. Onde dice Lucano: 'Bella per emathios plus quam civilia campos / Jusque datum sceleri,' etc." ("Tragedy is a poetic style used to deal with magnificent subjects, as Lucan does and Virgil in the *Aeneid*. In this style are recounted the deeds and iniquities of ancient, wicked kings. Authors of tragedies were rewarded with the gift of a buck, which the Greeks call *trages*; tragedies are characterized by sorrowful verses. So Lucan says: 'Bella per emathios (...)'" My transl; cfr. Kelly, *Tragedy and Comedy*, 26). More in general, definitions of tragedy as sorrowful poetry were customary in the Middle Ages: cfr. for example Isidore, *orig.* VIII, 7, 6 and XVIII, 45; Trevet, *Expositio* II, 2, f. 29 (*luctuoso carmine*), cited in Kelly, *Ideas and Forms*, 128.

However, as already mentioned, in the *Esposizioni* Boccaccio rules out the possibility of considering Lucan's poetic manner in the *Bellum Civile* as "tragic" in a strict sense, i.e. as entirely analogous to the style of Seneca's tragedies ("lo stilo [...] tragedo di Seneca poeta").[529] In fact, although he was not fully aware of the performative dimension of ancient drama,[530] Boccaccio does define comedy as a structurally dialogic genre, divided into "scenes" and following a single plot line without expansions; for these reasons the definition of Dante's masterpiece as a "comedy" seemed to him problematic.[531] The same considerations could have led him to see Lucan's poem as not strictly speaking "tragic."

Nevertheless, Boccaccio ultimately establishes that the *Divine Comedy* can, after all, be defined a *comedìa* in a figurative sense, for it ends in prosperity.[532] In his study on the topic, Kelly observes that Boccaccio "doubtless accepted the [...] assertion that the opposite kind of structure is a prime feature of tragedy."[533] Since in Boccaccio's reading the *Bellum Civile* recounts the downfall of the great Pompey, it can be inferred that the humanist considered it a tragedy in a figurative sense. An additional element supports this conclusion: Boccaccio owned Trevet's commentary on Seneca's tragedies, from which he probably derived his ideas on ancient drama.[534] In his *Expositio Senece*, Trevet distinguishes between tragic matter and tragic mode and states that, although Lucan did not write in a tragic mode as Seneca did, he can be called a tragic poet because he dealt with a tragic matter (*materia tragica*), i.e. the fall of great men and public affairs:

> Virgilius ergo in Eneydos, Lucanus et Ovidius de transformatis poete tragici dici possunt quia de materia tragica, scilicet de casu regum et magnorum virorum et de rebus publicis scripserunt, sed tamen minus proprie. Seneca autem in libro, qui pre manibus habetur, non solum de materia tragica sed etiam scripsit more tragico; et ideo merito liber iste liber tragediarum dicitur; continet enim luctuosa carmina de casibus magnorum in quibus nusquam poeta loquitur, sed tantum persone introducte.[535]

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[529] See pp. 95-97 above.

[530] See Kelly, *Chaucerian Tragedy*, 15-17.

[531] *Esp. Accessus* 20-3; Cfr. Kelly, *Tragedy and Comedy*, 46; Id., *Chaucerian Tragedy*, 19.

[532] *Esp. Accessus* 25: "Credo, con ciò sia cosa che occulatissimo uomo fosse l'autore, lui non avere avuto riguardo alle parti che nelle comedìe si contengono, ma al tutto, e da quello avere il suo libro dinominato, figurativamente parlando. Il tutto della comedìa è, per quello che per Plauto e per Terrenzio, che furono poeti comici, si può comprendere, che la comedìa abbia turbulento principio e pieno di romori e di discordie e poi l'ultima parte di quella finisca in pace e in tranquillità." ("I believe that, although our author was excellently insightful, he had not regard for the individual components of comedies but for the concepts as a whole and that he named his work figuratively. The essence of comedy, as is clear in the works of the comic poets Plautus and Terence, consists in the fact that a comedy has a tumultuous beginning, full of chaos and discord, whereas it ends in peace and tranquillity" (transl. Papio, *Boccaccio's Expositions*, 43).

[533] Kelly, *Chaucerian Tragedy*, 47. On the medieval definitions of "tragedy" and "comedy" based on the movement of the plot, first formulated by William of Conches and present in writers such as John of Salisbury, John of Garland, Huguccio, Nicholas Trevet, the author of the epistle to Cangrande, and Dante's commentators, see Kelly, *Ideas and Forms*, 68ff.

[534] Mazza, "L'inventario," 55-56; cfr. De Robertis, "L'inventario," 408; Kelly, *Chaucerian Tragedy*, 13; Papio, "On Seneca," 53-56.

[535] Trevet, *Expositio Senece* (ed. Franceschini, *Il commento*, 6.30-7.4). "Therefore, Vergil in the *Aeneid*, Lucan, and Ovid in the *Metamorphoses* can be called tragic poets, because they wrote of tragic matter, that is, the fall of kings and great men, and public affairs; but the name is less proper to them. Seneca, however, in the book before us, wrote not only of tragic matter but also in the tragic mode. For this reason this book is deservedly called *The book of Tragedies*; for it contains mournful poems about the falls of great men, in which the poet never speaks, but only

The matter of Boccaccio's reading of the *Bellum Civile* as a tragedy is intimately connected with the question of his view of Pompey. Some scholars, such as Branca, Ricci, and Zaccaria, have claimed that Boccaccio's writings express coldness and hostility towards Caesar's rival.[536] In my view, however, Boccaccio's references to the ancient general rather underscore the powerfully "tragic" character of the figure of Pompey, in line with the humanist's particular understanding of Lucan's poem. In Boccaccio's works, Pompey indeed exemplifies the typically tragic transition of human fortune from prosperity to adversity, a transition Boccaccio saw as already illustrated in the *Bellum Civile*.[537]

In book IV of the *Filocolo*, the noble *brigata* gathered around Fiammetta deals with the question of whether it is more painful to find love and then lose it, or not to be able to achieve love at all. The queen (*reina*) of the group remarks that falling into disgrace is worse for those who have once experienced happiness, and cites the case of Pompey as emblematic of this shift:

> [...] considerando che a colui è gravissima l'avversità che nelle prosperità è usato, noi terremo che quella che 'l suo amante ha perduto senta maggior dolore e sia più dalla fortuna offesa. Fabrizio mai i casi della fortuna non pianse, ma Pompeo sì. [...] Chi piangerà quello ch'egli mai non ebbe? Non alcuno, ma più tosto il disidererà.[538]

In the conclusion of the episode, Fiammetta emphatically declares that the pain of those who have lost what they once had is without doubt the most intense.[539]

In keeping with this tenet, in the *Amorosa visione* Pompey is represented as an extremely pitiful character. The defeated hero first appears in the context of the "triumph of fortune":

> A lui seguiva poi molto pensoso,
> palido nello aspetto, il gran Pompeo,
> tal che di lui mi fé tornar pietoso,
> mirando dietro a sé a Tolomeo
> che il seguiva, cui fé re d'Egitto,
> che poi uccider là vilmente il feo.[540]

The narrator's vision of the beaten and betrayed Pompey arouses in him feelings of compassion. The phrase "tornar pietoso," which we find in the first redaction, suggests that the narrator

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introduced persons" (transl. Kelly, *Ideas and Forms*, 131; cfr. Papio, "On Seneca, Mussato, Trevet," 52); see above, p. 73.

[536] According to Branca and Ricci and Zaccaria, Boccaccio's references to Pompey in the *Amorosa Visione*, *Filocolo*, *Commedia Ninfe*, *Fiammetta* (5, 28) are hostile or unfavorable (Branca, ed., *Amorosa Visione*, 704; Ricci and Zaccaria, eds., *De casibus*, 993). To the observations made below can be added that in *Fiammetta* 5, 28 Boccaccio does not polemically highlight Pompey's beauty, but appreciatively points out Pompey's favourable attitude: " [...] intra li predetti cavalieri togati [...] alcuni sì nel viso appareino favorevoli, che appena altramenti si crede che fosse il Magno Pompeo" ("and others appeared so pleasant that they resembled Pompey the Great," transl. Payne-Olsen, *The Elegy*, 78); cfr. Delcorno, ed., *Fiammetta*, 320 on *favorabilis* as "favorem seu laudem captans."

[537] A very significant passage in this regard is Lucan. VIII, 701ff., which seems to have also inspired Petrarch's treatment of the story of Pompey (see pp. 72-73 above).

[538] *Filoc.* IV, 24. "Considering that adversity is heaviest to the person who has experienced prosperity, we shall hold that the one who has lost her lover feels greater grief and is more hurt by fortune. Fabricius never lamented the turns of Fortune, but Pompey did. [...] Who will weep for what he has never had?" (transl. Cheney, *Il Filocolo*, 251).

[539] *Filoc.* IV, 26.

[540] *Am. vis*. 10, 49-51. ("Lost in thought, great Pompey followed him, pale of face, so that I came to feel again pity for him; behind him I saw Ptolemy, who had been made by him king of Egypt, and then so vilely had had him killed;" my readaptation of Hollander, Hampton and Frankel, transl., *Amorosa Visione*, 45).

already experienced such sentiments based on his previous knowledge of Pompey's story – a knowledge traceable to Lucan's poem in particular, alongside texts by other ancient authors.[541]

In *Amor. vis.* 36, 37-54, Boccaccio's guide shows him the bloody battlefield of Thessaly, where Caesar's and Pompey's armies fought with each other. Quaglio has demonstrated that the subtext of this pericope is Lucan. VII, 823-46.[542] The subsequent lines by Boccaccio tell of Pompey's flight from Pharsalus, his meeting in Lesbos with the weeping Cornelia, his journey to Egypt, his killing due to Ptolemy's betrayal, and the cremation of his corpse thanks to Codrus' affection and pity (ll. 55-88):

> Riguarda là Pompeo con volti dossi
> che fuggendo abandona il campo tristo,
> ed ancor ve' come a Lesbòs pososси.
> Se là rimiri, con sembiante misto
> di lagrime Cornelia accoglier lui
> vedrai, poi che sconfitto l'ebbe visto;
> e vedi ancor come quindi con lui
> si parte e vanne per mare in Egitto,
> in sé immaginando che colui
> dovesse lui ricevere, respitto
> avendo al regno che avuto avea
> da lui: ma 'l suo pensier non venne dritto –.
> Avanti mi mostrò, dov'io vedea
> come scendea del suo legno Pompeo,
> perché carico troppo li parea,
> di quello entrando in un che Tolomeo
> per Achillàs insieme con Futino,
> sotto spezie d'onor, menar li feo.
> In quel già assettato lui meschino,
> i traditori, alquanto indi lontani,
> pigliaron lui, quasi al suo mal divino,
> sì com parea: il capo l'aspre mani
> a lui tagliaro, il tronco in mar gittaro,
> e quello al sir portaron di lor cani.
> Ivi pareasi ancora il duolo amaro
> che Codro fece quando vide il busto
> del capo, ch'a' Roman fu tanto caro.
> Onde dolente, povero e vetusto
> prendea di notte quello, al mio parere,
> e poi che 'n picciol fuoco lui combusto
> sotterrato ebbe secondo il potere
> in piccioletta fossa, ricoprendo
> lui del sabbione, con lagrime vere

[541] For an overview of ancient sources recounting Pompey's end (e.g. Caesar, Cicero, Valerius Maximus, Florus, Eutropius, and Orosius), see Crevatin, *L'empio dono*, 169-72; cfr. Ricci and Zaccaria, eds., *De casibus*, 991-93. Lucan's prominence in Boccaccio's reception of the story is, nevertheless, confirmed by *Esp.* IV, esp. litt. 242, where the Cordovan poet is pointed to as the main source of Boccaccio's account of Pompey's escape and death.

[542] Quaglio, "Boccaccio e Lucano," 156-62.

il suo infortunio ripetea piangendo.[543]

This section summarizes the events of book VIII of Lucan's *Bellum Civile*, which is here the main source of Boccaccio's inspiration, as the mention of Cordus especially reveals.[544]

I do not accept Branca's claim that Boccaccio's representation of Pompey in this passage is unfavorable ("la prima presentazione [...] come fuggiasco da un punto all'altro non può essere né onorevole né avvivata di simpatia").[545] As in Lucan's poem, Pompey in the *Amorosa Visione* is a weak and vulnerable character, vanquished (*sconfitto*, l. 60) as a result of misfortune and his own flaws and miscalculations;[546] however, the narrator's attitude towards him is one of empathy and pity. Boccaccio's account is pervaded by *pathos* and is built by selecting the most dramatic elements of Lucan's version, such as Cornelia's tears, the Egyptians' betrayal and mutilation of the defenseless Pompey, the Romans' affection towards him, and Codrus' sincere sorrow.[547] The text expresses marked aversion towards Pompey's betrayers, who are called "dogs",[548] whereas the figure of the Roman general is connoted by means of the tragic adjective "wretched" (*meschino*, l. 73). What is more, in the second redaction of the *Amorosa Visione* emphasis is laid less on Pompey's shame and more on the disproportion between his heroic valour and his atrocious destiny.[549]

In the *Elegia di Madonna Fiammetta*, the sad parable of Pompey's life is evoked in even more pathetic tones, for events are focalized through the perspective of the suffering internal narrator (Fiammetta), who fully empathizes and identifies with the female character of

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[543] "'See there Pompey, who with back turned abandons the sad field in flight, and then see how he stopped in Lesbos. If you look again you will see Cornelia welcome him with a face half veiled in tears, seeing him defeated; and see again how then she leaves with him amd goes by sea to Egypt, presuming that its king might receive Pompey there in return for the kingdom which he had gotten through him: so did reason counsel - but the thought turned out to be incorrect.' Further along she showed me, as I saw, how Pompey debarked from his boat - to him it seemed overloaded - embarking into one which Ptolemy had ordered brought to him by Achillas and Pothinus under the guise of honor. Once he was in the boat, the traitors seized him - oh, wretched! - when they had only gone a short way, as they wanted and as if to fulfill his own suspicions: those dogs cut off his head and, throwing the trunk into the sea, brought it to their king. There was also visible there the bitter suffering which Codrus underwent when he saw the body so dear to the Romans without its head. Whereupon, in sorrow, poor and old, he picked up the body at night, I believe; after he burnt the corpse on a modest pyre and buried it in a small ditch using sand as a cover, as he could, he recalled Pompey's disgrace crying sincere tears;" my readaptation of Hollander, Hampton and Frankel, transl., *Amorosa Visione*, 149).

[544] On Boccaccio's affection for Codrus (who is mentioned in Lucan. VIII, 712ff.) see Branca, ed., *Amorosa Visione*, 618.

[545] Branca, ed., *Amorosa Visione*, 704. Pompey is depicted as fleeing also in *Commedia Ninfe* 33, 1-9: the dual flame of the Dioscuri is here put in connection with Pompey's departure from Rome, as in Lucan. I, 549-52: cfr. Quaglio, "Boccaccio e Lucano," 168; Id., ed., *Commedia Ninfe*, 949.

[546] The same ambiguity is also present in the *De casibus* (see pp. 106-8 below). The role of fate is especially stressed by Boccaccio in his second redaction of the *Amorosa Visione*: see n. 549 below.

[547] Cfr. Lucan. VIII, especially ll. 40-108, 444-49, 561-872.

[548] L. 78 (*cani*); cfr. Lucan. VIII, 831-32: "Nos in templa tuam Romana accepimus Isim / semideosque canes [...]" In the second redaction of the *Amorosa Visione*, the term is replaced by "profane" (*profani*).

[549] In Boccaccio's reelaboration, "In quel già assettato lui meschino" (l. 73) is changed into "In quello già posato, ah fiero destino!" ("once he was in the boat -oh savage destiny!-") and the last four lines (85-88) do not describe Codrus' sorrow, but rather comment on the inadequacy of Pompey's burial: "sotterralo secondo il suo possere / nel marin lito, ah troppo indegno scelo! / di vil sabbion, ché piramidi altiere / il suo sepolcro esser doveano al cielo" ("Then he buried it as best as he could on the seashore -ah undeserved, unworthy grave!- in the squalid sand; for high pyramids rising unto heaven should have been his sepulchre," transl. Hollander, Hampton and Frankel, *Amorosa Visione,* 149); cfr. Lucan. VIII, 793-872 and Bocc. *Epist.* 24, 24 (p. 108 below).

Cornelia.[550] Likewise, the same Lucanian lines on Pompey's ruin and death that are alluded to in the *Amorosa Visione* also underpin Boccaccio's biography of Pompey in the *De casibus*. Here as well, Pompey constitutes an object of compassion and his figure is constructed into a symbol of the turn from bliss to affliction, which is the subject of Boccaccio's treatise as a whole. Indeed, the *De casibus* could be itself considered a "tragedy in a figurative sense," or a work that deals with "tragic matter," as its stated purpose is to illustrate the fall of great figures due to their crimes and Fortune's instability; moreover, Boccaccio expressly states that, both overall and in its single parts, his collection of biographies starts in joy and ends in misery.[551]

In the *De casibus* Boccaccio introduces the character of Pompey after describing Marius' troubles in terms reminiscent of Lucan's treatment of the subject.[552] The narrator emphatically commiserates with Pompey, first led by Fortune to the edge of glory and then annihilated by her:

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[550] The afflicted Fiammetta compares herself to the suffering Cornelia, first elevated and then demeaned by Fortune: "Dietro a questa, così piena di tristizia come fu, mi si para Corniglia, la quale la Fortuna avea tanto levato in alto, che prima di Crasso, e poi moglie del Magno Pompeo, il cui valore quasi sommo principato in Roma avea acquistato, si vide. La quale prima di Roma, poi di tutta Italia quasi in fuga, rivolgendo la Fortuna le cose, col marito da Cesare seguitato miseramente uscì, e dopo molti casi in Lesbos lasciata da lui, quivi lui medesimo sconfitto in Tesaglia, e le sue forze dal suo avversario abbattute ricevette. E oltre a tutto questo, lui, ancora con speranza di rintegrare la sua potenza, nel conquistato Oriente il mare solcando, nelli regni d'Egitto arrivato, da lui medesimo conceduti al giovane re, seguitò; e quivi il suo busto sanza capo, infestato dalle marine onde vide. Le quali cose, ciascuna per sé e tutte insieme, dobbiamo pensare che sanza comparazione afflissono l'anima sua" (*Fiamm*. 8, 12) "After her, so full of sadness as she was, I remembered Cornelia, whom Fortune had raised so high. One sees her first as wife of Crassus and then as wife of Pompey the Great, whose valor almost won him the highest rule in Rome. When Fortune changed, she fled wretchedly from Rome with her husband, pursued by Caesar. After many troubles, Pompey left her in Lesbos and was then defeated by Caesar in Thessaly, and his forces were conquered by his adversary. Afterwards, Pompey, hoping to regain his power in the conquered East, sailed across the sea. Having arrived in the kingdom of Egypt, he delivered himself to the young king, but he was killed there. Cornelia then saw his headless body tossed by the waves. We must think that each thing by itself, as well as together, afflicted her soul without comparison." Transl. Payne - Olsen, *The Elegy*, 127). In *Filoc.* I, 30, 28, the desperate Giulia similarly compares herself to the "dolente Cornelia." The character of Cornelia seems particularly dear to Boccaccio: see *Cas.* VI, 9, 23-26; *Am. Vis*. 10, 76-78 and 36, 58-60; *Esp*. IV, esp. litt. 241-42 (cfr. pp. 104 above and 115-16 below).

[551] Bocc. *cas. Proem*. and IX, 25, 2. Kelly has shown that, although Boccaccio did not consider the stories of the *De casibus* as tragedies in a strict sense, his metaliterary reflections and various passages of his work recall Boethius's definition of tragedy. The stories of the *De casibus* were in fact regarded as tragedies by later writers like Chaucer, Lydgate, and Santillana (Kelly, *Chaucerian Tragedy*, 12, 23-24, 36-38; Id., *Ideas and Forms*, 171-72, 175, 205, 210). Papio has claimed that in writing the *De casibus* Boccaccio seems to have benefited from a Trevetian-Boethian reading of tragedy as the narration of the ruin of great princes due to fortune's instability, beginning in prosperity and ending in adversity (Papio, "On Seneca," 53-54, 58).

[552] *Cas.* VI, 1, 29-30: "Nec mora; et ecce ante oculos meos mulier imperiosa deduxit, madidis gemitu genis, squalida barba, incompositis canis, funesta veste, adhuc civili sanguine respersum, erumnosum Marium Arpinatem dixitque: 'Quem cernis ex humillima fere lixarum fece in septimum consulatum usque deduxi totque splendoribus exornavi ut nullus acceptiores evo suo triunphos deduceret. Verum quoniam nimie ambitioni sue digna satis sunt premia consecuta, maximum ex eo poteris exemplum mutabilitatis ostendere'" ("Without a minute's hesitation this regal woman made Marius of Arpinum appear in front of my eyes. He was completely distressed, still spattered with the blood of Roman citizens, very somberly dressed, his hair snarled, his beard filthy, and his face covered with mournful tears. Fortune spoke: 'The man you see before you I raised almost from the lowest dregs of camp followers all the way to become consul seven times. I rewarded him with every distinction, and to no man who was given triumphs in his time they were more welcome. And because he received rewards worthy of his excessive ambition, you will be able to use him as the best example of the world's instability.'" Transl. Hall, *The Fates*, 142). *Cas.* VI, 2, 13: "Marius autem fugiens cum in Minturnensium paludibus se abscondisset, ex eisdem ab insequentibus luto perlitus turpiter eductus est et Minturnensibus ut carcere servaretur exhibitus" ("Marius fled to the marshes at Miturnae and hid there. But he was captured, all covered with mud, by those who followed him there, and given

> Exim subsequebatur et quartus quem, quam cito vidi, Pompeium Magnum, ea etiam non dicente, existimavi. O spectaculum pium et miserabile! Madens erat adhuc undis egyptiis udorumque fragmentorum fumo luridus vix cervicem substentare posse videbatur. Quem dum ego spectarem et illa [i.e. Fortune] dixit: "Huius ego gloriam, tam reges superando, quam etiam regna dando, usque ad sydera summo cum favore portavi; tandem ut liquido quam fragilis esset mundanarum rerum splendor ostenderem, infeliciter pugnare, fugam capessere et in manibus egyptii pueri ut occumberet ipsa permisi."[553]

Fortune is here designated as the ultimate catalyst of Pompey's mistakes and deplorable choices: his defeat at Pharsalus, his flight from the battlefield, and his decision to trust the Egyptians.

In recounting the story of Pompey, Boccaccio first delves into the exposition of the general's remarkable deeds, which he designates as the greatest possible proof of human felicity ("nulla equidem reor [...] maiora humane felicitatis argumenta describi queant"),[554] and then proceeds to recount Pompey's fall from grace, following Lucan. In lines framed by allusions to the *Bellum Civile*, Boccaccio once again retraces Pompey's departure from Thessaly, meeting with Cornelia, voyage to Egypt, murder, and burial; like Lucan, Boccaccio deprecates the iniquity of Pompey's death and the unworthiness of his humble funeral far from Rome.[555] As in Lucan's poem, Pompey's disgrace is presented as a result both of fate's decree and of the commander's thirst for unchallenged power, which led him to refuse to share his authority with a colleague and to oppose Caesar in the first place.[556]

This identification of an indeterminate blend of fortune's action and individual guilt as the ultimate reason for the fall of great men is characteristic of the *De casibus*, whose rhetorical strategy is marked by inconsistencies and contradictions.[557] However, Pompey's prominence in Boccaccio's work does not seem due to the weight of his faults, as Branca claims,[558] but rather to

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over to the inhabitants at Miturnae to be put in prison." Transl. Hall, *The Fates*, 146). Cfr. Lucan. II, 68-75. Lucan's description of the wretched Marius is also evoked by Petrarch (cfr. pp. 74-75 above).

[553] *Cas.* VI, 1, 33-34 ("The second one followed next. The instant I saw him, I knew him to be Pompey the Great, though he did not say anything. Oh, what a piteous and tender sight! He was still wet with the sea at Egypt and sooty with the ashes of the smoldering fragments of ships. He seemed scarcely able to hold up his head. While I was looking at him, Fortune said: 'With supreme favor I brought the glory of this man to the stars, granting him to triumph over kings as well as endowing him with kingdoms; finally, I allowed him to be defeated in war and, while escaping, to fall into the Egyptian boy's clutches, where he found death; thus I acted in order to clearly show how frail is the splendour of mundane things'" (transl. by Hall, *The Fates*, 142, followed by my transl.).

[554] *Cas.* VI, 9, 18.

[555] *Cas.* VI, 9, 18-30; Lucan. VII, 712-14; VIII, 33ff.; VIII, 536-751; cfr. Ricci and Zaccaria, eds., *De casibus*, 992-93.

[556] *Cas.* VI, 9, 18-19: "Que [*sc.* Pompey's deeds] etsi quandoque invidorum morsibus lacessita sint, stetere tamen donec celsitudinis socios habere passus est. Verum occiso Crasso et Cesare bellum in Gallos agente, eo rem omnem publicam pro libito gubernante, rerum successu amplissimo deductus est ut magnitudini parem renueret" ("Although the majesty of Pompey's deeds was sometimes hurt by the mordancy of envious detractors, it nevertheless survived as long as he consented to have peers in his greatness. However, when Crassus was killed and Caesar was waging war in Gaul, Pompey governed the republic as he wished and was most successful with affairs of state; eventually he refused to obey any authority;" my transl. followed by Hall, *The Fates*, 153); cfr. Lucan. I, 80-93 and 120-6. The *De casibus* also recalls Pompey's unjust killing of Carbo (*Cas.* VI, 9, 25); moreover, Pompey's guilt is partly highlighted also in *Filoc.* III, 5, 11, where Boccaccio states that the Pompeians were vanquished by Caesar's less numerous army because they acted against divine will.

[557] Cfr. Kelly, *Chaucerian Tragedy*, 28-38.

[558] "Nella stessa ampiezza della presentazione si può scorgere un indizio del carattere umanamente deteriore di Pompeo: tutti i veri protagonisti del *De casibus* sono infatti colpiti dalla sventura dopo la gloria, come da una Nemesi storica, per le loro più o meno gravi mancanze" (Branca, ed., *De casibus*, 704).

the fact that, in Boccaccio's view, the figure of Pompey perfectly embodies the essence of "tragedy," broadly meant. Indeed, the *De casibus* confirms Pompey's role of tragic hero *par excellence*, since the Roman leader is said to have experienced misfortune after a long period of good luck ("post longas fortunas infortunia")[559] and to be the most significant possible token of fortune's reversals.[560]

In the *De casibus* Boccaccio expands a hint by Lucan and hypothesizes that Codrus' compassionate act towards Pompey might be inspired by Fortune's regret that the corpse of that excellent hero lay unburied.[561] The motif of Fortune's repentance for Pompey's undeserved end is organically developed in Boccaccio's epistle 24, which deals with Petrarch's death. Maintaining that mausolea are less efficacious for eternalizing someone's memory than humbler and yet more famous sepulchres, Boccaccio provides the example of the great Pompey, whose body lay under the open sky because Fortune realized that no commensurate urn could be found for such a great hero.[562] As Auzzas notices, Boccaccio's letter is interwoven with echoes of Lucan's books VII and VIII ("la pagina è tutta tesa a recuperare allusivamente momenti esemplari di pathos lucaneo, dall'VIII e dal VII libro").[563]

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[559] *Cas.* VI, 8, 6.

[560] *Cas*. VI, 10, 1-2: "Poteram, et honeste poteram, admodo quievisse ac pepercisse calamo postquam tantorum ducum et potissime Pompei Magni ingentes celsitudines et infortunium flebile recitaram. Quid enim restat amplius de Fortune potentia et instabilitate posse subicere? Neminem reor mortalium ex tam sublimi vertice corruisse" ("I would like to be still, and with a certain right, and to put down my pen after having related both the lofty rise and melancholy fall of these leaders, especially that of Pompey the Great. What more can be said about the unstable power of Fortune? I do not believe that any mortal ever fell from so high a pinnacle." Transl. Hall, *The Fates*, 156).

[561] *Cas.* VI, 9, 28: "Puduit forte Fortunam ut is, qui tam ingentis animi custos tam clarissimorum honorum susceptor tanteque maiestatis servator, ea favente, fuerat, insepultus esca piscium linqueretur" ("Perhaps Fortune was ashamed that she had been the guardian of one who had such greatness of soul, who had received such bright honors, who had served with such majesty, and that while she has on his side, he had been left to the rocks and the fishes." Transl. Hall, *The Fates*, 155), cfr. Lucan. VIII, 712-14.

[562] *Epist.* 24, 24: "Honorificentius iacent viri illustres in sepulcro incognito quam in minus egregio, si noscatur; et ut videas, volve tecum quid egerit cum Magno Pompeio Fortuna. Penituit eam, reor, quod passa sit eum subtrahi perituris rebus tam infausta morte, ut scilicet proditione pueri egyptii transfoderetur, et idcirco quem magnum viventem fecerat, maximum post mortem ostendisse voluit: et hunc mesta, per diem maris ludibrium singulari, in urna claudi omnino vetuit, ut quod litoris mare abluit inter Pelusium et Canopum eius crederetur omne sepulcrum; et que sparsa atque disiecta harena non texerat membra, celo texit sydereo, rata quoniam non satis decenter lucanum marmor aut parius lapis texisse potuissent, auxitque in tantum neglectorum reverentiam, ut viator solers assidue angeretur timore ne temerario pede premeret ossa eius qui regum armis et imperio sepissime cervices presserat. Si autem glorioso illi apud suos mori contigisset, considerata rerum gestarum ab eo preeminentia, vix credam satis illi fuisse insignem tumulum quem Arthemisia Cariorum regina Mausolo regi viro suo apud Alicarnassum erigi olim fecit" ("Illustrious men lie more honorably in an unknown sepulchre than in a more renowned but less beautiful one; in order to understand this, look at how Fortune treated Pompey the Great. I believe she repented for having allowed him to be subtracted from life in this transient world by such a cruel death, i.e. that he was mortally pierced due to the betrayal of an Egyptian boy; and thus she wanted to make magnificent in death him whom she had made great in life. Therefore, after he was scorned by the sea for one whole day, with affliction she forbade him to be closed into a sepulchral urn: in this way, the entire coast between Pelusius and Canopus could all be considered his sepulchre and his scattered and dispersed limbs, which sand had not covered, were covered by the starry sky, for Lucchese marble or Parian stone could not have sheltered him properly. Reverence towards the abandoned corpse grew so much that the steadfast traveller was continuously tormented by the fear of crushing with his careless foot the bones of that great man, who had so often crushed the necks of kings with his arms and power. If that glorious hero had, instead, died among his people, I doubt that the eminent tomb which Artemisia, queen of the Carians, once had built in Halicarnassus for king Mausolus her husband, would have been enough for him, considering the excellence of his deeds." My transl.).

[563] Auzzas, p. 844 ad loc. (with mention of Lucan. VIII, 710, 797-98, 802-3; VII, 819); cfr. Velli, *Petrarca e Boccaccio*, 95.

Boccaccio's tribute to Pompey fully reveals his admiration for the Roman leader and appears to be an attempt to compensate for the ineluctably "tragic" nature of Pompey's destiny, in keeping with Fortune's supposed decision and with the intention already stated by Lucan. As the Tuscan author remarks in an already-mentioned passage of the *Esposizioni*, the fame of Pompey's incredible deeds is universally propagated by written texts:[564] among these are, presumably, the epic poem by Lucan, the "pastor Opheltis," as well as Boccaccio's own writings. With his attempt to eternalize the memory of Pompey, Boccaccio takes on the role of Lucan's successor.

The above analysis has demonstrated that the story of Pompey is evoked by Boccaccio with powerfully poignant accents and without any appreciable polemical charge, but rather with sympathy. The following section of this chapter will show that Boccaccio's approach to the conflict recounted in the *Bellum Civile* is at times subtly anti-Caesar and yet devoid of significant political partisanship.

CAESARISM, ANTI-CAESARISM, AND BEYOND

If Boccaccio has oftejn been deemed a detractor of Pompey, this is also because he was thought to be a strenuous admirer of Caesar. Scholars such as Branca and Ricci and Zaccaria, mentioned above, emphasize Boccaccio's presumed fondness for Caesar as attested by various *loci* of the *Filocolo*, *Commedia Ninfe*, *Epistles*, *Esposizioni*, and *Genealogy*.[565] However, a contrary argument also exists: Witt and McLaughlin make reference to Boccaccio in their surveys of late-medieval anti-Caesarism, calling attention to the apparently negative representations of the Roman dictator in the *Esposizioni*.[566]

My study suggests that both elements are alive in Boccaccio's works. The Tuscan author expresses high admiration for Caesar's remarkable skills, echoing the pro-Caesar accounts offered by ancient authors such as the so-called Julius Celsus, Florus, Valerius Maximus, Eutropius, and Orosius as well as Dante and, to a lesser extent, Petrarch.[567] At the same time, Boccaccio moderately appropriates Lucan's anti-Caesar discourse, emphasizing the dictator's violent usurpation of power. Overall, Boccaccio's writings re-elaborate both the medieval "Caesarist" and "anti-Caesarist" traditions and contain interesting anticipations of fifteenth-century debates on Caesar's virtues and vices. Nevertheless, Boccaccio's reading of the Roman civil war is not a strongly politicized one; his allusions to the Roman past are primarily inspired by a search for poignant dramatic effects and by non-partisan admiration for ancient heroism. Boccaccio does not look at Caesar and Pompey as mutually exclusive heroic and political models, but rather as intrinsically compatible or complementary *exempla*. Moreover, although he redeploys Lucan's philo-Republican narrative to express a mild criticism of Caesar and of the Caesarism of his own times, Boccaccio does not draw a precise correspondence between past and present political conflicts.

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[564] *Esp*. II, esp. litt. 108; cfr. p. 100 above.
[565] Branca, ed., *Amorosa Visione*, 620-1; Ricci-Zaccaria, eds., *De casibus*, 993.
[566] Witt, "The *De Tyranno*," 446 ("Boccaccio is unfavorable to Caesar [...] While in other works Boccaccio expresses either a favorable or ambivalent attitude toward the Roman dictator, Boccaccio in the *Commento* is clearly no friend of Caesar"); McLaughlin, "Empire," 339-40. McLaughlin mentions Lucan, Suetonius, and Tacitus as possible points of reference for Boccaccio's supposedly anti-Caesar attitude.
[567] For a detailed analysis of Boccaccio's sources on Caesar, see for example Ricci and Zaccaria, eds., *De casibus*, 991-93; Padoan, ed., *Esposizioni*, 834-35;

Despite Branca's claims, the *Amorosa Visione* is already revealing of the subtle duplicity of Boccaccio's Caesar.[568] The Roman hero appears in the context of the the "triumph of fortune" and is described as noble, endowed with the symbols of imperial power, and the most valorous among the characters seen by the narrator, who declares his preference for him over the others. Yet, Boccaccio's eulogy is not unproblematic (*Am. Vis.* 10, 25-42):

> Nobile nello aspetto si vedea
> possente oltre venir intra costoro
> Cesare, che in vista ancor ridea
> d'avere a forza avuto da coloro
> nome d'impero, che real dignitate
> per istatuto avean cassa fra loro.
> Ornato di bell'arme e coronate
> le tempie avea di quelle fronde care,
> che fur da Febo già cotanto amate.
> Mirabilmente bell'a campeggiare
> in uno scudo lo divino uccello
> nero nell'or li vidi, ciò mi pare;
> ancora in una lancia un pennoncello
> che 'n man portava vidi, e simigliante
> vi vidi quella ventilarsi in quello.
> Di quanti a lui ve n'andasser davante
> nullo ne fu che tanto mi piacesse
> né tanto valoroso nel sembiante. [569]

At ll. 26-29 the text hints at Caesar's forceful seizure of power and his overturning of the Republican institutions, which had existed since the deposition of the last Roman kings. Boccaccio intermingles praise with words of reproach reminiscent of Lucan's more vehement denunciation of Caesar's illicit political methods.

Boccaccio's works present other signs of this fundamental contradiction. Some texts stress Caesar's virtues, possibly in dialogue with Dante's and Petrarch's re-elaborations of Lucan's text. Two passages of the *Commedia Ninfe* retrace the history of ancient Rome from a philo-imperial perspective which reminds us of Dante's accounts of Roman history in the *Comedy*; in both cases, Caesar's name is accompanied by the epithet "divine" (*divino*) and his figure is presented in a very favorable manner. In the first instance we find a brief mention of Caesar's rapid march towards Spain and his siege of Marseilles: as Quaglio has noted, Lucan's text is here mediated by Dante's positive citation of Caesar as an *exemplum* of celerity in Purg.

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[568] Branca, ed., *Amorosa Visione*, 620-1.

[569] "Noble of aspect appeared, mighty among the rest, Caesar, whose face still smiled because he had had by force the name of emperor from those who by statute had abrogated the royal rank. Adorned with beautiful weapons, he had his temples crowned by those precious fronds which were so loved by Phoebus. On his shield, marvelously beautiful to behold, I think I saw the divine bird, black on gold; at the tip of the lance a little pennant I saw, borne aloft in his hand; and like one in real air it fluttered on the shield. Among those who came before him there was no one pleased me as much nor who seemed as valorous in appearance;" transl. Hollander, Hampton and Frankel, *Amorosa Visione*, 43, readapted at ll. 35-36). In his second redaction, Boccaccio also modifies ll. 35-36, changing "in uno scudo lo divino uccello / nero nell'or li vidi, ciò mi pare" in "il giovial uccello / li vidi in oro e insuperbito stare" ("I saw the bird of Jove in gold, swelling with pride;" transl. Hollander, Hampton and Frankel, *Amorosa Visione*, 43), thus stressing even more the proud splendor of Caesar's imperial, or quasi-imperial, authority.

XVIII.[570] In the second occurrence, the nymphs recall the labors endured by Caesar and his army before and after Pharsalus, highlighting how Caesar's rule granted Rome dominion over the world.[571] Quaglio has again observed that this Boccaccian passage is patterned after Dante's description of Caesar in *Par.* VI,[572] which in turn is a rewriting of Lucan's text from a decidedly philo-imperial perspective.[573] Likewise, in his letters Boccaccio states that Caesar's glory is undiminished by his rivals' envy and repeatedly asserts the sincerity of Caesar's tears at the sight of Pompey's head, thus following the explanations provided by authors such as Eutropius, Valerius Maximus and, especially, Petrarch, in direct contrast with Lucan's insinuating remarks.[574]

Nonetheless, as anticipated, Boccaccio's later writings express some anti-Caesar reservations, to which the *Bellum Civile* may have contributed. In his commentary on Dante's *Inf.* II, 16-18, Boccaccio expands the hint already present in the *Amorosa Visione* by stating that, for the first time since the expulsion of the ancient kings, Caesar violently centralized all power in his hands:

> quantunque Cesare non fosse imperadore, egli fu dettatore perpetuo, e fu il primo, dopo i re cacciati di Roma, il quale recò nelle sue mani violentemente tutto il governo della republica.[575]

Also while commenting on Dante's mention of "Cesare armato" in *Inf.* IV, 123, Boccaccio provides an exhaustive biography of the character, putting into relief his exceptional talent as well as his vices and faults, among which is having unlawfully extended the duration of his appointment as dictator:

> Costui adunque, tornato in Roma, ed avendo triunfato, occupò la republica, e fecesi fare, contro alle leggi romane, dittatore perpetuo, dove, secondo le leggi, non si poteva piú oltre che sei mesi stendere l'uficio del dettatore. [576]

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[570] *Comm. Ninfe* 29, 13: "passammo [...] le mura [...] che furono negate al divino Cesare, allora che elli con volo subito se n'andò ad Ilerda" ("we passed [...] the walls [...] that were denied to the divine Caesar, when he went to Ilerda with dashing flight;" my transl.); cfr. Dante, *Purg.* XVIII, 101-2 and Lucan. IV, 13ff.; cfr. Quaglio, ed., *Commedia Ninfe*, 943).

[571] *Comm. Ninf.* 35, 28: "E di quinci nelle mani del divino Cesare pervenuta, lieta donna si vede di tutto il mondo; il quale, asprissimi affanni sopra l'onde d'Ibero, durante per lo suo imperio, ancora non istata la farsalica pugna, vittorioso di quelli, seco alle seguenti fatiche uomini antichi di sangue, nobili di costumi, chiari di fede e di virtù risplendenti, nell'armi feroci e agli affanni possibili, ne menò; da' quali non abandonato giammai, ad essi per merito dopo l'acquistate vittorie con la cittadinanza luoghi nobili diede in Roma" ("Having come then into the hands of the divine Caesar, Rome found herself the happy queen of all the world. And when Caesar had sustained exceedingly harsh battles on the Spanish waters (before the Battle of Pharsalia) in order to gain domination, and was victorious in these, from there he took with him to future endeavors men who were noble in custom, illustrious in fidelity, shining in virtue, fierce in arms, and capable of bearing hardships. And since he was never abandoned by these men, when the victories were won, he conferred citizenship upon them and noble positions in Rome for their merits," transl. Serafini and Sauli, *L'Ameto*, 102.

[572] *Par.* VI, 9; cfr. Quaglio, ed., *Commedia Ninfe*, 951.

[573] See p. 42 above.

[574] See Boccaccio's consolatory epistle to Pino de' Rossi (1361-62), par. 145-46; *Epist.* 13, 50; *Epist*. 22,11 (in this last passage Caesar's tears for Pompey are mentioned alongside Alexander's weeping for Darius, as in Petr. *Rem.* I, 104, 10; moreover, here and in *Bucc. Carm*. XV, 80ff. Alexander the Great is defined *praedo*, with a possible allusion to Lucan. X, 21: cfr. Bernardi Perini, ed., *Buccolicum Carmen*, 1069). On Petrarch's interpretation of Caesar's tears and its relation to ancient accounts of the scene, see p. 63 above; cfr. Crevatin, "L'empio dono," 173-76.

[575] *Esp*. II, esp. litt. 46 ("Although Caesar was never actually emperor, he was proclaimed dictator for life and was the first, after the ostracized Roman kings, to obtain through violence the whole of the governing power in the state;" transl. Papio, *Boccaccio's Expositions*, 119).

The *Bellum Civile* may have been present to Boccaccio's mind as he was writing these lines. Indeed, in order to explain Dante's description of Caesar as "armed" (*armato*), Boccaccio makes reference to the "civic war between him and Pompey" ("battaglie cittadine [...] tra lui e Pompeo"),[577] which he elsewhere indicates as the subject of Lucan's poem.[578]

In his discussion of Dante's allocation of some pagan characters in Limbo, Boccaccio refers again to Caesar's depredation of the public treasury and tyrannical usurpation of power, using words that also have a Lucanian flavor:

> E dentro al castello pone [...] similmente Cesare, il quale, come mostrato è, fu incestuoso uomo e di più donne vituperevolmente contaminò l'onestà, rubò e votò l'erario publico de' Romani, e, oltre a ciò, tirannicamente occupò la libertà publica e quella, mentre visse, tenne occupata. [579]

These passages from the *Esposizioni* are cited by Witt as a proof of Boccaccio's antipathy towards Caesar.[580] Witt's interpretation seems to me too drastic and one-sided, as it does not take into account the appreciation of Ceasar that emerges from Boccaccio's *Esposizioni* as well as his other works, nor the characteristically "*sic et non*" rhetorical structure of the Boccaccian treatise. The *Esposizioni* do confirm that the humanist does not only address "lodi altissime" to Caesar, as Branca claims.[581] However, Boccaccio manifests a high esteem for the Roman general although he is conscious of his possible faults. In commenting on Dante's treatment of Caesar, Boccaccio writes:

> [...] quantunque Enea, Giulio e Lucrezia e gli altri detti stati peccatori <sieno> qui discritti dall'autore, intende esso autore questi cotali in questo luogo si prendan solamente per virtuosi in quelle virtù che loro qui attribute sono, e le colpe, quasi non sute, si lascino stare. E così prenderemo quivi essere chiunque fu in opere simile a Giulio, in quanto virtuoso e non battezato, e così di Lucrezia e degli altri, e non in quanto in alcune cose peccarono: e in questa maniera si conviene sostener questo testo.[582]

This passage once more bears witness to Boccaccio's awareness of the contradictory facets of Caesar's personality and the ambivalent implications of actions that entailed, and resulted in,

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[576] *Esp.* IV, esp. litt. 196 ("After his return to Rome and his triumphs, Caesar took control of the Republic and had himself proclaimed dictator for life, contrary to Roman law which had mandated that no one may hold that office for longer than six months;" transl. Papio, *Boccaccio's Expositions*, 207).

[577] *Esp.* IV, esp. litt. 192: "E dice il predetto Plinio sotto la sua capitaneria, in diverse parti combattendo, essere stati uccisi de' nemici dalla sua gente un milione e cento novanta due migliaia d'uomini: né si pongono in questo numero quegli che uccisi furono nelle guerre né nelle battaglie cittadine, le quali tra lui e Pompeo e' suoi seguaci furono; per la qual cosa meritamente dice l'autore: Cesare armato" ("The aforesaid Pliny remarks that during Caesar's campaigns in various regions 1,192,000 enemies met their death. In this number, however, are not included those who were killed in the process of the civil wars that were fought between Caesar and Pompey, and their respective followers. The author, therefore, quite rightly says 'armed Caesar.'" Transl. Papio, *Boccaccio's Expositions*, 206).

[578] *Esp.* IV, esp. litt. 134-35 (cfr. p. 96 above); *Esp.* IX, esp. litt. 15; *Esp.* IV, esp. litt. 238 and 242.

[579] *Esp.* IV, esp. litt. 373 ("He similarly places there Caesar, who, as we have seen, was incestuous and vituperably defiled the chastity of numerous women. He also pilfered and emptied the Roman public treasury and even tyrannically seized Roman liberty and retained it until his death;" transl. Papio, *Boccaccio's Expositions*, 238).

[580] Witt, "The *De Tyranno*," 446.

[581] Branca, ed., *Amorosa Visione*, 621.

[582] *Esp.* IV, esp. litt. 378 ("although Aeneas, Caesar, Lucretia, and the other sinners we mentioned are described in this place, the author wishes them to be considered only as representative of upright people who possessed the virtues with which these figures are typically associated and overlooks their sins as if they never existed. Thus we should imagine that here may be found anyone who, like Caesar, was virtuous but unbaptized. This applies similarly to Lucretia and the others, for their sins too should be overlooked. It is in this way that the text should be interpreted." Papio, *Boccaccio's Expositions*, 238-39).

both virtues and sins (*colpe* and *virtù*). As the *Genealogy* also confirms,[583] Boccaccio's Caesar is both an incredibly gifted leader and a violent "dictator." Boccaccio's approach somewhat anticipates fifteenth-century debates on Caesar's virtues and vices, when the characters of the *Bellum Civile* will be interpreted as symbols of the opposing ideals of Republicanism and monarchy that characterize Italy in the age of the *Signorie*.[584]

However, Boccaccio regards the Caesar-Pompey conflict in a less politicized way than later humanists will do: he does not take a unilateral stance on the question nor does he see the fight as fully connected with, or anticipatory of, contemporary debates on imperialism. The way Boccaccio redeploys Lucan's text in the *Filocolo* is indicative of his mildly pro-Republican, but fundamentally "non-partisan," take on the Roman civil war in relation to his own political views. The opening of the work contains an allegorically-veiled declaration of Boccaccio's stance against the Hohenstaufen and in favor of the Pope and his Angevin allies. The Church, which in the text is symbolized by the goddess Juno, is said to turn against Manfred — alluded to as "the last descendant of an ungrateful stock" ("picciolo ramo dell'ingrata progenie") — with the purpose of cutting down his arrogance, as she had already done with his ancestor, namely Frederick Barbarossa ("come quella degli antecessori avea altra volta abbattuta"); in the pursuit of this end she seeks the help of a valorous youth ("valoroso giovane"), in whom we can identify Charles of Anjou.[585] Boccaccio's attitude is clearly opposed to Dante's and Petrarch's philo-imperial position. This opening statement translates into the use of a predominantly pro-Republican, and yet not consistently or unilaterally anti-Caesar, intertextuality throughout the *Filocolo*; in fact, the text combines its several allusions to Pompey, his party, and Roman Republican values with examples of Caesarian heroism.

The character of Lelio (father of the female protagonist Biancifiore) is a descendant of the Scipios, one of the most illustrious and representative families of Republican Rome. In exhorting his army, Lelio significantly refers to the *exemplum* of Cato of Utica, whose fierce opposition to Caesar entailed the extreme sacrifice, that of life, for the cause of freedom.[586] What is more, as Quaglio and Velli have demonstrated in detail, intertextual allusions establish a strong parallel between the ill-fortuned Lelio and the Pompey of the *Bellum Civile*. The description of the dawn before the battle between Lelio and king Felix is permeated with Lucanian echoes ("lugubri colori lucanei").[587] In *Filoc.* I, 26 Lelio's enemy Scurmenide resembles Lucan's Caesar,[588] while multiple intertextual hints link Lelio to Lucan's Pompey,[589] a

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[583] In *Gen.* VI, 73, 2 Caesar is portrayed as "the splendor of Rome" and the world, and yet defined "dictator;" the same definition is present in *Epist.* 19, 15.

[584] See pp. 115, 125-26 below.

[585] *Filoc.* I, 1, 1-2; for the interpretation of the allegory, cfr. Quaglio, ed., *Filocolo*, 713-14. "Now she learned that in Ausonia's southernmost corner there still remained a little offshoot of the ungrateful line, trying to bring back to life the arid roots of its trunk. In her anger at this man's actions, the holy goddess determined to annihilate him and strike down his inflamed pride, just as she had duly struck down that of his predecessors in earlier times [...] and spoke thus: '[...] I have noted the birth of a valorous youth, descended from the ancient line of that man who once liberated your predecessors from the currish enmity of the Lombards, rendering them vanquished alongside other enemies of our power" (transl. Cheney, *Il Filocolo,* 1).

[586] *Filoc.* I, 20, 5 (cfr. Quaglio, ed., *Filocolo*, 736, which identifies Dante's Purg. I, 34ff. as an important point of reference for Boccaccio).

[587] *Filoc.* I, 16, 1; Lucan. VII, 1-7; Velli, *Petrarca e Boccaccio*, 108.

[588] *Filoc*. I, 26, 17; Lucan. VII, 557-64; cfr. Velli, *Petrarca e Boccaccio*, 99-100.

[589] *Filoc.* I, 26, 12-16; Lucan. VII, 366-70, 382-84, 494, 95; cfr. Velli, *Petrarca e Boccaccio*, 97-98 (at pp. 101-6, Velli underlines many other Lucanian echoes in *Filoc.* I, 26).

connection which is made explicit in *Filoc.* I, 29 through the words of Lelio's wife Giulia, who cries on the body of her dead husband and compares herself to Pompey's wife.[590]

Likewise, in *Filoc.* I, 32, 4 the desolation caused by the fight between Lelio and Felix is expressly related to the carnage of Pharsalus:

> E gli uccelli, che per adietro avean seguitati i celestiali pasti, si raunarono; e l'aria mai non si vestì di tanti avoltoi, e mai non furono più uccelli veduti adunati insieme, se ciò non fosse stato nella misera Farsaglia, quando i romani prencipi s'afrontarono.[591]

Quaglio has shown how the whole chapter 32, which describes the ruin concomitant with Lelio's defeat, is framed with allusions to Lucan's account of the events following Pompey's loss at Pharsalus in book VIII of the *Bellum Civile*.[592] Again, in *Filoc.* I, 38 the narrator compares the sorrow that the news of Lelio's death provoked in Rome to the ancient Romans' mourning for Lucius Junius Brutus, significantly defined as the restorer of freedom to the Roman people ("riformatore della libertà del romano popolo");[593] Velli's analysis has shown that this passage is patterned after Lucan's comparison of Pompey's and Brutus' funerals.[594]

Yet Boccaccio juxtaposed these numerous references to Republican Rome and the Pompeians with positive mentions of Caesar and his followers. The narration repeatedly emphasizes the fact that Lelio's wife Giulia descends from Caesar: this blood lineage is underscored by the narrator, highlighted by Lelio, recorded on Giulia's epitaph, and later recalled by Floro, always in terms eulogistic of the Roman *dux*, commemorated as noble, victorious, magnificent, and even divine.[595] Lelio recalls Caesar as the most valiant of the Romans ("ardire e prodezza ebbe più che alcun altro romano avesse mai") with a formulation which appears very close to the eulogy of Caesar in the *Amorosa Visione*.[596] Moreover, intertextual references to Lucan assimilate Lelio's followers not just to Pompey's, but also to Caesar's supporters, such as the valorous Scaeva, Curio, and Vulteius' fearless soldiers.[597]

In his study of Lucan in the *Filocolo*, Velli points out Boccaccio's fundamental indifference ("disinteresse concettuale") to the ideological implications of the *Bellum Civile*.[598] Velli's statement can be cautiously endorsed. In fact, it is true that the reuse of Lucan's poem has also and especially the function of enriching Boccaccio's vivid narration with a web of intertextual reverberations which increase the *pathos* and set Lelio's suffering and defeat against the dramatic background of classical literature. Pompey is evoked more for his tragic aura than

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[590] *Filoc.* I, 29, 21.
[591] "The birds, formerly seeking celestial nourishment, gathered in flocks; and the air had never been clothed with so many vultures, nor had there ever been so many birds seen gathered together, unless it was on the wretched plain of Pharsalus when the Roman princes confronted one another" (transl. Cheney, *Il Filocolo*, 39-40).
[592] Quaglio, "Boccaccio e Lucano," 153-62; cfr. Velli, *Petrarca e Boccaccio*, 81-82, n. 11.
[593] *Filoc.* I, 38, 2-3; Brutus is similarly exalted as a liberator also in *Am. Vis.* IX, 55-57. Also in *Comm. Ninfe* 36 we find a list of glorious figures from Republican Rome: Brutus is said to have rightly killed the last heir of the *Tarquini*, who had abolished the divine gift of freedom; Cato the Elder and the Younger are presented immediately after Brutus as strenuous opposers of servitude (ll. 13-21).
[594] Velli, *Petrarca e Boccaccio*, 109-10; Lucan. VII, 37-42.
[595] *Filoc.* I, 23, 3; I, 43; II, 15, 5; II, 44, 5. On Boccaccio's admiration for Caesar as revealed by the *Filocolo*, cfr. Quaglio, ed., *Filocolo*, 724; Velli, *Petrarca e Boccaccio*, 100.
[596] *Filoc.* I, 23, 3-4 "Caesar [...] had more boldness and prowess than any other Roman has ever possessed;" transl. Cheney, *Il Filocolo*, 25). Cfr. *Amor. Vis.* 10, 40-42; p. 110 above.
[597] See Velli, *Petrarca e Boccaccio*, 103-6.
[598] Velli, *Petrarca e Boccaccio*, 99-100.

for his role as Caesar's opponent; his predominance in the *Filocolo* is ultimately functional to an artistic and poetic rather than strictly political purpose.[599]

More significantly, we can notice that Boccaccio's pro-Guelph stance does not prevent him from looking at the ancient Roman past as a repertory of moral models whose validity goes beyond their specific political affiliations. Boccaccio's rewriting revives the stories of the generals and soldiers fighting in the Roman civil war regardless of their allegiance; moreover, his reuse of the *Bellum Civile* does not establish continuity between past and present political conflicts, or between past and present Caesarism. To Boccaccio, Caesar's valor is not necessarily opposed to Pompey's, nor is esteem of Caesar at odds with Guelph, anti-imperial values; on the contrary, the Tuscan author tends to mention the two ancient rivals together, as intrinsically compatible and equally memorable *exempla*.[600] Whereas, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, philo-republican humanists would contest the common opinion that Florence was founded by Caesar by claiming that the city was founded by Sulla's soldiers and thus derived from the Roman Republic,[601] Boccaccio significantly states that Florence was founded by the Romans, destroyed by Sulla, and reconstructed by both Caesar and Pompey.[602]

ERUDITE POETRY AND POETIC ERUDITION

In Boccaccio's works, Lucan's characters often display typifying qualities and assume a posture made further distinctive by Dante's and, to some extent, Petrarch's rewritings of the *Bellum Civile*. In addition to the case of Caesar, mentioned above, we could consider some further examples. Like his two predecessors, Boccaccio elevates Amyclas to a noble symbol of poverty, which he associates with the art of poetry.[603] Moreover, in the *Commedia Ninfe* and *Amorosa Visione*, Cato is praised as a good, valorous, and thoughtful man who strenuously fought for liberty, in line with Dante's and other late-medieval representations of his figure.[604] Still in the *Amorosa Visione*, the female characters of Cornelia, Marcia, and Giulia (Pompey's first wife) are depicted in the pitiful attitude they have in the *Bellum Civile* (as well as in some other Boccaccian works);[605] the three women are named in close succession, as in Dante, *Inf.* IV, 128 and, to a lesser degree, Petr. *Tr. cupid.* II, 14-15 and 32-33 (for Cornelia and Giulia).[606]

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[599] Further examples of Boccaccio's "poetic" reuse of the *Bellum Civile* are given by the Lucanian *clausulae* and *iuncturae* utilized in the *Buccolicum Carmen* and identified by Velli in his edition: e.g. *Bucc. Carm*. I, 88 *turbidus auster* (Lucan. I, 234 and 498); *Bucc. Carm.* III, 67 *montes ... nemorosaque plana* and (cfr. Lucan. VI, 4); *Bucc. Carm.* III, 68 *gemino ... ponto* (Lucan. II, 404); Lucan. IV, 67 *hybernis imbribus* (Lucan. VIII, 829); IX, 58ff. and X, 96ff. *Lybicas pestes* (Lucan. IX, 805); X, 170 *filia sorores* (Lucan. VI, 703 and IX, 838); Bucc. Carm. XI, 43 *sub rupe sonantis Tarpeie* (cfr. Lucan. III, 154).

[600] In *Epist.* 4, 18 Boccaccio points to the dangers which the promoters of civil wars (e.g. Caesar and Pompey) incurred; in *Epist.* 19, 15-16 he remarks that in poetry one can find the examples of "Cesar dictator," Pompey "cui virtus equa fuit fortune," and other *viri illustres*. The deeds of Pompey (Opheltis) and Caesar (Daphnis) are recalled together also in *Bucc. Carm.* IX, 66-77.

[601] See McLaughlin, "Empire," 337-42.

[602] *Commedia Ninfe* 38, 102; cfr. *Trattatello*, 11; Villani, *Cronica*, I, 38.

[603] *Gen.* XIV, 4, 23-25 (the *exemplum* of Amyclas is accompanied by that of Arrunte: see I, 584ff. and 519ff.); cfr.also *Epist*. 13, 227.

[604] *Comm. Ninfe* 36; *Amor. Vis*. 5, 52-54.

[605] *Am. Vis.* 10, 76-82. For Cornelia ("in sembianti smarriti"), see pp. 104-6 above; Marcia is described as "col viso di lagrime infuso" (cfr. Lucan. II, 328, 334-35, 365-67); Giulia, who is here mentioned only briefly, appears also in *Filoc*. I, 29, 21; *Consol*. 50; *Mulier.* 81, where she is always described as fatally passionate; however, Boccaccio's main source on this last character is Val. Max. IV, 6, 4.

[606] Cfr. Branca, ed., *Amorosa Visione*, 623-24.

As Boccaccio reads Lucan through Dante, so does he utilize Lucan to explain Dante. In his *Esposizioni*, Boccaccio describes the above-mentioned Roman characters with allusions to, or explicit mention of, the *Bellum Civile*. Boccaccio's commentary on *Inf.* XIV, 14-15 includes a short biography of Cato, defined as "romano uomo d'alta e di singulare virtù" ("a Roman citizen of great and singular virtue").[607] Summarizing some famous passages of Lucan's poem, Boccaccio recalls Cato's choice to support Pompey in the civil wars, based more on loyalty to the Senate than personal sympathy, Cato's departure to Numidia upon hearing about Pompey's death in Cyrene, and his crossing of the scorching Libyan desert as far as Leptis.[608] In giving an account of the triad of ancient Roman women mentioned in Dante's *Inf.* IV, 128, Boccaccio points to Lucan as the source of Cato and Marcia's and Pompey and Cornelia's touching stories.[609]

As my analysis so far has partly shown, Boccaccio's approach to Lucan's poem is both poetic-literary and scholarly-erudite or, so to speak, philological. On the one hand, the historical and mythological elements of the *Bellum Civile* are reused by Boccaccio as "plastic," re-adaptable poetic materials conferring literary depth and richness on his own writings. A further example for this is provided by the story of Antaeus, for which Boccaccio's main source was the *Bellum Civile*, as is revealed by the long citation of Lucan in *Gen.* I, 13, 1-2.[610] This narrative episode is recalled in *Fiamm*. I, 17, 12 as one of the heroic deeds performed by Heracles before falling in love, whereas in *Carm*. 7, 21-23 Boccaccio declares himself to have been fighting with fever as Heracles did with Antaeus. Likewise, Lucan's narration about Erichtho provides the basis for a poignant simile in *Comm. Ninfe* 23, 13, and is evoked in different, more playful tones in *Epist.* I, 2, where Boccaccio states that the list of his concerns would be more annoying to his addressee than the enchantments produced by Circe, Erichtho, and Medea.[611]

At the same time, Boccaccio "the scholar" uses Lucan's text as a source of information on ancient mythography, cultural history, and geography. In commenting on Dante's *Comedy*, Boccaccio refers to Lucan's *auctoritas* to illustrate the origins and identity of characters such as Homer and Erichtho.[612] Lucan is also frequently mentioned in the *Genealogy*, alongside writers such as Virgil, Ovid, Pliny the Elder, and the mysterious Theodontius.[613] Quotations of the *Bellum Civile* are here functional to the construction of Boccaccio's "encyclopedia" of ancient classical mythology. For instance, Boccaccio refers to Lucan to support the statement that the Titan Pallas was hostile to the Olympian gods, to describe Ocean's son Triton, and to recall how the river Evenus was dyed with the blood of the centaur Nessus;[614] in *Gen.* XI, 14, 2 Homer is

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[607] Transl. Papio, *Boccaccio's Expositions*, 533.
[608] *Esp.* XIV, esp. litt. 9-12 (Lucan. IX, 19-119, 368-949). Also in *Mulier.* 82, 1 Porcia is introduced as the daughter of that Cato who crossed the Libyan desert.
[609] *Esp*. IV, esp. litt. 236-42 (following Lucan. II, 326-64 and VIII, 582-636).
[610] Lucan. IV, 593-609.
[611] On Boccaccio's combinatory strategy in reusing Lucan, see Velli, *Petrarca e Boccaccio*, 110-3.
[612] In *Esp*. IV, esp. litt., 94 Boccaccio mentions Homer's likely provenance from Smyrna with a quotation of Lucan. IX, 984; in *Esp.* IX, esp. litt. 15 he provides a brief briography of Erichtho which is drawn from Lucan. VI, 507-9 and VI, 510-93 ("di questa Erittòn scrive fiere e meravigliose cose Lucano nel VI suo libro [...]"). *Esp.* V, esp. litt. 85 includes a biography of Cleopatra based on a combination of sources including Lucan (cfr. Padoan, ed., *Esposizioni*, 860).
[613] On Boccaccio's sources in the *Genealogy*, cfr. Joycelin, "The Sources;" Pastore Stocchi, "Da Crisippo al Boccaccio;" Solomon, ed., *Genealogy*, XIII-XVII.
[614] *Gen*. IV, 63, 1 (Lucan. VII, 150); *Gen*. VII, 7, 4 (Lucan. IX, 347-49); *Gen.* IX, 31, 3 (Lucan. VI, 365-66). Also Boccaccio's description of Cleopatra in Gen. LXXXVIII may partially draw on Lucan's book X (see Brown, ed., *Famous Women*, 498).

explained through Lucan, as a citation of the *Bellum Civile* is used to clarify a perplexing passage of the *Iliad* about the stream Xantus.[615]

In fact, Lucan is especially cited by Boccaccio as a poet of rivers and streams, and *flumina* do often appear in the *Bellum Civile* (books II, VI, and X in particular) as they do in Boccaccio's own works. In *Gen.* VII, 30 Boccaccio explicitly points to Lucan as an important precedent for his specific interests, remarking that among the writers who have talked about the Nile are Aristotle, Seneca (*Naturales Quaestiones*), Lucan, and Boccaccio himself in the *De montibus*:

> Nylus fluvius est meridionalis [...] De hoc multa et mirabilia referentur. Composuit enim ex eo libellum Aristotiles, et Senecas phylosophus ubi *De questionibus naturalibus* multa dixit, et post eum Lucanus, sic et ego ubi *De montibus et fluminibus* [...][616]

Indeed, moving to consider the *De montibus*, Lucan's poem and the medieval commentary tradition on it underpin many passages of Boccaccio's geographical treatise, as the editor Pastore Stocchi has punctually highlighted in his edition, and especially Boccaccio's descriptions of rivers such as the Thessalian Absyrtus and Epidanus (the former traditionally thought to derive from the blood of Medea's brother), the *Cinga rapax*, the Eas, and the Iader.[617] These and other references evince Lucan's importance for Boccaccio as an *auctoritas* on geography and a major point of reference for the humanist's topographic endeavour.[618]

Boccaccio's attitude to his sources is highly critical: his erudite explanations of mythology and geography are compiled by collating, comparing, and evaluating different opinions.[619] In *Mont.* V, 870, for example, Boccaccio points out that the river Timavo was erroneously thought to emerge from mount Euganeus and run next to Padua, but it actually flows beside the cities of Concordia and Trieste:

> Timavus Venetorum fluvius est Concordie atque Tergeste oppidis proximus. [...] Fuere tamen qui putavere hunc fluvium apud Antenoridas esse et ex Euganeo monte fundi, quod falsum est.[620]

Uncertainty about the exact location of the river Timavo was widespread in late-medieval Italy. Mussato and the Paduan proto-humanists generally use the name *Timavus* to indicate the Paduan river Bacchiglione, but without full consistency or univocity.[621] Petrarch clarifies this issue in *Sen*. III, 1, a letter written in 1363 and addressed to Boccaccio himself, which explains how confusion about the Timavo derives from a passage by Lucan (VII, 192-94).[622] Indeed, Lucan's

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[615] The references are to Hom. *Il.* XXI, 2 and Lucan. IX, 974-75.

[616] *Gen.* VII, 30, 2 ("The Nilus is a southern river [...] about which many wonderful things have been related. Indeed, Aristotle has composed a booklet about it; Seneca the Younger has written extensively on the same topic in his *Natural Questions*, followed by Lucan and by myself in my *On mountains and rivers*;" my transl.); on the Nilus cfr. Lucan. X, 40 and 172-331.

[617] *Mont.* V, 10 (cfr. Lucan. III, 190 and Arnulf, *Glosule*, ed. Marti, 173); *Mont*. V, 289 (cfr. Lucan. IV, 121); *Mont.* V, 352 (Lucan. VI, 361-62); *Mont.* V, 374 (Lucan. VI, 372-73); *Mont.* V, 466 (cfr. Lucan. IV, 404-5).

[618] See also *Mont*. I, 425 (cfr. Lucan. VII, 482); *Mont.* I, 158 (cfr. Lucan. III, 172-73); *Mont.* I, 225, on the mount Euganeus (cfr. Lucan. VII, 192-93); *Mont.* I, 239 (cfr. Lucan. III, 198); *Mont.* V, 28 (cfr. Lucan. VI, 362-63).

[619] Cfr. Solomon, ed., *Genealogy*, XV-XVI.

[620] "The Timavo is a Venetian / Illyric river, which flows close to Trieste and Concordia. [...] Some thought this river to spring from the mount Euganeus and to flow close to (the lands of) Antenor's descendants, but this is false" (my transl).

[621] Cfr. Dazzi, "Intorno alla nascita," 263-269; Novati, "Nuovi studi," 3-7; Gianola, ed., *De obsidione,* 13-14, n. 28.

[622] "Euganeo (si vera fides memorantibus) augur / colle sedens, Aponus terris ubi fumifer exit / atque Antenorei dispergitur unda Timavi"("In the Euganean Hills above Padua, an augur sat (if we credit the tale) where Aponos

poetic pericope conflates the rivers Aponos and Timavo: while the former gushes from the Euganean hills, close to Padua, the latter is in the area of Aquileia.[623] Petrarch's note could be either an elucidation written in response to the *De montibus*, or a previous insight later included by Boccaccio in his geographical survey, which he was composing in those same years (from the 1350s to the mid-1360s). What seems, however, of relevance is that, in his later treatises, Boccaccio expands Petrarch's scholarly and antiquarian interests by adopting an equally accurate method in approaching and interpreting ancient source materials, including Lucan's text.[624]

Nonetheless, for Boccaccio the scholar, Lucan and the ancient classical authors are much more than static "sources" attesting unequivocally understandable stories to be patiently collected in erudite compilations. With his later treatises – the *Genealogy*, first of all, but also the *Esposizioni* and *De mulieribus* – Boccaccio also engages in a systematic theoretical attempt to interpret and justify ancient pagan myths by unraveling their multiple layers of meaning. In his study of the *Genealogy*, David Lummus has shown how Boccaccio utilizes a variety of strategies to explicate myth, moving from genealogy to allegory, although his approach is primarily euhemeristic and historicist and privileges interpretation of the letter (literal sense or "sensus primus") over the other senses. Lummus has also demonstrated that Boccaccio takes into account the historical contexts in which myths were elaborated, thus providing a "story of inventive power of human *ingenium*" and a "lineage of human poetic creations," where myth is regarded as a polysemous human creation whose meanings develop over time.[625] Unlike earlier medieval mythographers, Boccaccio uses graphic-textual devices to clearly identify the poetic authorities from which he draws;[626] however, he also distinguishes between the first, primitive men who created myths (*vetustissimi*) and the poets who later continued the tradition by transmitting these stories (*vetustes*).[627]

Lucan is often quoted by Boccaccio as the transmitter of tales especially relating to the broad areas of infernal or monstrous mythology and geography. Of these myths Boccaccio offers different orders of explanations, which often intersect with each other and sometimes re-elaborate previous medieval exegeses of Lucan's text.[628] In some cases, Boccaccio opts for a moral-allegorical reading of myth.[629] In *Gen*. III, 6, 2-4, for example, he quotes Lucan (VI, 732-74) to claim that the ancient *Furiae* were also called "dogs" (*canes*), a term which he explicates as signifying the angry barks mediocre men emit when they do not fulfill their desires. The same

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sends healing vapors up from the ground and Timavo's waters fork;" transl. Joyce, *Pharsalia*, 176); Petr. *Sen.* III, 1, 74.

[623] Petrarch follows Pliny (*Nat*. II, 106, 225) and Mela (*De chor*. II, 4, 61); cfr. Dotti, ed., *Seniles*, 333, n. 94, 95, 96. Petrarch deals with the Timavo controversy also in a note on *Aen.* I, 244 (Petrarch, *Postille*, 285-86 n. 243). On Petrarch's correction of Lucan's geography, see also Baglio, "Le postille a Virgilio," 63, 82-83.

[624] Petrarch's erudite interests in connection with his reading of Lucan are also evident from *Variae* 39, likewise written in 1363 and addressed to the grammarian Pietro da Moglio: Petrarch replies to a question posed by his interlocutor concerning the ancient name of the city of Dyrrachium by referring to Lucan. X, 545.

[625] Lummus, "Boccaccio's Poetic Anthropology."

[626] Solomon, ed., *Genealogy*, XVI.

[627] Lummus, "Boccaccio's Poetic Anthropology," 738.

[628] If fifty years ago Velli claimed for Boccaccio familiarity with Arnulf's *Glosule* (Velli, *Petrarca e Boccaccio*, 93-94) Boccaccio's ownership of manuscript Plut. 35.23, including glosses derived from Anselm of Laon's commentary, and his remarks about characters such as the *Furie* and Demogorgon (see n. 488 and 631) do demonstrate his familiarity with medieval Latin exegesis of Lucan's text.

[629] Beyond the above-indicated example, cfr. also *Gen.* III, 13, 3, where it is explained that Ascalaphus "the owl" is the son of Orne because owls often frequent sepulchres, which latter are called *Ornae*, as Lucan (VII, 819) and Papias attest. Also in *Gen.* XII, 62, 4 Boccaccio states that Mercury personifies eloquence and his act of raising winds signifies provoking fury, as the eloquent Curio did with Caesar (cfr. Lucan. I, 280).

quotation of Lucan and an almost identical exegesis of the term *canes* are present in Boccaccio's allegorical commentary on the term *Furie* in the *Esposizioni.*[630]

More often, Boccaccio's interpretation is primarily historicist. For instance, in describing Demogorgon, the primal monster to which Lucan's Erichtho seemingly alludes, Boccaccio suggests that this creature was invented by the ancient Arcadian farmers to represent the "wisdom of the earth."[631] Sometimes Boccaccio juxtaposes historical and moral expositions of mythical tales. The story of Antaeus, which in the *Genealogy* is recalled based on an extended quotation of Lucan (IV, 593-609), is interpreted by Boccaccio in two ways, *hystoricus* and *moralis*: Antaeus, he observes, was likely an old king of Mauritania, but could also be seen as standing for lust, following Fulgentius.[632] Lucan's statement that Minerva was born from Jupiter's head finds a similarly two-fold explanation in the *Genealogy*. According to Boccaccio, the tale alludes to the generation of wisdom from the mind of God; alternatively, Minerva was a virgin of brilliant intellect whose discoveries originated from her extraordinary acumen.[633] This latter reading is proposed also in the *De mulieribus*, where Boccaccio claims that Minerva was a virgin so noble that Africans and Greeks believed she was born from God's mind.[634]

Similarly, the *sensus hystoricus* often substantiates, and merges with, a physical explication of myth, in line with Boccaccio's understanding of Varro's "physical theology" or "mythology of the philosophers."[635] Thus, Lucan's affirmation that Ischia is placed over the body of the giant Typheus is read by Boccaccio as a fable which explains in an appropriate and yet concealed way the nature of earthquakes on the island,[636] whereas Lucan's account of the battle between Orion and Scorpio finds an astronomically-informed explanation in the *Genealogy*.[637]

A story that seems to have especially piqued Boccaccio's interest is that of Medusa. In the *Genealogy* the three Gorgon sisters, begotten by the marine monster Phorcys and living in the Gorgades islands, are described with references to various classical authors including Lucan (IX, 624-26). Boccaccio once more embraces a historicist-euhemeristic viewpoint, according to which the three Gorgons were the beautiful daughters of a famous king; Fulgentius' allegorization of them as "three generations of fear" is explicitly rejected.[638] The same exegetical contents appear in the *Esposizioni* and (partially) in the *De mulieribus*; in these works, however, Boccaccio advances a moral interpretation of his own, claiming that the three Gorgons symbolize

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[630] *Esp*. IX esp. all. 16 and 31: Boccaccio explains that when low-status men ("uomini di bassissima e infima condizione") reckon they have suffered an injustice, they are perturbed by anger and desire for revenge and bark like furious dogs ("furiosamente abbaiano come fanno i cani"). On the frequent references to Lucan in commentaries on Dante's passage about the *Furie*, see Gentili, "Cerbero e le Arpie," 199-203.

[631] *Gen*. I proh. III, 6-12; Lucan. VI, 744-47. Boccaccio's reference to Demogorgon in connection with Erichtho's speech is in line with a common medieval interpretation of the passage (see Weber, ed. *Pharsalia*, vol. III, 497-98, on Lucan. VI, 744: *qui vocatur Demogorgon* etc.; ms. CLM 322, f. 74r: "Ille scilicet Demogorgon;" cfr. Quint, *Epic Tradition*, 73).

[632] *Gen.* I, 13, 1-2.

[633] *Gen.* II, 3, 2, 5 and 8-10 (Lucan. III, 350).

[634] *Mulier.* 6, 1.

[635] On the historical sense as the basis for moral and physical interpretations in Boccaccio's *Genealogy* see Lummus, "Boccaccio's Poetic Anthropology," 748. On Boccaccio's combination of the fourfold medieval system of allegorical interpretation with Varro's and Augustine's threefold ways of reading ancient religion and mythology, see Osgood, *Boccaccio on Poetry*, XV-XXIII.

[636] *Gen.* IV, 22, 4; Lucan. V, 100-101.

[637] *Gen.* XI, 19, 5; Lucan IX, 833-38. Cfr. also *Gen.* VII, 58, 1, where Lucan is cited as an authority on the Cephissus, followed by a "historicist" explanation of legends about the river.

[638] Gen. X, 10, 1-5.

the fatal attraction of material goods, which can turn their obsessed owners into cold, stone-like beings, deprived of *caritas* and moved only by anxious self-interest.[639]

Through this variety of strategies, Boccaccio discloses the manifold potential of myths as transmitted by ancient poets including Lucan. In so doing, he engages with Lucan's text at a more theoretical level than Dante does and adopts a much more open and conciliatory attitude towards Lucan's pagan and occult marvels than Petrarch does.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has demonstrated the pervasive presence and importance of Lucan in Boccaccio's writings. Like Petrarch, and possibly following him (alongside Suetonius and Tacitus), Boccaccio highlights the problematic implications of Lucan's biography, from the poet's challenge to Virgil to his opposition to Nero and his final suicide to his failure to endorse the Christian faith. However, throughout his whole career, Boccaccio consistently refers to the *Bellum Civile* as a major, though difficult to classify, model of ancient poetry in a high style. In contrast with other late-medieval and early-humanist authors, such as Mussato, who view Lucan's poem as a narration about Caesar's triumphs, Boccaccio reads the *Bellum Civile* as the story of Pompey's dramatic downfall from prosperity to adversity, and thus, very likely, as a "tragedy" in a figurative sense. Although Boccaccio appears aware of the political force of Lucan's text and of its contextual criticism of Caesar, he does not embrace a straightforwardly political interpretation of the *Bellum Civile* in connection with the political debates of his own age — as, later, fifteenth-century humanists will do. Boccaccio's reception of Lucan's poetry is medieted by Dante's work and, in turn, mediates Boccaccio's approach to the *Divine Comedy*. Like Dante, Boccaccio is deeply interested in the mythological and magical elements of Lucan's narrative, which he does not only consider from a literary standpoint, but also appreciates at a scholarly, anthropological and meta-literary, level. Boccaccio's understanding and reuse of Lucan's poem are, at the same time, poetic and erudite, informed by both artistic creativity and a rigorous, "philological" study of the ancient source text.

[639] *Esp.* IX, esp. all. 40-60 (Lucan. IX, 624-26); *Mulier*. 22.

CONCLUSION

LUCAN IN THE *TRECENTO*

My dissertation has demonstrated the centrality of the figure and work of Lucan in fourteenth-century Italian literary culture and the variety of ways in which the *Bellum Civile* was interpreted and reused in this period. Emphasis has been primarily, if not exclusively, on the major authors of this period: Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. The story of Lucan's fourteenth-century reception encompasses, however, many other authors, texts, and contexts, which I have not been able to discuss here, but which will I hope prove the starting point for future research. As will soon be apparent, the following pages are by no means an exhaustive summary of the work that remains to be done in the field, but rather aim to "give a taste" of the many possibilities which remain open to the scholar of Lucan's fourteenth-century reception.

"MINOR" AUTHORS

Lucan is a very important model and source for many other, slightly or decidedly less well-known, fourteenth-century Italian authors. One example is the demonstrable importance of Lucan for the Paduan proto-humanists. In the introduction I have mentioned how Albertino Mussato names Lucan in his theoretical discussion on "tragedy" (*Vita Senece*).[640] Mussato also repeatedly alludes to Lucan in his literary revival of ancient Latin tragedy (*Ecerinis*), as well as in his poetic dream-vision of the underworld (*Somnium*), and evokes Lucan as a poetic authority in his verse epistles.[641] Mussato's other writings, from the historical works *De gestis Italicorum*, *De obsidione*, and *Traditio* to the philosophical dialogue *De Lite inter Naturam et Fortunam* all contain citations of the *Bellum Civile*, often relating to Lucan's Caesar and reused in connection with the figure and deeds of Cangrande.[642]

The poems and metric epistles of Mussato's master, Lovato Lovati, similarly abound with

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[640] Mussato, *Vita Senece*, 134-142; see p. 12 above.

[641] See for example *Ecerinis* 132 (cfr. Chevalier, ed., *Écérinide*, 7, n. 15); 228ff. (description of civil war reminiscent of Lucan); 322ff. (Ziramonte's death: cfr. Lucan. VIII, 663-711; Chevalier, ed., *Écérinide*, 15, n. 37); 607ff. (Alberic's death: cfr. Lucan. VIII, 663,711; Chevalier, ed., *Écérinide*, 27, n. 57); *Somnium* 25 (cfr. Lucan. VII, 194; Chevalier, ed., *Écérinide*, 50, n. 8 with bibl.); 96-101 (Lucan. IX, 1-11; cfr. Chevalier, ed., *Écérinide*, CXXX-CXXXI); *Epist.* I, 13-14 ("Bella per Emathiis alius civilia campis / edidit et ritus deliciasque Phari"); VII, 95-96 ("Bella per Emathios per me civilia campos / edita sunt populis Cesareum decus"); XII, 94 ("Nulla fides pietasque viris qui castra secuntur": cfr. Lucan. X, 407; Chevalier, ed., *Écérinide*, XXIX); XVIII (for the pagan names of God, cfr. Lucan. X, 267). For Lucan in these works by Mussato, see also Chevalier, ed., *Écérinide*, LI, LIII, LIV, CXXI; Pastore Stocchi, "Dante, Mussato," 254.

[642] Much more work needs to be done on Lucan in Mussato's historical works. Mussato's quotations of Lucan in the *De obsidione*, *Traditio*, and *Ludovicus Bavarus* are pointed out in Gianola's and Modonutti's commented editions (Gianola, ed., *Albertini Muxati De obsidione;* Ead., ed., *Albertino Mussato, Traditio civitatis Padue*; Modonutti, ed., *Ludovicus Bavarus*). In the *De obsidione* in particular, Lucan's lines are frequently recalled both to achieve ornamental effects (especially in the final clause / at the end of the verse) and to suggest an association between Cangrande's siege of Padua as described by Mussato and the Caesar-Pompey civil war. Lucan's presence in Mussato's *De gestis Italicorum* and the *De gestis Henrici VII Caesaris* deserves further investigation. Manitius and Sanford, for instance, have pointed out that, in *De gestis Italicorum* IX, Mussato apostrophises Cangrande with words which recall Lucan. I, 12 (*De gest. Ital*., ed. Muratori SS X, 694; Manitius, "Lucan," 716; Sanford, "Quotations," 3). In the *De Lite*, Mussato's quotations of Lucan once relate again to Caesar's triumphs (ms Sevilla, Bibl. Colomb., 5.1.5, f. f. 12v: Lucan. I, 226; f. 30r: Lucan. V, 292), as well as to ancient Rome's proverbial centrality (f. 34v; Lucan. II, 655).

allusions to Lucan's poem.[643] Lucan's relevance in this cultural milieu is confirmed also by the alleged epitaph of the Cordovan poet written by Rolando da Piazzola at the close of Vat. lat. 1769, the manuscript of Seneca's tragedies compiled by the Paduan proto-humanists.[644]

Lucan is substantially present in texts of many other, "minor" fourteenth-century poets and historians. Ferreto Ferreti's *De Scaligerorum origine poema*, for example, is filled with citations of the *Bellum Civile*, from the very first lines onwards;[645] Ferreto also references Lucan in his *Historia*, in the opening of which he recalls the *Bellum Civile* and the *Thebaid* as witnesses to the ever-present evils of fratricidal violence.[646] Likewise, Ranieri Granchi quotes Lucan extensively in his *Carmen de preliis Tusciae*, while the historian Rolandino da Padova, in the preface to his chronicle, wishes that Lucan and Virgil were still alive ("sed utinam viveret Virgilius vel Lucanus") and cites the Cordovan poet throughout his work.[647] Moreover, the historian and encyclopedist Giovanni Colonna, who provides a biography of Lucan in his *De viris illustribus*, appears to follow the *Bellum Civile* in his account of the Caesar-Pompey civil war in book four of his *Mare historiarum*.[648] These and many other examples corroborate the idea that the *Bellum Civile* played a crucial and versatile role in fourteenth-century Italian literary culture.[649]

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[643] E.g. Lovato Lovati, ed. Bolisani, *Questio de prole*, 49 (*alea fati*, cfr. Lucan. VI, 603); 69 (*media Syene*, cfr. Lucan. II, 587). Echoes of Lucan in Lovato's metrical epistles are noted in Sisler's doctoral dissertation (Sisler, *An Edition and Translation*): e.g. e*pist*. I, 15-16 ("ratio mentemque labantem / erigat;" cfr. Lucan. II, 244-5); *epist.* II, 94-5 ("... num versibus edidit antri / abdita Cirrhaei?" cfr. Lucan. V, 95); *epist.* III, 7 ("Fata vetant;" cfr. X, 485); *epist.* IV, 12 ("Seu premit effigiem barbara Colchis acu;" cfr. Lucan. X, 464); *epist.* IV, 73 ("occidus cardo non tantum distet Eoo;" cfr. Lucan. V, 71-2). See also the further echoes highlighted by Petoletti in his edition of Lovato's epistle I (IV ed. Sisler): l. 12: Lucan. X, 464; l. 73: Lucan. V, 71-2, IV, 672; l. 75: Lucan. II, 272 (Petoletti, "I carmina"). Cfr. also Gianola, "Il prologo del *De gestis Henrici*," 336 with bibl. on Lovato*, epist.* III (II Sisler), 27 ("si quid veneranda vetustas;" cfr. Lucan. IX, 987).

[644] "M.A. *Lucano Cordubensi poete beneficio Neronis* Caesaris fama servata" (Vat. lat. 1769, f. 246v; *CIL* VI 6). Rolando allegedly copied the inscription in 1303, in Rome, near San Paolo fuori le Mura, but in fact composed it himself.

[645] Cfr. Ed. Cipolla, *Le Opere*, Vol. II (as Cipolla remarks, the first line of Ferreto's poem, "Rupis in Aonie scopulis," recalls Lucan. VIII, 46 and IV, 452, and is followed by an invocation to *Pallas* which appears reminiscent of Lucan. IX, 665ff.).

[646] Ed. Cipolla, *Le Opere*, Vol. I, 12: "'Sed, ha, quid non suadet regni scelerata cupido? / Quid non impatiens consortis dira potestas?' testis huius est fratrum Thebanorum crudelis hystoria, Cesaris et Pompeii vetusta memoria, quos sola regnandi voluptas ad glorie certamen erexit" (cfr. Lucan. I, 92-3).

[647] Ranieri Granchi's references to Lucan are evidenced in the critical edition by Diana, *De preliis Tuscie*; in her introduction, Diana remarks: "Ranieri Granchi prende a modello della sua opera i grandi epici come Virgilio, Lucano e Stazio [...]" (p. 100). For Rolandino, see Fiorese, ed., *Vita e Morte di Ezzelino da Romano*, Prol. 40 (p. 14); cfr. p. 663 and Manitius, "Lucan," 716.

[648] Giovanni Colonna's works are mostly still unpublished. Marco Petoletti is working on a critical edition of the *De viris illustribus* based on the autograph ms. Florence, BNCF, Conv. Soppr. G 4 1111; thus, Giovanni's biography of Lucan should soon be available to scholars. Giovanni also includes a brief mention of Lucan's death in the *Mare historiarum*: the passage is preserved in Vat. lat. 4963, f. 185v. The rubrics edited by Modonutti based on the autograph manuscript of the *Mare historiarum* (Florence, Laur. Edili 173) suggest that Lucan is probably an important source for Giovanni's narration of the Roman civil war. Indeed, not only does Giovanni mostly follow the articulation of Lucan's account, but also focuses on such typically Lucanian aspects and scenes as Caesar's plundering of the treasury and Scaeva's death, and the "famosissima (...) et atrocissima" battle of Pharsalus (Modonutti, *Giovanni Colonna e la storia antica*, 104-5, corresponding to ff. 1003-103r of the manuscript).

[649] Some more examples can be found in Manitius, "Lucan," 715-17. Existing studies on Lucan's presence in "minor" authors from this period are: Orlandi, "Da Marsiglia a Germignaga" (on Lucan in the thirteenth-century poet Stefano da Vimercate); Haye, "Die Uneinigkeit" (on the Lucan-Petrarchan tradition witnessed by the fifteenth-century ms. Turin, BN, H, VI, 12); cfr. also Delaurenti, "Oresme, Lucan" (on Lucan and the French author Nicholas

COMMENTARIES AND TRANSLATIONS

An especially promising area of inquiry concerns the *Trecento* commentaries on Lucan's poem, some of which I have quoted and used throughout this dissertation. Benvenuto da Imola's extensive commentary on the *Bellum Civile*, in particular, is a benchmark in the history of the hermeneutics of Lucan. This work, available in the form of student *recollectae* of the lectures that Benvenuto offered in Ferrara in 1377-78, is preserved in three manuscripts and is still unpublished, apart from the limited sections edited by Rossi (book I, 1) and De Santis (book VI).[650] Other extensive, and equally unpublished, commentaries are those by Goro of Arezzo and Zono.[651] Pietro da Parma's *Preambulum*, contained in a unique manuscript held at Berkeley's Bancroft Library and edited by Monti, is another prominent exegetical work, which presents significant points of contact with Benvenuto's commentary and attests the later influence of Petrarch's approach to Lucan.[652]

There is, moreover, a myriad of partial commentaries and glosses on Lucan written in the Italian *Trecento*. Among the Roman and Bolognese manuscripts of the *Bellum Civile* described by Badalì are various fourteenth-century exemplars with glosses.[653] Shorter commentaries also include the manuscript glossed in 1355 by an Italian from Cisalpine Gaul and studied by Endt, the fragment published by Wilson,[654] as well as innumerable other unpublished materials preserved in various European libraries.[655] The British Library holds copies of Goro's and Zono's commentaries alongside other sumptuous manuscripts with commentaries by various fourteenth-

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Oresme). The impact of Lucan's presence in fourteenth-century Latin-Italian poetry can be easily verified through specific searches on the online database "Poeti Italiani in Lingua Latina."

[650] The mss are: Ferrara, Biblioteca Ariostea, II, 192; Padova, Biblioteca Universitaria, 653, ff. 117r-184v (with a commentary limited to Lucan. VII, 2 ff.); Oxford, Balliol College, 144. The glosses contained in the fifteenth-century manuscripts Seville, Colomb. 5.5.13 and Florence, Laurenziana 35.6 also bear witness to Benvenuto's exegesis. See Rossi, "Benvenuto da Imola," 194-203; De Santis, "Il commento di Benvenuto;" Pasquino, "Benvenuto Rimbaldi da Imola," 91, 113. Rossi's various studies on Benvenuto are gathered in his recently published book, *Studi su Benvenuto da Imola* (Sismel 2016).

[651] On the manuscripts of Goro's and Zono's commentaries, see Sanford, "Manuscripts;" Rossi, "Benvenuto da Imola," 179-80, n. 45 and 186, n. 74; De Angelis, "... e l'ultimo Lucano," 155-56, n. 22-23.

[652] Banc ms UCB 85, ff. 27v-33v; Monti, "Il codice Berkeley;" Ead., "Petrarca *auctoritas*." Both Benvenuto's and Pietro's commentaries cite Dante and Petrarch as major authorities and sources of parallels: Monti, "Petrarca *auctoritas*" (in part. pp. 249-51); Rossi, "Benvenuto da Imola," 190-1; cfr. Crevatin, "La presenza," 239-49; Carron, "Le *Comentum*" (on Benvenuto's commentary on Dante's *Comedy* in relation to Petrarch's works and thought).

[653] Badalì, "I codici romani di Lucano" (I, II, III); Id., "I codici bolognesi di Lucano" (among the fourteenth-century manuscripts of Lucan listed by Badalì are: Rome, BAV, Barber. lat. 66; Chris. lat. H, VII, 232; Chris. lat. H, VIII, 270; Chris. lat. H, VIII, 272; Ferraioli 731; Ottob. lat. 1192; Ottob. lat. 1712; Ottob. lat. 1803; Ottob. lat. 1881; Ottob. lat. 2007; Pal. lat. 1678; Pal. lat. 1682; Regin. lat. 2069; Vat. lat. 1619; Vat. lat. 1620; Vat. lat. 1622; Vat. lat. 2798; Vat. lat. 2800; Vat. lat. 2801; Vat. lat. 2803; Vat. lat. 2804; Vat. lat. 2805; Vat. lat. 11559; Vat. lat. 9952; Bologna, Bibl. Univ. 2340). Badalì provides an excellent, detailed description of all manuscripts and a list of their glosses on Lucan's text.

[654] Endt, "Ein Kommentar;" Wilson, "Manuscript Fragment" (cfr. Rossi, "Benvenuto da Imola," 168, n. 11 with bibl.).

[655] E.g. Florence, Laurenziana, 35.11 and 35.20; Milano, Ambros I 143 inf. and S 49 sup; Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, 1573; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon Class. lat. 70 and Add. C 141; Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 268 Han; Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 322 and 349; Wrocław, Bibl. Uniwersyteka, Rhedigeranus 97. For additional examples and indications, see Sanford, "Manuscripts;" Rossi, "Benvenuto da Imola," 168, n. 11 and 179-80, n. 45 with bibl.; De Angelis, "... e l'ultimo Lucano," 148-9, n. 8; 163, n. 41; 181.

century Italian exegetes.[656] Add. 11990, for instance, was copied in 1378 by Giacomo Giuliani da Portiolo, in Ferrara, in memory of Feltrino Boiardo (Matteo Maria Boiardo's ancestor): this is a superb folio codex on vellum, finely written and ornamented, with interlinear glosses.[657] Add. 11991, also from the fourteenth-century, is similarly a folio manuscript written upon vellum and provided with many interlinear and marginal glosses.[658] Add. 14799 is another elegant, illuminated large folio manuscript on vellum, written in Italy at the close of the fourteenth century: prefixed to Lucan's poem in this manuscript are the "Intentiones librorum Lucani, et distinctiones per capitula;" on the first page are the emblazoned arms of the Mocenigo family. Burney MS 204, also dating from late-fourteenth century Italy, is a large parchment codex; decorated with colored, flourished initials, this manuscript has numerous marginal and interlinear glosses, both in Greek and in humanistic script.[659]

These documents show the wide circulation and high social-literary prestige of Lucan's poem in fourteenth-century Italy, especially among the wealthy and well-educated strata of the population. A close examination of fourteenth-century commentaries would further reveal the similarities and differences between the medieval and the early-humanistic practice of interpretation of the *Bellum Civile*.[660] Examining these materials is also crucial to any assessment of the extent to which fourteenth-century literary appropriations of Lucan were in line with, influenced, or were influenced by the scholarly, exegetical and rhetorical convictions of their age.

In the fourteenth century, the *Bellum Civile* was also subjected to translations into Italian. The literary genre —or "literary field"—[661] of late-medieval *volgarizzamenti* evinces an attempt to address a wider audience than the strictly Latinate one, either with a simply didactical purpose in mind or with some independent literary ambitions. The most famous fourteenth-century Italian rendition of Lucan's poem is that authored around 1355 by Arrigo Semintendi, a notary from Prato. As Allegri has pointed out, this translation is characterized by a deep reverence for the Latin original and faithfully reproduces Lucan's syntax and vocabulary to the point of stretching

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[656] Goro's commentary is contained in London, British Library, Harl. 2458; Zono's commentary is preserved in: British Library, Addit. 18791 (commentary on Lucan's books I-II); British Library, Harl. 2479; British Library, Royal 15 C XIII (commentary on Lucan's books I-V).

[657] This manuscript, written in the same year in which Benvenuto da Imola was giving his lectures on the *Bellum Civile*, represents a further sign of Lucan's relevance in fourteenth-century Ferrara. In this same town, around 1343, Niccolò da Verona had written his *Pharsale*, presumably while staying at Niccolò d'Este's court (cfr. Babbi, "Niccolò da Verona;" cfr. p. 125 below).

[658] On the first page of this manuscript is a cataloguer's note: "Lucani Pharsalia; superb manuscript of the thirteenth century, upon vellum, with scholia, and various readings of great importance;" a later hand has added "XIVth" and "fourteenth century" is also the dating which appears on the online catalogue description of the manuscript.

[659] Beyond those mentioned, other relevant fourteenth-century manuscripts in the British Library with commentaries on Lucan are: Add. 14087; Add. 19891; Harl. 1865; fifteenth-century exemplars are: Sloane 2490; Harley 2507; Add. 11992; Add. 11993; Add. 10087; Add. 17509; Add. 11989; Arundel 113; Burney 203; Burney 205. The "famous" Add. 27376, also written in Italy in the fourteenth century, is a large, beautiful folio manuscript on vellum, which contains Marino Sanudo's "Liber secretorum fidelium super terrae sanctae recuperatione" with decorated initials, illuminations, and maps (attributed to the 14th-century Genoese cartographer Pietro Vesconte); at f. 179r-v, the codex, interestingly, has a series of rubrics written in French and dealing with Caesar's deeds as recounted by Lucan: in the catalogue, this page has been described as a fourteenth-century fragment of Lucan, but it is, rather, a series of chapter headings from *Li Fet des Romains*.

[660] On the general difference between medieval and humanistic commentaries, cfr. Lo Monaco, "Alcune osservazioni;" Woods, "What are the Real Differences." Marti claims that the statements on poetry found in twelfth-century commentaries on Lucan may have influenced the later humanists (Marti, "Literary Criticism," 254).

[661] This is the definition adopted by Romanini, "Un volgarizzamento," 639.

the limits of the Italian language.[662] Romanini has called attention to another, unpublished translation written by an anonymous Milanese author between the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth centuries. This ancient Milanese version, prepared for the school, is characterized by the evident effort to simplify Lucan's elaborate *constructio* and thus facilitate the pupils' understanding of the original Latin text.[663]

The indirect tradition of Lucan's poem in late-medieval Italy also comprises the *Fatti dei Romani* (or *Fatti di Cesare*) and the *Pharsale* of the *giullare* Niccolò da Verona; although these two works are not strictly speaking translations of the *Bellum Civile*, they rely extensively upon it. The *Fatti dei Romani*, or *Fatti di Cesare*, is a thirteenth-century Florentine translation of *Li Fet des Romains* (ca. 1212-3), an earlier French compilation about Caesar's life which combines passages from Caesar himself, Lucan, Suetonius, and Sallust.[664] Between the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries, the *Fatti dei Romani* circulated widely, especially among Tuscan merchants, and was subject to several revisions and rewritings.[665] Romanini has highlighted the rhetorical sophistication and search for *pathos* which characterize the *Fatti dei Romani*, as well as Arrigo Semintendi's translation, in contrast with the stylistic plainness of the Milanese translation.[666] Niccolò da Verona's *Pharsale* is, instead, a French-Venetian poem of 6116 lines written in Ferrara around 1343 and dealing with the Caesar-Pompey civil war; this literary work is based on the *Bellum Civile* through the mediation of *Li Fet des Romains*.[667] These translations and re-adaptations are a further proof of the wide and transversal circulation of Lucan's poem in the *Trecento*. A detailed examination of these materials could further illuminate the rendering and adaptation of Lucan's literary-rhetorical devices, as well as of his cultural, political, geographical, and philosophical terminology, in the context of fourteenth-century vernacular Italian culture.

SALUTATI, BRUNI, AND LATER HUMANISTS

My work has emphasized some differences between the reception of Lucan by Dante and by later humanists following Petrarch. The analysis of Lucan's reception by late-fourteenth-century humanists could be expanded to identify further similarities and divergences in the earlier part of the century. In their studies on the reception of ancient Roman Republicanism and Caesarism in the Italian Renaissance, Baron and McLaughlin have shown that, in the works of late-fourteenth- and early-fifteenth-century humanists like Salutati, Bruni, Bracciolini, and Guarino Veronese, Caesar and his enemies come to embody the contrasting values of Republicanism and monarchy which characterized, respectively, contemporary Florence and the northern Italian *Signorie* of Milan and Ferrara.[668] If accepted, this interpretation of the late *Trecento* would underscore a

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[662] Arrigo's translation is edited by Allegri, ed., *Arrigo Semintendi*, and Marinoni, ed., *Pharsalia*.

[663] Ms. Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Parm. 2928; see Romanini, "Le tecniche del volgarizzare;" Id., "Un volgarizzamento;" Id., "La resa dello stile tragico."

[664] Ed. Banchi 1863 (Banchi dates the work to the first half of the thirteenth century). Marroni has recently published a partial edition of the first and most complete Italian translation of the *Fatti*, of which the text edited by Bianchi is a later and abridged version (Marroni 2004).

[665] Bénéteau, ed., *Li fatti de' Romani*, provides a critical edition of a later version of the *Fatti*, based on mss. *Hamilton 67 and Riccardiano 2418*, copied by the merchant Lapo Corsini in 1313. At pp. 9-15, Bénéteau gives an overview of the complex manuscript tradition of the *Fatti*.

[666] Romanini, "La resa dello stile tragico."

[667] Wahle, ed., *Die Pharsale*.

[668] See Baron, *The Crisis*, 79-168 (esp. 118-168), 199, 242-43, 357-403, 414-5; McLaughlin, "Empire," 338-45, with bibl. An especially interesting case is the epistolary controversy about Caesar and Scipio engaged in by the

slightly different pattern as to the earlier phase of the century, when — as my dissertation has demonstrated — the reuse of Lucan in relation to contemporary politics was generally more fluid and the opposition between the Republican and Imperial phases of Roman history was often very nuanced or even as yet *in nuce*. Nonetheless, Baron's and McLaughlin's overviews leave the door open for further problematization and a more systematic and in-depth analysis of particular cases.[669]

Furthermore, Lucan's presence in the various works of Salutati, Bruni, and other prolific contemporary humanists could be evaluated in a more wide-ranging way, moving from the spheres of political theory and intellectual history to the field of philology and literary criticism. For instance, Coluccio Salutati, whose pro-monarchical *De tyranno* and political writings engage with Lucan's political ideas, frequently cites the *Bellum Civile* also in his relatively understudied other works, with a variety of purposes.[670] In his letters, Salutati praises the Cordovan poet ("splendidissimus ille Cordubensis") and debates some problems of interpretation of the *Bellum Civile*; in one evocative and intertextually interesting passage where he discusses the style of the major ancient Latin poets, he compares Lucan to the impetuous river Rhône, Ovid to the Ticino and Virgil to the (mythological) Eridanus.[671] Lucan is an important source for the *De laboribus Herculis*, Salutati's treatise on poetry and the manifold meanings of ancient myth.[672] Similarly, Giovanni Conversini, whose discussion of ancient Roman Republic and empire is mentioned by Baron, cites Lucan (also) in non-strictly political contexts: in Conversini's autobiography *Rationarium vite* and autobiographical *Dialogus inter Johannem et literam*, citations of Lucan create effects which range between the edifying and the humorous or satirical.[673]

All this confirms that Lucan's voice was a powerful means frequently redeployed by fourteenth-century Italian authors to interact with each other and their predecessors in a rich, polyphonic dialogue full of reverberations. Pervasively present in fourteenth-century literary culture, Lucan's text authorized a wide range of rereadings which activated its inner contrasts and manifold facets, as this dissertation has shown. The *Bellum Civile* was variously interpreted as an

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Florentine Poggio Bracciolini and Guarino Veronese, a member of the Este intellectual milieu (the text is edited by Canfora, *La controversia*: for a contextualization, see pp. 9-61).

[669] The limits of Baron's narrative about the development of Petrarch's political thought have been discussed in chapter III. Baron's account of Italian political Humanism, centered on the narrative of a "titanic struggle between Republican Florence and Giangaleazzo Visconti (...) as the battles between the forces of freedom and that of tyranny" (Witt, "Introduction," 108), has been the target of more general criticism (cfr. for example Ricciardelli, *The Myth of Republicanism*); for an assessment of Baron's work, its premises and its legacy, see for example the articles collected in *The American Historical Review* 1996 (1) and the introductions of Trinkaus, *The Scope of Renaissance Humanism*; Celenza, *The Lost Italian Renaissance.*

[670] On Salutati's use of Lucan in the *De tyranno* and other political writings, see Bond, "Lucan;" Witt, "The *De tyranno*" (pp. 450-71 in part.); Id., *Hercules*, 371-75; cfr. Baron, *The Crisis*, 118-20, 146-66; McLaughlin, "Empire," 340. Ullman, *The Humanism*, 236 counts more than fifty citations of Lucan in Salutati's works.

[671] This eulogistic reference to Lucan appears in *Epist.* III, 26 ed Novati (cfr. Ullman, *The Humanism*, 236; Bond, "Lucan," 491). Some mentions of, and allusions to, Lucan and his poem in Salutati's works are noted in Bond, "Lucan," 491-2; Ullman, *The Humanism*, 96, 255; Witt, *Hercules*, 54, 244, 301. The extended river metaphor can be found in *Epist.* I, 338-9 (cfr. pp. 4, 54, 93 above on earlier, late-Antique and medieval definitions of Lucan's style as impetuous).

[672] Cfr. *De laboribus Herculis*, ed. Ullman, 649.

[673] Baron, *The Crisis*, 134-45. See *Dialogue*, ed. Eaker and Kohl, 105 (Lucan. VIII, 493); *Rationarium*, ed. Nason, 27, 9 (Lucan. VIII, 241); 35, 7 (VIII, 715); 64, 2 (Lucan. V, 527). Conversini's works are still partly unpublished; Leoncini and Albanese's edition of his narrative prose, which is currently forthcoming, will help to shed light on the eminently "literary" aspects of Conversini's work.

anti-Caesar or a pro-Caesar text, as the story of Caesar, of Pompey, or of both, as a narration about the power of *virtus* and audacity or about the perils of ambition and the intrinsic flaws of human nature. Late-medieval authors appropriated Lucan's text to criticize institutions or authorize autocracy, to recall and explain ancient history and mythology, to underpin their moral-philosophical claims, or to embellish their poetry through the words of a major, canonical epic poet who, especially before Petrarch, was regarded as consonant with, rather than opposed to, Virgil. A more detailed study of the above-mentioned areas ("minor" authors, commentaries and translations, late-fourteenth century humanists) may further illuminate the scope and many-sidedness of Lucan's fourteenth-century receptions, while also opening new avenues for research.

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