

The Dialogue Between the Mytileneans and Pompey in Lucan's *De Bello Civili* (8,109-158)

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ABSTRACT: This article comments upon the episode of the dialogue between the Mytileneans and Pompey in Lucan's *De Bello Civili* (8,109-158) and its multiple poetic purposes are investigated. I argue that the episode in question has a significant structural value, since Lucan's emphasis on the islanders' loyalty and Pompey's reaction should be connected not only with the similar stance of the Lariseans in the previous book or the perfidy of the Egyptians later in the work, but also with many other passages and themes of the epic (as e.g. Caesar's greed, his presence at Amyclas' hut, the virtues of *vetus Roma*, the absence of an important tomb for Pompey). In this way the particular episode allows the poet to highlight tragic elements in Pompey's portrayal and more generally traits of his image that are in contrast with those of Caesar's, while at the same time facilitates Lucan's attempt to hint at his poetic immortality.

KEY WORDS: Lucan; Mytileneans; Pompey; Character Portrayal; Poetic Immortality.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The episode featuring the defeated Pompey's appearance on the island of Lesbos and his reply to the Mytileneans' plea that he remain and continue the war against Caesar from there is extensively described in Lucan's epic (8,109-158), but has not yet been studied in depth by contemporary schol-

ars¹. As I shall attempt to demonstrate in due course, the episode in question has a noteworthy structural function, while the emphasis Lucan places on it fulfils multiple poetic purposes. It is obvious that the islanders' behaviour is in contrast to that of the Egyptians later in the work. Their honourable stance deceives Pompey allowing him to believe that the same *fides* is to be found in other places in the world and thus, when his illusion is shattered, his situation is all the more tragic. At the same time, this passage recalls other episodes of the work and the epic poet exploits it to highlight traits of Pompey's image that are in contrast with those of Caesar's, thus facilitating the interpretation of events. Furthermore, the particular passage seems to allow Lucan to pass comments on the matter of eternal fame and subtly imply his poetic confidence.

Since Lucan composes a historical epic, it is reasonable that the main points of the historical background of his account of the civil war should not be altered and thus significant deviations from the facts are not to be expected in his work. Generally speaking, despite some minor inconsistencies and historical inaccuracies, Lucan is regarded as a reliable and veracious writer². He is, however, primarily a poet and feels free to treat his historical material in a manner that facilitates his poetic purposes. Furthermore, his training in the declamation schools is clearly reflected in his epic and the impact of rhetoric on his work is indisputable³. As a result, he does not hesitate to insert invented episodes, compress events in a few lines, or even skip them; at the same time, he approaches the historical past in a way that serves his literary and political intentions and allows him to interpret facts in a manner that complements the main principles, general scope and ideology of his work, but he does so without significantly vitiating the historical credibility of his poem. Consequently, he often indulges in emotional judge-

¹ See mainly TASLER (1971) 128-133 and SCHMITT (1995) 141-155, as well as the relevant part of the commentary on book 8 by MAYER (1981) 100-107.

² Lucan's affinity with historiography is already mentioned by Servius: *Lucanus namque ideo in numero poetarum esse non meruit, quia videtur historiam composuisse, non poema* (SERV., *Aen.* 1,382). For Lucan's treatment of his historical material and his credibility, see e.g. GRIMAL (1970); LINTOTT (1971); SALEMME (2002); NARDUCCI (2003); BARTSCH (2010); BUREAU (2010). For a defense of Lucan's credibility in book 8, see POSTGATE (1917) ix-lxx.

³ Cf. Quintilian's famous statement at *Inst.* 10,1,90: *Lucanus ardens et concitatus et sententiis clarissimus et, ut dicam quod sentio, magis oratoribus quam poetis imitandus*. For the influence exercised by the declamation schools on Lucan and his debt to rhetoric, the bibliography is extensive: see e.g. BONNER (1966); MORFORD (1967); RUTZ (1970); NADAI (2000); NARDUCCI (2007) 387-395.

ments, reveals his bias against Caesar as well as his preference for the side of Pompey, and appears interested in exemplarity. Thus various scenes are forced or dramatically represented so as to create a pathetic atmosphere or function as a means of character portrayal.

As regards the episode under discussion, Pompey's presence in Lesbos is an undeniable historical fact, well attested by many other sources⁴. However, Lucan transforms it into an emotional scene that sheds further light on Pompey's literary persona and contributes to the portrayal of the Mytileneans as the exemplification of loyalty. As it also touches upon some other topics of Lucan's epic thought, all the evidence tends to point to the fact that it is well integrated in the whole epic.

2. THE SPEECHES

At the beginning of book 8, Pompey, having just been defeated at Pharsalus, is shown desperately trying to flee to the East in a state of terror, while the description of his journey to Lesbos, where his wife Cornelia⁵ had been sent for safety (5,722 ff.), follows directly. Lucan describes the moving reunion of husband and wife extensively (8,33-108), before focusing on the efforts made by the islanders to convince the Roman leader to remain on the island and continue the war from there:

Tunc Mytilenaeum pleno iam litore vulgus
affatur Magnum: 'si maxima gloria nobis
semper erit tanti pignus servasse mariti,
tu quoque devotos sacro tibi foedere muros
oramus sociosque lares dignere vel una
nocte tua: fac, Magne, locum, quem cuncta revisant
saecula, quem veniens hospes Romanus adoret.
Nulla tibi subeunda magis sunt moenia victo:
omnia victoris possunt sperare favorem,
haec iam crimen habent. Quid quod iacet insula ponto,
Caesar eget ratibus? Procerum pars magna coibit
certa loci; noto reparandum est litore fatum.
Accipe templorum cultus aurumque deorum;

⁴ These sources include VELL. 2,53; FLOR., *Epit.* 4,2,51; PLV., *Pomp.* 74-75; and D.C. 42,2,3-4.

⁵ For the portrayal of Cornelia in Lucan's epic and his models, see especially BRUÈRE (1951); NEHRKORN (1960) 204-219; KUBIAK (1990); NARDUCCI (2003) 174-180; NAGYILLÉS (2009); UTARD (2010).

accipe, si terris, si puppibus ista iuventus
 aptior est; tota, quantum valet, utere Lesbo.
 Hoc solum crimen merita bene detrahe terrae,
 ne nostram videre fidem felixque secutus
 et damnasse miser⁶.

[LVCAN. 8,109-127]

The speech of the Mytileneans includes both emotional and logical arguments. Examining the structure of their speech, we ascertain that it moves along the axes of *iustum*, *utile*, *facile*, *honestum*, a structure used by generals in pre-battle speeches (*cohortationes*) and a subject matter in which Lucan is well-versed⁷. In particular, the axis of *iustum* is evident when they remind Pompey that it was on their island that his wife was kept safe and call upon him to honour a city evidently devoted to him, as well as the sacred bonds and gods of hospitality, by staying on the island for at least one night. The axis of *utile* is suggested by the argument based on the premise that by offering hospitality to Cornelia, Mytilene is already guilty in Caesar's eyes and therefore cannot worsen its position; on the contrary, should Pompey choose to leave and go to another city, he would deprive this city of its last hope of enjoying favourable treatment by the victorious Caesar. The axis of *facile* is served by the arguments that support the opinion that Lesbos is an appropriate place from which Pompey can proceed with the war: firstly, as Caesar does not have a fleet, Lesbos offers a refuge. Secondly, as the members of the Senate know the location, they can easily convene there and, thus assembled, affect the outcome of the war more effectively. Furthermore, the entire island is at Pompey's disposal: the youth of the island, trained in combat both on land and at sea, as well as the island's resources, as the locals are willing to offer him everything, including the treasures of their temples and the gold of the gods. Finally, the axis of *honestum* is implied in the moral argument that concludes their speech, as they ask of Pompey not to appear to be rejecting them in his time of sorrow, though they served him well, when he chose them in his time of prosperity.

Though cheered with the islanders' show of *pietas*, as well as with their demonstration of *fides* for his person, Pompey gracefully declines their request with a speech which on many points counters their arguments:

⁶ For the Latin text, I follow the Teubner edition of SHACKLETON BAILEY (1997).

⁷ For Lucan's familiarity with the genre of *cohortatio*, see e.g. GOEBEL (1981); TZOUNAKAS (2005); MANZANO VENTURA (2010).

Tali pietate virorum
 laetus in adversis et mundi nomine gaudens
 esse fidem 'nullum toto mihi' dixit 'in orbe
 gratius esse solum non parvo pignore vobis
 ostendi: tenuit nostros hac obside Lesbos
 affectus; hic sacra domus carique penates,
 hic mihi Roma fuit. Non ulla in litora puppem
 ante dedi fugiens, saevi cum Caesaris iram
 iam scirem meritam servata coniuge Lesbon,
 non veritus tantam veniae committere vobis
 materiam. Sed iam satis est fecisse nocentes:
 fata mihi totum mea sunt agitata per orbem.
 Heu nimium felix aeterno nomine Lesbos,
 sive doces populos regesque admittere Magnum,
 seu praestas mihi sola fidem. Nam quaerere certum est,
 fas quibus in terris, ubi sit scelus. Accipe, numen
 si quod adhuc mecum es, votorum extrema meorum:
 da similis Lesbo populos, qui Marte subactum
 non intrare suos infesto Caesare portus,
 non exire vetent.'

[LVCAN. 8,127-146]

Here Pompey stresses the extent of his feelings for Lesbos, praises the island, draws attention to the trust he has shown in the islanders so far, but claims that he should now take his fate to the rest of the world. Upon hearing Pompey's decision, the islanders were perturbed expressing their sorrow for the Roman leader's departure, but more so for that of Cornelia, whom they had grown to love dearly for her virtues⁸.

3. THE EPISODE'S STRUCTURAL VALUE AND LITERARY PURPOSES

In reality, it is possible that there were other reasons behind Pompey's refusal. Perhaps he felt restricted on an island and was also concerned about

⁸ LVCAN. 8,146-158: *Dixit, maestamque carinae / imposuit comitem. Cunctos mutare putares / tellurem patriaeque solum: sic litore toto / plangitur, infestae tenduntur in aethera dextrae. / Pompeiumque minus, cuius fortuna dolorem / moverat, ast illam, quam toto tempore belli / ut civem videre suam, discedere cernens / ingemuit populus; quam vix, si castra mariti / victoris peteret, siccis dimittere matres / iam poterant oculis: tanto devinxit amore / hos pudor, hos probitas castique modestia vultus, / quod summissa animi, nulla gravis hospita turba, / stantis adhuc fati vixit quasi coniuge victo.*

the possibility of betrayal; still, his supporters made sure that his decision was presented in such a way as to appear as a gesture of generosity⁹. Lucan unreservedly adopts the latter version, without any allusion to the possibility of other motives, while the emphasis he lays on the particular episode seems to serve a number of literary purposes. In fact, it is worth noting that the poet appears to have prepared his readers with great care from his previous book with a briefer reference to the defeated Pompey's arrival in Larisa. In this episode the inhabitants of the Thessalian city welcome the Roman general in a similar manner, offer him gifts, open the doors of their temples and homes for him, are willing to join him in his fate and show *vera fides*. Pompey, however, generously rejects their offer and asks them to express their loyalty to the victorious Caesar, a fact that compels the poet to state that Pompey is giving his father-in-law peoples:

Vidit prima tuae testis Larisa ruinae
 nobile nec victum fatis caput. Omnibus illa
 civibus effudit totas per moenia vires
 obvia ceu laeto: promittunt munera flentes,
 pandunt templa, domos, socios se cladibus optant.
 Scilicet immenso superest ex nomine multum,
 teque minor solo cunctas impellere gentes
 rursus in arma potes rursusque in fata redire.
 Sed 'quid opus victo populis aut urbibus?' inquit
 'victori praestate fidem'. Tu, Caesar, in alto
 caedis adhuc cumulo patriae per viscera vadis,
 at tibi iam populos donat gener. Avehit inde
 Pompeium sonipes; gemitus lacrimaeque secuntur
 plurimaeque in saevos populi convicia divos.
 Nunc tibi vera fides quaesiti, Magne, favoris
 contigit ac fructus: felix se nescit amari.

[LVCAN. 7,712-727]

It is clear that the brief episode of Larisa prepares the ground¹⁰ for the Mytileneans' stance as well as for Pompey's reaction in book 8, where the poet more thoroughly develops themes he has touched upon earlier. With the juxtaposition of two similar episodes and, indeed, with their development at an increasing progress, Lucan wants to highlight those points that to him

⁹ See POSTGATE (1917) xxx-xxxii, followed by MAYER (1981) 100.

¹⁰ See, for instance, MAYER (1981) 100; BRAUND (1992) 297.

constitute fundamental matters both in his portrayal of Pompey, as well as in the literary depiction of the question of the civil war, while at the same time, as we shall see later, including allusions to his own epic work.

The Lariseans and Mytileneans act as examples of peoples who express their loyalty and devotion to Pompey even after he has been defeated¹¹. They do not put their own interests first, but act according to the old moral principles, which in the greater part of the work appear to have been deflated¹². Influenced by their example, Pompey is led to arbitrary generalities and is deceived into believing that other peoples will act in a similar way. Thus, he finally seeks refuge in Egypt, where his expectations will be belied¹³, when the Egyptians murder him and offer his head to Caesar in an attempt to curry the victor's favour. Consequently, the example of the Lariseans' and even more so that of the Mytileneans', as has already been noted¹⁴, aims to create a strong contrast with the behaviour of the Egyptians that shows a total lack of *fides*. Pompey's decision to abandon the loyal Mytileneans and seek refuge in the hands of unreliable allies shows a man whose attachment to the past¹⁵ renders him unable to assess correctly the new reality he finds himself in and lends his person further tragic elements¹⁶. Let us not forget that this tragic element has already been noted by the Mytileneans, who, in the conclusion of their speech, refer quite clearly to Pompey's transition from a state of prosperity to one of adversity (8,126-127: *ne nostram videre fidem felixque secutus / et damnasse miser*). The tragedy of his situation is further emphasized by his plea to whichever deity still favours him to help him find people like the Mytileneans; the fact that his wish is unanswered shows that the gods have finally abandoned Pompey and that he, without being aware of it, continues to rely on his past fortune. Elements of the tragic are also evident in the Mytileneans' position, as, by protecting Cornelia on their island, they have established their guilt in Caesar's eyes, a situation made worse by Pompey's departure. Pompey's presence on the

¹¹ MAYER (1981) 100; for the Lariseans' stance, cf. also NADAÏ (2000) 254-256.

¹² Cf. e.g. LVCAN. 5,297-299: *sic eat, o superi: quando pietasque fidesque / destituunt moresque malos sperare relictum est, / finem civili faciat discordia bello*.

¹³ Cf. e.g. LVCAN. 9,131-132: *hospitii fretus superis et munere tanto / in proavos, cecidit donati victima regni*.

¹⁴ MAYER (1981) 100.

¹⁵ For Pompey's attachment to the past, cf. e.g. RUTZ (1963) 345; AHL (1976) 156 ff.; FEENEY (1986); BRAUND (1992) xxi; HELZLE (1994) 124.

¹⁶ More generally for elements of tragic history in Lucan's epic, see especially MARTI (1964).

island and the possible reversal of the course of the war (8,120: *noto reparandum est litore fatum*) would allow them to avoid Caesar's punishment, whereas with Pompey's departure all hope is lost. Their plea to Pompey not to place other people in a similar position of guilt by seeking refuge with them shows a sense of responsibility and a humanistic concern. However, Pompey's refusal and his decision to seek justice and crime in other lands (cf. 8,137-138: *sed iam satis est fecisse nocentes: / fata mihi totum mea sunt agitanda per orbem* and 8,141-142: *nam quaerere certum est, / fas quibus in terris, ubi sit scelus*) will lead to other peoples' involvement in his personal fate and is consistent with the poetic view of the civil war as a universal event that shocks the entire world and has universal repercussions¹⁷.

Pompey's love for Cornelia makes him feel that, while she was on Lesbos, the island was his sacred home, his dear house-gods, indeed, his Rome¹⁸. This statement reveals the Roman leader's dependence on his wife, pre-determines his final downfall and moves in an opposite direction to Vergilian models, such as that of *pietas* and Aeneas' *amor* for his homeland¹⁹. At the same time, it intratextually recalls Lentulus' address to the senatorial meeting in Epirus, when he asserts that, regardless of the place, Rome is where the Senate is and employs the example of Camillus:

Tarpeia sede perusta
Gallorum facibus Veiosque habitante Camillo
illic Roma fuit.

[LVCAN. 5,27-29]

The implications derived from the comparison of the phrases *illic Roma fuit* (5,29) and *hic mihi Roma fuit* (8,133) seem to be important for appreciating the structural function of the passage. While Lentulus echoes the traditional

¹⁷ The theme of the huge dimensions of the civil war is highlighted already from the proem of Lucan's epic; cf. LVCAN. 1,4-6: *et rupto foedere regni / certatum totis concussi viribus orbis / in commune nefas*.

¹⁸ According to AHL (1976) 173-183, Pompey's desire to love and be loved is a main trait of his image in the epic. As he rightly notes (177), "[i]n his mind there is an equation between Rome and Cornelia. The city and the woman are both objects whose love Pompey seeks to earn by doing great deeds and winning applause. In adversity he thinks he can no longer be loved by either".

¹⁹ For more details, see THOMPSON (1983-1984), especially 212-213; cf. also UTARD (2010) 187-188. More generally for the employment of the noun *amor* in Lucan's epic, see TUCKER (1990).

republican view that the Senate's role is vital for the Roman state²⁰, Pompey appears unable to follow this tradition, since he identifies Rome not with the Senate, but with Cornelia.

Nonetheless, Pompey's statement that *hic sacra domus carique penates, / hic mihi Roma fuit* (8,132-133) allows for further thoughts and interpretations. The phrase *hic mihi Roma fuit* indirectly leads to a comparison of the two cities. By expressing feelings of devotion and loyalty to Pompey, Mytilene becomes a symbol of the old, moral Rome²¹. For example, the Mytileneans show *pietas* towards Pompey (8,127: *tali pietate virorum*), a notion which points directly to the moral principles of the *vetus Roma*. Furthermore, referring in book 1 to the causes of the civil war, Lucan lays great emphasis to the loss of *fides*, as e.g. in lines 1,92: *nulla fides regni sociis*, 1,119-120: *morte tua discussa fides bellumque movere / permissum ducibus* and 1,181-182: *hinc usura vorax avidumque in tempora fenus / et concussa fides et multis utile bellum*. While, however, on the eve of the civil war any notion of trust was absent from Rome, both in politics as well as in commerce²², in Mytilene this notion continues to exist²³, lending the island traits of the old Rome.

At this point it is worth drawing attention to the extensive commercial imagery prevalent throughout the episode²⁴. In both speeches Cornelia's stay on Lesbos and the shelter offered by the islanders is compared to a pledge (*pignus*) given by Pompey: 8,110-111: *si maxima gloria nobis / semper erit tanti pignus servasse mariti*, 8,129-131: *'nullum toto mihi' dixit 'in orbe / gratius esse solum non parvo pignore vobis / ostendi* (see also 8,190-191: *comitem pignusque recepi / depositum*). This metaphor is complimented by a plethora of

²⁰ For a characteristic example in Lucan's epic, cf. LVCAN. 7,578-581: *in plebem vetat ire manus monstratque senatum: / scit cruor imperii qui sit, quae viscera rerum, / unde petat Romam, libertas ultima mundi / quo steterit ferienda loco*. For the way the Senate is presented in Lucan's epic, see FANTHAM (1999) and DUCOS (2010).

²¹ For the ethical implications of the proximity of *pietas* and *fides* here, see SKLENÁŘ (2003) 120-121.

²² For the meaning of the term *fides* in lines LVCAN. 1,119 and LVCAN. 1,182, see ROCHE (2009) 203.

²³ Cf. COFFEE (2009) 155-156, who remarks that the Mytileneans "continue to practice and preserve those supposedly fundamental Roman virtues: *fides*, *pietas*, *hospitium*, and the preservation and return of *gratia*. These values no longer operate in Rome; instead, like other virtues, they have migrated to the periphery of the civilized world" (156).

²⁴ For the commercial metaphor here, see MAYER (1981) 100; TZOUNAKAS (2000) 120-121; COFFEE (2009) 155-156, who notes that "the scene of Pompey's reception by the Mytileneans contains by far the densest accumulation of language expressing reciprocal ties in the poem" (155).

other terms with financial connotations, as e.g. *devotos sacro ... foedere muros* (8,112), *fidem ... secutus* (8,126), *et mundi nomine gaudens / esse fidem* (8,128-129), and the phrase *praestas ... fidem* (8,141). By portraying Pompey's relationship to the Mytileneans as a commercial agreement attended with a pledge, Lucan stresses Pompey's and the Mytileneans' loyalty, underlines the latter's trustworthiness and highlights their moral principles. This good faith, however, that is necessary for sound commercial agreements and is shown by the Mytileneans, leads Pompey to the general (as we have a gradual transference of the islanders' commercial good faith, implied by the word *virorum*, to the world) and possibly arbitrary conclusion that trustworthiness is to be found the world over (8,127-129).

At the same time, the episode effectively enhances the image of Pompey that Lucan wants to set against that of Caesar. More specifically, the Mytileneans, just like the Lariseans before them, go as far as to offer Pompey the adornments of their temples and the gold of their gods, gifts the latter refuses to take or use. His stance moves in the opposite direction of Caesar's behaviour, who in book 3 is described as seeking to and succeeding in ravaging the treasury-temple of Saturn in Rome (3,112-168)²⁵. Furthermore, when Caesar sees the treasures of Egypt (10,107-171), Lucan goes to great lengths to show the Roman leader's strong desire to possess them²⁶. Thus, the poet portrays Pompey as uninterested in receiving gifts offered to him, in contrast to Caesar, whom he portrays as greedy, seeking material gain at every opportunity²⁷, even if it means seizing the treasures of Rome's sacred temple.

The episode of the Mytileneans presents further opportunity to demonstrate an additional aspect of the contrast between Caesar's and Pompey's literary portrayals. In book 5 Caesar enters Amyclas' humble abode (5,508 ff.) and asks him to take him to Italy on his small boat²⁸ crossing the Adriatic

²⁵ For this episode and the relevant bibliography, see HUNINK (1992) 81-102.

²⁶ Cf. LVCAN. 10,146-149: *pro caecus et amens / ambitione furor, civilia bella gerenti / divitias aperire suas, incendere mentem / hospitis armati* and LVCAN. 10,169-171: *discit opes Caesar spoliati perdere mundi / et gessisse pudet genero cum paupere bellum / et causas Martis Phariis cum gentibus optat*.

²⁷ Caesar's association with money and the projection of his greed dominate the epic; see recently VESTER (2008), especially 331-332; COFFEE (2009) 117-181, especially 135-151.

²⁸ Whereas the poet describes both Caesar attempting to cross the Adriatic Sea as well as Pompey travelling from Thessaly to Lesbos on small vessels (cf. respectively LVCAN. 5,502-503: *fluctusque verendos / classibus exigua sperat superare carina*, and LVCAN. 8,39: *exiguam vector pavidus correpsit in alnum*), it is worth noting that Plutarch informs us that Pompey travelled to Lesbos on a large commercial vessel; see MAYER (1981) 88. It is possible that Lucan intentionally uses this similarity in order to strengthen the connection of the two episodes.

Sea²⁹. In this description, Lucan is following the motif of hospitality, frequently found in Hellenistic and Augustan poetry, according to which a god, or demigod, enters a humble home and is welcomed by the owners³⁰. The cases of Callimachus' *Hecale*, Evander's hospitality to Aeneas in Vergil's *Aeneid* (8,102 ff.), and the episode of Baucis and Philemon in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (8,618-724) are characteristic examples. As has been noted, through verbal echoes and allusions to the relevant passages of the *Aeneid* and the *Metamorphoses*, Lucan depicts his Caesar as the counterpart of Aeneas at the home of Evander and the counterpart of Jupiter and Mercury in Ovid's episode of Baucis and Philemon³¹. Thus, Caesar is portrayed as having attributes suited to a deity, while his leadership qualities are highlighted. By consequence, Pompey's refusal to honour the Mytileneans' hospitality even for one night could be set against the episode describing Caesar's presence at Amyclas' hut. In this light, Pompey is denied the grandeur suited to gods and Caesar's superiority is subtly implied. The latter thus exemplifies what appears as the canonical type of *princeps*: mortal but divine.

4. THE MATTER OF ETERNAL FAME AND IMMORTALITY

Another point in the Mytilene episode which is structurally important to the epic is when the Mytileneans appeal to Pompey to remain on Lesbos so as to ensure the island's eternal fame and make it a place of Roman worship:

Fac, Magne, locum, quem cuncta revisant
saecula, quem veniens hospes Romanus adoret.

[LUCAN. 8,114-115]

²⁹ The historicity of Caesar's attempt is uncertain. It is not mentioned by Caesar in his *De Bello Civili*, while it appears (with variations) in VAL. MAX. 9,8,2; SVET., *Iul.* 58,2; PLV., *Caes.* 38; D.C. 41,46; APP., *BC* 2,9,57-58: see e.g. BARRATT (1979) 167; MORFORD (1967) 37; TZOUNAKAS (2004) 333 with n. 12; MATTHEWS (2008) 307-314. Lucan's episode is extensively commented upon by MATTHEWS (2008) and by BARRATT (1979) 156-238. For the Amyclas scene in particular and the relevant bibliography, see also RADICKE (2004) 337 ff., who cites (342, n. 103) MORFORD (1967) 37-44; NARDUCCI (1983); BORZSÁK (1983); HÜBNER (1987); SALEMME (2000) 516-517; NARDUCCI (2002) 247-261.

³⁰ For the literary tradition of the hospitality theme in Greek and Roman poetry, see e.g. HOLLIS (1990) 341-354.

³¹ See MATTHEWS (2008) 19 and 87 ff.

This statement does not only serve to highlight the respect Pompey continues to enjoy on Lesbos even after his defeat³², but skilfully prepares the ground for the poetic treatment of the matter relating to the lack of a notable tomb for Pompey's headless body in Egypt³³, a monument that can withstand the ravages of time. It is worth noting that in lines 8,818-822, where the poet laments the wretched tomb of the Roman leader, similar vocabulary is used, making the connection of the two passages even clearer:

Solitumque legi super alta deorum
culmina et extractos spoliis hostilibus arcus
haud procul est ima Pompei nomen harena
depressum tumulo, quod non legat advena rectus,
quod nisi monstratum Romanus transeat hospes.
[LVCAN. 8,818-822]

By highlighting the fact that Romans could visit Lesbos and the island would thus enjoy eternal reputation, Lucan skilfully implies that by remaining there Pompey could secure a notable grave that would attract Romans in perpetuity, something which did not happen in Egypt. In this way Lucan again draws attention to the Roman general's tragedy and misfortune, as by rejecting the Mytileneans' offer and trusting the Egyptians he denied himself the right to a noble grave. At the same time, the particular reference prepares the ground for the episodes describing Caesar's visits to Troy (9,950-999) and Alexander's tomb (10,1-19), which are in contrast to Pompey's fate and serve to highlight his tragic end even further.

The question of eternal fame often draws the poet's attention and also becomes a matter of poetic treatment in the episode under discussion. When responding to the Mytileneans' plea to make their island a place of Roman pilgrimage in perpetuity, Pompey refers to Lesbos as *nimum felix aeterno nomine*, whether others follow its example, or not (8,139-141); with their stance, the islanders have secured immeasurable happiness and an

³² See MAYER (1981) 101: "This allusion, albeit highflown, to the tourist industry may seem strange, but it is nevertheless a compliment to Pompey and an assurance of his deathless fame. The theme is resumed and elaborated movingly at the close of the book (821f and 851-8); cf. also 9.950ff and 10.15-19 where visits are paid to Troy and Alexander's tomb by Caesar".

³³ For Lucan's emphasis on the particular theme, see MAYER (1981), especially 167-170; cf. also GALTIER (2010). For a detailed description and an insightful interpretation of the fall of Pompey in Lucan's epic, see ESPOSITO (1996).

everlasting name. When describing Pompey's burial, Lucan skilfully implies that the absence of a magnificent grave is counterpoised by Pompey's reputation which cannot be marred by the insignificance of the monument³⁴. A similar idea is also evident in the apotheosis of Pompey at the opening of book 9³⁵, where it is noted that his soul leaves the ignoble tomb, ascends to the abodes of the *semidei manes*, and laughs at the insults levelled at his headless corpse.

This argument is further corroborated by lines 8,781-782, included in Lucan's apostrophe to Cordus³⁶, the man who buried Pompey's decapitated body:

Quam metuis, demens, isto pro crimine poenam
 quo te fama loquax omnis accepit in annos?
 [LVCAN. 8,781-782]

Here the poet predicts that, by displaying loyalty and *pietas* to Pompey, Cordus will enjoy eternal fame. His *pietas* (8,718 and 8,785) recalls that of the Mytileneans (8,127), while the phrase *te fama loquax omnis accepit in annos* corresponds to the expression *aeterno nomine* for the Mytileneans (8,139), thus highlighting an additional similarity between them. In a similar context of comparison between the duration of a funeral monument and the fame achieved by acts of *pietas* and offered by poetry, Lucan implies his ability to ensure poetic immortality for the individuals he commemorates.

³⁴ Cf. e.g. LVCAN. 8,858-862: *Nil ista nocebunt / famae busta tuae. Templis auroque sepultus / vilior umbra fores; nunc es pro numine summo. / Hoc tumulo, Fortuna, iaces? Augustius aris / victoris Libyco pulsatur in aequore saxum.*

³⁵ LVCAN. 9,1-18: *At non in Pharia manes iacuere favilla / nec cinis exiguus tantam compescuit umbram; / prosiluit busto semustaque membra relinquens / degeneremque rogum sequitur convexa Tonantantis. / Qua niger astriferis conectitur axibus aer / quodque patet terras inter lunaeque meatus, / semidei manes habitant, quos ignea virtus / innocuos vita patientes aetheris imi / fecit et aeternos animam collegit in orbes. / Non illuc auro positi nec ture sepulti / perveniunt. Illic postquam se lumine vero / implevit, stellasque vagas miratus et astra / fixa polis, vidit quanta sub nocte iaceret / nostra dies risitque sui ludibria trunci. / Hinc super Emathiae campos et signa cruenti / Caesaris ac sparsas volitavit in aequore classes, / et scelerum vindex in sancto pectore Bruti / sedit et invicti posuit se mente Catonis.*

³⁶ For Cordus as an invention of Lucan's and the parallel tradition, see MAYER (1981) 171, who also notes that Cordus' *pietas* ranges him "alongside Cornelia, the Senate, and the Mytileneans and against Caesar and the Egyptian court"; cf. also POSTGATE (1917) lxi-lxii; BRENNAN (1969); BRAUND (1992) xxxii; GALTIER (2010) 195-198.

Of course Lucan is not the first poet to indulge in such comments on the role of poetry in preserving the memory of individuals. The antecedent of Vergil's words in the famous episode of Nisus and Euryalus in the *Aeneid* seems to be Lucan's most probable model here:

Fortunati ambo! Si quid mea carmina possunt,
 nulla dies umquam memori vos eximet aevo,
 dum domus Aeneae Capitoli immobile saxum
 accolet imperiumque pater Romanus habebit.
 [VERG., *Aen.* 9,446-449]

It is a known fact that, in demonstrating poetic confidence, Lucan is well aware of the timelessness of both his work and his subject, as revealed by lines 9,980-986, where, in the episode describing Caesar's visit to Troy, the poet foresees that his work and the victorious general shall survive forever:

O sacer et magnus vatum labor! Omnia fato
 eripis et populis donas mortalibus aevum.
 Invidia sacrae, Caesar, ne tangere fama;
 nam, si quid Latiis fas est promittere Musis,
 quantum Zmyrnaei durabunt vatis honores,
 venturi me teque legent; Pharsalia nostra
 vivet, et a nullo tenebris damnabimur aevo.
 [LVCAN. 9,980-986]

Seen in this context, the eternal reputation of the Mytileneans and of Pompey seems to be secured not by the existence of some magnificent monument that will attract Roman tourists, but by Lucan's poetry that extols them. This interpretation, in fact, is reinforced by a passage found in Statius' *Genethliacon Lucani*, where he mentions: *tu Pelusiaci scelus Canopi / deflebis pius et Pharo cruenta / Pompeio dabis altius sepulcrum*³⁷. Statius expresses the opinion that Lucan's poetry offers Pompey a monument greater than the Pharos, bringing to mind Horace's famous lines: *Exegi monumentum aere perennius / regalique situ pyramidum altius*³⁸. As a result, in tandem with its other expediencies, the Mytilenean episode seems to allow the poet to reveal aspects of his poetic confidence, which reaches a climax in the next book. Thus, by

³⁷ STAT., *Silv.* 2,7,70-72. For these lines of Statius, see recently NEWLANDS (2011) 240-241.

³⁸ HOR., *Carm.* 3,30,1-2.

showing *vera fides* at a time when it has all but vanished, the Mytileneans offer a remarkable *exemplum* which earns the interest of Lucan, who by lauding it in his poetry secures its eternal fame³⁹.

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³⁹ I would like to thank the Editorial Board of *Minerva*, and the anonymous referees for their valuable comments and suggestions.

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